

Good morning. My name is Carol Dutton and I am the Outreach Chairperson at Emmanuel Church and I would like to share with you a history of how our mission trips got started.

I'll never forget that beautiful Easter Sunday morning, 13 years ago, when I started attending Emmanuel Church. I felt right at home in this loving and caring, community of faith and Louise Ritchie took me under her wing and introduced me to everyone. I was very interested in learning more about your outreach programs so I started attending outreach committee meetings. Don Booth was the chairperson at that time and he inspired me, and all of us about the importance of serving others.

In the year 2000, my daughter, Katelin, went on a mission trip with Amy Bentencourt, Ayllah White and 30 other volunteers from Don's niece's church in MA. The group worked at Glides Memorial Church in San Francisco feeding the homeless. When Kate returned home from the mission trip she shared all of her stories with me and I knew how much the trip meant to her. I was touched by Kate's experiences and I felt God calling me to serve in missions. With Don Booth as my mentor and the Holy Spirit as my guide I started to plan and schedule mission trips sponsored by the Emmanuel Church vestry. How very blessed I am to have had both of my daughters, Meghan and Katelin, go on mission trips with us. I would recommend to any family that if you serve together, you will become closer to Christ from the experience.

Our dear friend, Don Booth, passed away in September, 2009, and I am so thankful that I got to work side by side with him. Don planted a seed in me and gave me the passion to do the work God has called me to do. All of my outreach and mission trip experiences has increased my faith and trust in God and brought me closer to Christ.

Fast forward eleven years and the Emmanuel Church vestry, outreach committee and parishioners have heard God's call and have sponsored and supported ten mission trips taking volunteers all over the US to take part in various works of care and relief.

Los Alamos, NM helped with a forest fire clean up, two mission trips to Appalachia, WV helped people recover from a 100 year flood, Staten Island, NY feeding the homeless and learning about HIV Aids, Farmington, ME helped repair homes for the poor and handicapped. Since Hurricane Katrina over one million volunteers have gone to the Gulf Coast to help with the recovery and rebuild efforts and Emmanuel Church has sponsored five mission trips to the Gulf Coast to help rebuild New Orleans.

In April this year, during Holy Week, we returned to New Orleans to work for Habitat for Humanity. Seventeen volunteers from six local parishes left the comforts of home behind to work alongside fifteen other volunteers from all over the country and Canada. Over a period of three days we put clapboard on a house on America Street for a New Orleans family of six. We also worked for Episcopal Community Services, helping to sheetrock a home for a woman who has lived in a FEMA trailer for the past four years. We also worked for the Latino Farmers Cooperative and New Orleans Mission. Our group made a difference that week. We brought hope to the people in New Orleans who, after almost six years, are still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

I want to sincerely thank all of the volunteers who participated in this year's mission trip. What we experienced that week can barely be described in words. Just as Jesus transformed us through the Resurrection, we were all transformed into His likeness that week. We have come home changed people, more sensitive to the needs of others. The faces of whom we served becomes cherished remembrances, like photographs in a locket. I am so proud to have worked side by side with all of the volunteers. There is a bond and a friendship between us that can never be explained but only felt within the heart.

I would also like to thank the EC Vestry, parishioners, and outreach committee, for sponsoring this year's mission trip and for supporting our fundraising efforts. I would also like to thank Richard Sardella and Patrick Fitzgerald for allowing us to have a fundraiser spaghetti dinner at Sardella's Restaurant in Newport. We also received donations for the trip from other local businesses: Newport Harbor Corporation, Kiwanis Club of Newport, Newport Federal Savings Bank.

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, Jesus is standing at the gate and He calls each one of us to listen to his voice. He calls each one of us not be afraid, to leave our comfort zones and to reach out and help others. He calls us to serve and to make a difference in our world. You are invited to join this dynamic community of faith in our mission as we plan to develop and grow the future of Emmanuel Church.

I would like to share a quote with you written by Henri Nouwen:

"The great mystery of God's revelation in Christ is that he not only came, lived, died and rose among us, but that he continues to come, to live, to die and rise in our midst."

I hope you can join us next Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4 pm at Peoples Café, Newport for the New Orleans mission trip slide presentation.