



Go therefore and make Disciples

The Tool Belt

The Wesley United Methodist Church
Monthly Missions Newsletter
July/August 2007

If you wish to submit information for this newsletter or get involved with the missions included in this newsletter contact the following people:

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- Pat Williams, Pastor Missions and Care at pat@wesleyumc.net
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James 2:18-26 (New Living Translation)

18 Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”

19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. 20 How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

21 Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.”¹ He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

25 Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

The objective of the Mission and Outreach Ministries of Wesley is not to simply recruit and deploy volunteers. Instead, we hope to prepare people to become an active part of God’s loving, life-giving, and genuine concern for all of humankind and creation by providing opportunities for believers to give back and grow in their relationship with God through service to others beyond the walls of Wesley. Whether it’s through making donations, joining projects, or leading others, we have a place for you. We invite you to learn more about our wide range of mission opportunities.

Wesley always has a number of service opportunities awaiting volunteers. These range from one person tasks requiring a couple of hours to larger projects that require a team to organize and tackle. There are also all sorts of needs from construction to boxing supplies to shopping for others. If you or your group could help out, please call Pat Williams at the church office or Dan Armstrong.

Dan Armstrong has lost his electronic Relief and Recovery Team e-mail roster list and is recreating it slowly. If you are interested being on this distribution list, please email Dan.

SONshine stitchers is a mission group of ladies of all ages (men are not excluded) who enjoy fellowship and craftsmanship for the glory of the Lord. The group provides an umbrella for many areas of interest: Brittany's Friends, "Murphy Harpst" Christmas blankets, construction of Lydia Project blankets, blankets for burn unit victims at Doctors Hospital, prayer blankets, fleece blankets for children of Interfaith families and most recently, crocheted blankets for the homeless. There have been other requests, which have been filled with joy.

We are currently interested in sponsoring an "Angel Room" between Thanksgiving and Christmas, which will display all types of angels on loan during this period by Wesley members. There will be additional display items crafted by SONshine stitchers for sale with proceeds going towards the Interfaith Ministry. We would like feedback on this project from interested persons. In the future, we plan to expand as needs arise for our services. Our meeting time is the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. We're always open to new ideas and members.

Thank you, Elaine Carter

GRACE@GRADUATION

In all four Columbia County high schools this year, 49 students were awarded money based on financial need to further their education. These students were all potential dropouts that were identified by their school counselors and graduation coaches. These students were credit deficient with no means to pay for extra classes to catch up.

Wesley United Methodist Church became partners with the school officials in trying to find a solution for these students. The options these young people have are limited and costly. They can take courses online, attend an evening school in a neighboring county, or go to summer school. Wesley has contributed to all of these endeavors.

Of these 49 students, 10 graduated on time with their peers in May 2007. Six students were not seniors but students striving very hard to catch back up with their class. They all accomplished this task. There are 28 other students who are currently taking online courses or attending summer school and aiming for a July 2007 graduation date. Some of these will return for a 5th year of high school but they will not be dropping out! Unfortunately, 5 students who received money did withdraw from school despite our best efforts. With a 90% success rate, we were very pleased with our first year implementing this program.

Grace and Peace, Dorcas Powell

A Mountain Top Experience for the Honduras Outreach Team

A group of fifteen souls, loosely tagged as the Honduras Outreach Team of Wesley UMC, returned from an unforgettable weeklong mission trip to La Esperanza, in the Intibucá department of Honduras (21-28 July). This group consisted of three father /son teams, one mother/daughter team and others.

Following two relatively uneventful flights (thanks for all of the prayers), we were joyfully greeted by the friendly faces of TR and Rhonda Sweeney and Lukas Padilla at the Tegucigalpa airport. After all the luggage was identified, our tired team was whisked from the airport up into the mountains of the Intibucá department via the “rainbow” bus and accompanying van. We arrived at our campsite (Campo Baptiste Independente - a Baptist camp no less) just outside La Esperanza, roughly 20 hours after leaving the Wesley church parking lot.

The first full day in Honduras was the Lord’s Day. Prior to worshipping with the Buena Vista community in the afternoon, we were guided by TR and Rhonda through the town of La Esperanza, witnessing a Lenca Indian festival, walking through the open market, visiting the public bathing facilities, and seeing the Sweeneys’ lovely home. After returning to the camp for lunch, the ladies “got formally dressed for church,” and we traveled further up the mountains to meet and worship with our new Christian brothers and sisters at the mountain village of Buena Vista.

Upon arrival, we were received with open arms, glad and generous hearts, including children excited and playful, wanting to be a part of this holy event. The whole community beamed at sharing this time to glorify God in their church with meticulously swept dirt floors. Our physical work had not begun, and yet it was very clear God was actively present in these mountains.

For the next 3 days, much physical labor took place with the completion of concreting the church floor, digging out the base, framing, and roofing an open air Sunday school room. The floor of this room was concreted along with a connecting sidewalk to the church. As Wesley and Buena Vista laborers completed these tasks, a simultaneous Vacation Bible school experience for the children along with a medical clinic was occurring in separate rooms at the school, which was located just down the hill from the church. Once again the Holy Spirit was fully active and pouring forth on the mountain.

On Wednesday afternoon, we all had a little down time. A small group of us went to the local hospital in La Esperanza for a tour and to pay a visit to the children who have been admitted there. You should have seen their eyes light up when we gave them each a stuffed animal from Brittany’s Friends. Sharing God’s love not only lifted the patients but us visitors as well.

On the morning of the 4th day, Thursday, the Honduras Outreach Team, went to another village called “Ocho de Octubre” - the Eighth of October. This was the day the village was formed. We have also nicknamed the town “Tommy Town.”

Upon arrival, the villagers came running to greet us. One little girl (Olivia) literally jumped in to our arms and refused to get down - being passed from one team member to another.

After a quick tour of the village, the medical team set up shop in a community building and soon had more than enough patients to see. The rest of the team mingled and played with the villagers - sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

By any standards, “Tommy Town” is one of the poorest villages in Honduras. Yet you would not know it by interacting with them. They all displayed a sense of pride and a very loving and caring attitude towards one another and especially to us. I imagine we will see more of them in the future.

During the afternoon, we went back to Buena Vista, where we gathered at the church and had a small ceremony and worship service commemorating the work we had done for the village and our new relationships we had formed. Several members of Buena Vista Church sang songs and made speeches. They even presented Wesley Church with a couple very nice parting gifts to say “thank you” to all Wesley members.

The evening was capped off with cake and soda and the ever popular traditional piñata. The children (and adults) really loved this part. And after many hugs, we waved good-bye to our new found friends and headed back to camp. And leaving with the knowledge that God’s love extends to Buena Vista as well.

We returned to Tegucigalpa on Friday morning for a much needed rest at the Mayan Hotel. There we met Lucas' family for a very nice dinner and celebration of another successful mission trip.

We got up early on Saturday, and before going to the airport, we made a quick tour of the "Basilica de Suyapa", a Catholic basilica on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa. The stained glass windows and other architectural features were absolutely breath taking.

We soon made it to the airport where we proceeded to wait and wait and wait for our flight. After a couple of hours of delays, we finally flew out back to Miami - where we were told we missed our connecting flight. So ... we were stuck in Miami for one extra night. But, staying at the Miami Hilton was not so bad.

We eventually made it back to Evans safe and sound and into the waiting arms of our loved ones. But never leaving the loving arms of God.

Thank You God ... for giving us the courage to travel to a foreign land, where we did not meet strangers, but merely brothers and sisters who spoke a different language. And thank You God ... for the relationships that were formed and will continue to prosper over the years. And finally thank You God ... for brining us all home safe and sound where we may start to plan our next mission back to Honduras.

Amen



Mission Calendar of upcoming events:

Faith Care will meet August 21, September 4, 18, October 16 and 30 at 6:00-9:00 PM @ Doctors Outpatient Surgery Center, 635 Ronald Reagan Drive For information on how you can help, call Al Lightsey at 706-855-6860.

Wesley will serve lunch to the homeless on Thursday, August 16 and September 16 at the Master's Table, Fenwick Street, Augusta. If you would like to participate in this ministry, contact Ray Bussey at 706-860-9831.

Asbury UMC is renovating the building used as a community food pantry. The Relief and Recovery Team has agreed to help out and our first assignment is the replacement of the shingled roof. It is not a big project, just about 1600 sf. Tentatively we will remove the old roof, make any repairs and get the felt on Saturday, September 15th, and then place the new roof Saturday, September 22nd. It will likely be warm these days so we will plan an early start each day and to finish by noon-ish in order to prevent damage to the roof (and the roofers) in the warm weather. We will have an ample supply of cold drinks on hand.

Please let Dan Armstrong know if you are interested and available for these dates so he can finalize plans. Remember we need water bottle throwers and helpers on the ground as well as those who can work on the roof.

Several of you have worked with me at the Shiloh Community Center over the past 5 years in conjunction with the United Way's Project Serve. If you have then you know the amazing Ms. Ruth Crawford, the director. I would never tell a lady's age but let's just say is a number bigger than 90.

I wanted to advise you of some unfortunate news and to let you all know that we will be scheduling a workday there in the not too distant future. Shiloh Center has been vandalized several times over the past couple of weeks. Personally I cannot imagine the motives not that any of that matters. Once law enforcement has completed their work, the dust settles somewhat and we get the Asbury food bank roof behind us, we will set up a day to repair windows, ramps and, more importantly, hearts.

Stay tuned.

Dan

The Fall Yard Sale date is October 13. Trailers will be available for drop off's on August 26th. More details to follow as time draws closer. Rose Montgomery and Edie Willard