



Inside scoop

- Churches bring Vacation Bible School to three locations!
- Roofing Projects make a difference
- Ecumenical Fellowship brings us together
- Transformation, Sacraments and Chili Dogs

“Let’s start the prayer by looking at the mountains’ and for about 60 seconds everything was quiet. The world held its breath as we took in the beautiful mountains surrounding us, the clouds engulfing us, and the blue sky above us. We all spent those sixty seconds soaking in the place that began as very foreign to us in the beginning of the week but became home after 6 days.”

Hannah Smiles, Clarendon Hills, IL

WVMAW Welcomes teams From around the Eastern US

WV Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps hosted 63 teams of volunteers who came here from Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Tennessee, Michigan, Massachusetts, Ohio and even West Virginia. We welcomed back students from Cabrini College, the College of Wooster, Notre Dame University, George Washington University, and Penn State University who came to WV for alternative spring break. And we welcomed Holy Ghost Prep School from Philadelphia, Loyola School from Manhattan, St John Prep from Boston, and St. Peter’s Prep from Jersey City, NJ. People came here from big cities and small towns. They got a chance to share West Virginia hospitality, and give a hand up to families in need. Most of all they got a chance to put their faith into action, take a few risks, learn about families and their struggles, and share time listening to stories. They left hand prints and foot prints, and a picture of what God’s grace looks like. Sara Hobday of Notre Dame University wrote, “I think that sometimes Notre Dame students have this idea that we are going to go into a place and ‘fix’ things or transform a community for the better. Hopefully we did some measure of this in Webster [Springs], but truly I think it was our perspective that was transformed the most.”

Vacation Bible School: A Gift to our Communities!



First Presbyterian, St Albans welcomed the assistance of **Bloomington (IN) Presbyterian Church** workers. Kathryn Maddy, Christian Educator for First Presbyterian, said, "We made jam for Jericho House and cookies for both them and Twin City Shelter. We made Care Bears and cookies for the Police and Fire Departments. We painted flower pots and potted them with begonias for our shut-ins and the local nursing home. A small group prepared and presented a puppet show for Braley Care Home, and again at our last closing worship. The youth and kids also decorated 'puppy love blankets' for the Kanawha County Animal Shelter. And we made tie-dye pillowcases for First Presbyterian Church of Shelbyville, KY to use in their mission 'A Place to Sleep,' which provides beds and bedding to families in need. A palette garden was planted for Christ's Kitchen, and food was collected all week for the St. Albans Food Pantry, who gave the kids a tour of their facilities." Pastor Paul Romine enjoyed jamming with his banjo with some of the musically gifted students!



First Presbyterian Colcord welcomed **York United Presbyterian, York, NY**. The Reverend Michelle Sumption wrote of their adventure in WV: "The church door of Colcord Presbyterian Church has not been locked in 107 years. True to the hospitality that such a gesture emulates, the congregation warmly welcomed the nineteen of us New Yorkers. Whether working on homes with Gary or Art, leading VBS with Wendy and Becky, being fed and befriended by the congregation, or being greeted by

town-folk while walking around or swimming in the creek, the church and community graciously hosted and ministered with us. I did not see our time there as a 'mission trip.' Instead, I saw it as two friends (York UPC and Colcord Presbyterian) working together to serve the Lord. But isn't it funny how, sometimes, the people we were called to serve end up blessing us just as much, if not more?"

New Hope Presbyterian Church from Derwood, MD joined with **Gilbert Presbyterian** and the **Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer** (WVMAW location) to host the first VBS that Gilbert has been able to offer in many years. It was a wonderful collaboration of two churches in the community, partnering with WVMAW volunteers who helped to bring the program, provide volunteers, and work with the children.

It is a big deal for groups to work construction all day and then tackle a crowd of energetic youth at the end of the day! The out of state teams that partnered with our WV churches helped them to be able to do more than they may have been able to do on their own. Adequate help, funding, imagination and ideas were the work of the Spirit that brought these churches together to reach out into the communities to teach the stories of Jesus and show faith in action. The ministry was as much for the people in the church as it was for the youth! **Thank you** to Bloomington, York and New Hope for your hard work and enthusiasm that brought joy and love! To our youth.





Our biggest expense by far is roofing. From persistent leaks in old roofing that damage the interior of a home and leave behind black mold, to wind and fire that strip the roof from the house, it is the most frequent request for assistance from our communities. It is also the most expensive. Depending on the damage, the size and the pitch, the cost can be prohibitive for our budget. Whenever we do roofing projects we seek some kind of collaboration. Often family can contribute toward materials. Or perhaps funding can come from the family church, from a donor, other agencies, or designated gifts to the ministry. Sometimes we just take a step of faith!

This is truly where Jesus Math—the loaves and fishes that feed a multitude—keep us mindful of what God can do!

Kevin and Misty have lived in a single wide trailer for many years. Kevin was a coal truck driver, and Misty, who has some disabilities, sets up a road side stand where she sells household items and traded things. Rain and heavy snows had weakened the roof of their home, and they even had tires thrown on top to help hold it down in the wind. The stench of mold was so powerful even from the outside, and explained the severe cough that Kevin could not shake. In the economic cutbacks, Kevin was laid off from his job. Misty has refused disability income because she says she



ROOFING is a challenge both financially and physically, yet vital for keeping homes warm, safe and dry





loves to work and “disability” would mean she could not. So they have been living on her meager income.

What needed done for Misty and Kevin was complete overhaul, but the couple had nowhere to live in the meantime. So the project manager in Hampden rented a storage building that was placed on their lot. They ran power to it, however there was no plumbing. They used buckets for water and other necessities. They made a makeshift kitchen with appliances and a microwave. They moved the refrigerator into the shed. What is so humbling is how excited they were to be able to continue to live by their trailer as it was being repaired, and never complained about the inconvenience.

The trailer now has a new roof, new walls and flooring, new insulation, fresh paint, new kitchen cabinets, and even an extra room built on so Misty can store her things that she sells.

Lola is a single mom with four girls. When her marriage fell apart, Lola moved in with relatives until she could get on her feet. A kind couple GAVE Lola their old mobile home if she could fix it up. It had been partially burned in a fire! When Cab Wolford, the Project Manager, showed it to me I thought it needed more gasoline and flame to finish it up.

WVMAW teams partnered with Catholic Charities, found some generous donations, and had some hard working volunteers including Lola herself. In between her job hours, she made time to work alongside volunteers to make this rubble into a home!

Now her family is living in a wonderful home that is warm, safe and dry. With rooms of their own, room to play, room to be a family, this home has literally risen from the ashes. Resurrection is not lost on Lola, who is grateful to God for the people who have given her a hand up.

Most of the stories are not quite as extreme as these. Older homes need new roofing, but materials and labor are not affordable. Leakage causes mold in the insulation and walls, which can lead to respiratory ailments and allergies. Sometimes we can cost share with the family, and sometimes we have to weigh the expense with our budget. We are grateful to our donors, and grateful for groups willing to climb on roofs, learn a new skill, and help to make an old home new.

Of course it is not just about the work. It is about the grace of giving a family a hand up. When you hear the rain on your roof, thank God for your dry home.

Remember the families who struggle, and pray for them—and for those who seek to make a difference in Jesus’ name.



Ecumenical Fellowship calls us together!

WVMAW loves the ecumenical flavor of the ministries in the counties where we serve. We partner with agencies and churches, reaching beyond denomination. A few of the partnerships include: Catholic Charities in Mingo County; Mustard Seed, Glen Elk Homeless Shelter and Clarksburg Mission in Harrison County; Webster Christian Work Camps in Webster County; St. Paul Community and Economic Development Corporation (SPCEDC) in Kanawha County. Referrals have come to us from DHHR, Hospice, Department of Aging, neighbors, and church members.

Our accommodations range from Presbyterian churches in Ronceverte/Maxwelton, Point Pleasant, Colcord and Clarksburg to The Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer near Gilbert, First Baptist and First United Methodist in Webster Springs, and Highlawn Baptist in St. Albans.

We cannot say **thank you** enough to the churches in the communities who take the time to serve the mission groups lunch or dinner,

sitting with them to talk and share. THANK YOU to the **Webster County churches** of Burgoo Baptist, First Baptist, First United Methodist, Upper Glade Presbyterian, Sand Run Baptist, New Life Baptist, Trinity Methodist, Boggs-Walnut Grove Community Church and the ecumenical Sisters in Christ. We are grateful to the **St. Albans churches** of Highlawn Presbyterian, Riverlawn Presbyterian, First Presbyterian, St. Andrews United Methodist, King's River Worship Center, Gateway Christian Church, Maranatha Fellowship, Abney Street Church of God, and St. Mark's Episcopal. The **Greenbrier County churches** that offered meals include Ronceverte Presbyterian, Clifton Presbyterian, Frankford Presbyterian, Edgewood Presbyterian, Oak Grove Presbyterian, and Big Clear Creek Baptist. In **Mingo County** the accommodation site

Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer served dinner for many of the teams. First Presbyterian in **Colcord** has a Tuesday cookout complete with burgers, hot dogs, and covered dishes! **Point Pleasant** served a welcome meal to each group. **Clarksburg** hosted a mid-week picnic by Lake Oral.

Having meals with the different church families was a highlight for every mission team. It was also a highlight for those who got to sit at the table and share meals, laughter, and stories!

Table Fellowship in the name of the Lord takes us far beyond any differences we may have. Together we share our common goals of showing grace, praying for and with one another, and giving a hand up in the name of Jesus.



Transformation, Sacraments and Chili Dogs

"The life story of the woman who owned the house seemed to parallel the story of the house itself. She had divorced one husband and lost a boyfriend to illness. She herself had fallen into the hell-world of drug addiction. Like her house she probably once had life's version of beautiful hardwood floors and a shiny-faced family, but her life had fallen into disrepair. The local site supervisor told us that the only way she could qualify for the assistance we were providing was by turning her life around. The person we saw was drug-free and had a job! Transformed! We also learned that as a youth she had participated in a mission trip to help fix up peoples' homes. Was that where God first planted his mustard seed of faith, hope, and love in her life? One wonders how and why that seed had fallen among the thorns of poor life choices for so many years and how it came to be, well, resurrected. On our last day on the job for lunch, she brought chilidogs for us. It was her special way of thanking us for all the work we had done on her house. We had learned that chilidogs were a local delicacy! Were chilidogs the sacrament *de jour* that day? Transforming!"

He went on to say: "What I saw that week was the glory of the coming of the Lord in every lovingly offered chilidog, every caring act, and every compassionate word. Christ had transfigured us all!"

David Kepley from Providence Presbyterian, Fairfax, VA shared about his transformative adventure in Webster Springs



My West Virginia Home

Hannah Smiles of Clarendon Hills, IL wrote:

It's hard to describe what I mean when I say that [Colcord] became home, but I'll do my best because that feeling of belonging is what I discovered this week at West Virginia and it radiated throughout the week: in the belly-laughs, in the language loaf, in the games of soccer, ultimate Frisbee, and croquet, and in the feeling as I stood on a roof in 100 degree heat and look over and see Paul sliding down the roof like a slip -n-slide..."

Hannah shared what it was like to get to know families in the Colcord community. She wrote of the privilege of getting to listen the stories of people there, and understand the dilemma of coal in their history that she noted was "both sustaining them and killing them."

"So while I was looking at those mountains on that last day, I saw the mountains that had become my home, but I also saw the people that made it home. I saw people who spent a week 'serving like they meant it' and people who 'let themselves be served like they meant it' by taking cookies from homeowners, listening to [a local's] stories, and by listening to what God was telling them. Deuteronomy 10: 12-21(The Message) was one of our devotional passages this week but, the end of the passage was what spoke the most to me this week: 'He's your praise! He's your God! He did all these tremendous, these staggering things that you saw with your own eyes.' God gave me a new, wonderful family in a place that isn't foreign, but is now home."



Mission For A Day

The Mission Committee of First Presbyterian, Charleston, WV, was looking for a way to reach out locally and help neighbors. So this fall they committed to one day a month to work in St. Albans, partnering with WVMAW and with St Paul Community and Economic Development Corporation. (whose Mission is "to transform our community from the inside out.") The projects, led by The Rev. Dr. Michael Poke and Dale Young of DRY Construction, are set up to be completed in one day. They have included building a set of steps, building a deck, painting and dry wall, and using some folks to help with a plumbing project. We look forward to the spring to see what God has in store!

Locations

Colcord	Point Pleasant
Ronceverte	Maxwelton
Webster Springs,	St. Albans
Hampden/Gilbert	Clarksburg

Now Booking for 2016!

Contact:

Rev. Joan Stewart

304-846-2294

joanandtim.stewart@gmail.com

"God was there the whole time. He was there in the amazing scenery of the mountains, He was there in the gratitude of the church goers, He was there to power us through the hot afternoons of work, and He was there in the connections and community that we built with each other. God was there and he made the week great."

Delaney McGowen, Clarendon Hills, IL

FOR INFORMATION OR DONATIONS:

WV Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps Inc.

PO Box 18200

S Charleston, WV 25303

www.wvmaw.org

Board of Directors:

Rev. Paul Romine, Chair

Rev. John Holland, Vice Chair

Kari Preslar, Secretary

Lois Coffey, Treasurer

Rev. Jim Robinson

Marie Newcomb-Lewis

Jack Rogers

Karen Robinson

Rev. David Lee

Rev Greg Kubar

Rev. Karen Kinney

Rev. Doug Pendleton

