

AREA YOUTH RETURN FROM SERVICE MINISTRY IN PAINTSVILLE, KENTUCKY

The First American Lutheran Church Youth Organization recently returned from its 10th annual service ministry trip on Sunday, July 17th. Since 2002, First American Lutheran Church has sent more than 80 high school students on service and mission experiences. These trips have built their faith in Christ while serving others.

This year's trip was to Paintsville, Kentucky, a community of 5,000 on the far northeast side of Kentucky. Paintsville is situated in one of the many "hollers" of the Appalachian Mountains. In Paintsville, the First American group partnered with Good Neighbors, Inc. for a week-long service ministry at two homes. Both of these households are supported by single mothers living in substandard housing conditions. The Good Neighbors program is designed for people that have slipped through the cracks and do not qualify for assistance in any other form. Good Neighbors, Inc. is the nation's only 501c3 charity providing home and automobile repair exclusively for employed American families who have been "Mugged by Life."

Fourteen area youth and four adults participated in this year's trip. Youth participating were: Sam Beekman, Lauren Caldie, Lindsey Carey, Guinevere Dickinson, Alex Exworthy, Miles Exworthy, Natalie Flint, William Gallagher, Maggie Henning, Carla Kobus, Conner Moe, Camille Sowle, Laine Stary, and Sarah Woodworth. The adult chaperones were Brad and Jane Weber, Mandie Caldie, and Frank Votava.

At the home of Cathy, a young widow, the group's goal was to finish the addition to the home that was started by her late husband. Youth painted the exterior of the house, finished and painted the drywall in the living area, installed carpeting and vinyl flooring, and repaired termite damage to an interior wall. Cathy worked along with the crew and enjoyed their help and company. On the day the group left she tearfully thanked them for the help and said no one has ever been so nice to her as the youth from Oconto.

At the home of Sherry, a single mother of two, the group's goal was to finish and paint an addition to the trailer home to allow for a living area. They installed a working bathroom, finished a pantry, and installed flooring in the living area. They also corrected minor electrical problems and replaced the exterior walls of a small garage. On the second day of work a wind storm and thunderstorm caused a very large tree to fall and barely miss the house. The trees on the mountain behind the home slid down the rocks and took out the power to the "holler." The crew spent the day clearing the tree with the help of several helpful neighbors.

Besides their work in Paintsville, the First American youth experienced a night at Shaker Village, where they slept at the only living history museum in the United States. In addition, the group went on a tour of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati where important lessons about slavery past and present are taught. When on the road they traveled to Berea, Kentucky and enjoyed the 30th Annual Berea Craft Festival at Historic Indian Fort Theatre and the Natural Bridge State Park.

While at the worksite in Paintsville, nightly activities included: cliff diving, swimming, picnics, a haunted museum tour, worship at the Calvary Assembly of God in Paintsville, bluegrass dancing at US 23 Country Music Museum Front Porch Pickin' and many trips to local businesses for water, (the group went through 23 cases), and building supplies.

Pictures of the First American Youth Servant Event are located on their website at firstamericanlutheran.org and on the Good Neighbors Appalachia Facebook page.

2011 FALC Mission Participants



Left to Right:

Standing: Sam Beekman, Guinevere Dickinson, Frank Votava, Conner Moe, Maggie Henning, Brad Weber, Camille Sowle, Miles Exworthy, William Gallagher, Mandy Caldie, Lindsey Carey, Laine Stary, Jane Weber

Seated: Alex Exworthy, Natalie Flint, Sarah Woodworth, Lauren Caldie

Garage repair at Sherry's worksite



Lauren Caldie, Miles Exworthy, Samantha Beekman and Natalie Flint

Storm damage at Sherry's house



Painting at Cathy's worksite



Laine Stary, Conner Moe, Guinevere Dickinson and Jane Weber

The crew at Cathy's house



Maggie Henning, Cathy, Jane Weber, Mandy Caldie, Sara Woodworth, Guinevere Dickinson, Camille Sowle, Laine Sary, Conner Moe, William Gallagher.