

Word from the Pastor

Greetings,

Tropical Storm Irene visited Northwestern Connecticut for about a day, but will be remembered for decades because of the resulting flooding, downed trees, and power outages. We thank God that the damage was not worse, and our prayers are with those across the Eastern Seaboard who are rebuilding and repairing damage from the storm.

Irene serves as a reminder that no matter who we are, where we live, and what our station in life, there will be times when the rains of affliction will fall on us, when the winds of change blow through our lives, and when the darkness of doubt and despair fills our lives. But Irene also is a reminder of the importance of preparation. Although we could not stop the storm from coming, most of us were prepared to deal with the consequences. We made sure our flashlights had good batteries to deal with the darkness, we put away items in our yards so that the winds would not cause more damage from flying objects, and those in low lying areas moved to higher ground so that the rains and floodwaters would not overwhelm us.

The beginning of the school year is a time of preparation for our Church family, and I just wanted to remind you of some upcoming changes.

First, Sunday worship services will return to the 10:00 am time starting September 4th.

Second, Sunday School Registration and Rally Day will be on Sunday, September 11th. There is more information about the Rally Day event in this issue of the Bellringer.

Third, on September 11th, the Order of Worship will change slightly. The offering will be taken right after the Children's Time instead of after the time for joys and concerns. The children will be given offering envelopes as they enter the sanctuary which they can use for their offerings. The purpose of this is not to improve our finances but to include our children in this important part of our worship. It is a time when we acknowledge that God has blessed us abundantly and a time when we affirm the fact that each of us and we collectively as a church are an important part of God's work in the world. So what matters is not the amount in the offering envelope but the participation in dedicating who we are and what we have to God's work!!! After the Doxology, the children will go to Sunday School classes as those who are staying sing the second hymn of the service.

Finally, many wonderful things took place this Summer that should not be overshadowed by Irene! And they took place only because of the collective efforts of our members and friends. Although an overused cliché, I wanted to remind you that there is no CHURCH without "U"! I hope you had an opportunity to relax during the summer and will be a part of our regular activities once again in the Fall.

Blessings,

Mike



SEPTEMBER 2011

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9/11 Remembered

Mexico Mission Trip Daily Journal – Pastor Wu

Day One

It was a beautiful summer morning as the group departed from the church parking lot at 4am this morning. We all arrived on time, and we departed on time. Traffic was light overall and we just encountered road construction in two places. We arrived to JFK just after 6am and dropped off half of the group at the Aeromexico terminal for their flight. The rest went to the Delta terminal. Checking in was a breeze, except for the fact that the Pastor (of all people) left his passport on the desk in the church office after going in to use the computer to register the rental cars to an EZ Pass account!

The church folks will forever wonder whether:

- the Pastor ditched his group;
- the group ditched the pastor;
- there was an unadvertised sale at Sam's Club today; or
- the pastor just wanted to sleep in a real bed one more night while the rest slept on foam mats on a plywood floor...

The Delta flight arrived ahead of schedule and was greeted by Eduardo and his family. Eduardo is from Mexico City and wanted to join our group this year. That group then got onto their scheduled flight to Oaxaca. The group on Aeromexico was over an hour delayed, and had to take a later flight to Oaxaca. The Pastor drove back to Winsted, got the passport, and got a later flight to Mexico (catching up to the group on Sunday).

Although we have experienced more curveballs today than on any prior trip, the group is in good spirits (we have been staying in contact by phone and Texts), everyone has stepped up to the plate and are doing wonderfully without the Pastor (no surprise) and the Pastor gets an opportunity to send a report on the first day.

Proof once again that Christians don't live life problem free...but rather proof that God is always with us, we do far more as a team than individually, and with faith (and a bit of patience) all things turn out OK.

Day Two

We're all together!!!

A good part of the morning and afternoon was spent bagging salt into half pound bags. The

salt comes in kilo bags and we used empty water bottles to measure the proper amount. Sounds like an easy task, but you have to unfold and open plastic bags, measure out the right amount, tie the bag closed, and then put 30 small bags of salt into a big plastic bag. Doing the last of the 2800 bags took an extra effort, especially since we just had lunch. Today's lunch was grilled chicken, rice, aguave (cactus), grilled onions, tortillas, and two different sauces.

The evening will be spent at Casa Hogar. We are looking forward to seeing the children and staff again. We made arrangements for a Mariachi band to play. They love music, especially those who are visually impaired. We are also providing pizza for dinner.

We took a walk in the area surrounding the operations center. There is a lot of development, but at the same time there are open fields and great views of the mountains that surround the area.

We are adjusting slowly to the altitude...you can feel yourself working when you walk up a little hill!

This message is a little short because we are all exhausted...more tomorrow!

Day 3 Greetings from Oaxaca.

This will be short and sweet. 3G service not working today so no access to the Internet from the iPad.

Day began with pancakes, sausage, watermelon, scrambled eggs and cereal at 7:45. Everyone was a bit tired from the prior day's activities.

After breakfast we bagged 1500 half kilo bags of detergent. That took us just over an hour instead of half a day. So we moved sand, stones and a bunch of surplus/used building materials to a new location in prep for tomorrow's concrete mixing. Some also painted over graffiti on the outside of the compound perimeter walls replaced the edging on a counter, and sealed the three sinks in the wash area. It was then time for a lunch of the now famous dump sandwiches, made by Edith, the recipient of one of the houses built at the city dump a few years ago.

After lunch we bagged more soap, but were told to slow down for fear of not having enough to do tomorrow. I am proud to report that the First Church team again did more than anyone expected them to do.

In the afternoon we visited the Tule tree, the

largest tree in North and South America. We did some shopping (no matter how many times on the mission trip, no one seems to bore from shopping!). Dinner was at a quaint Oaxacan restaurant close by, followed by more shopping at the Dona Rosa black pottery store and factory.

On a side note, we must report that Olivia and Meghan have fallen for dark haired (although short and very clean) Mexicans. We have photos of them hugging the newly discovered mates. Twice or three times we had to call them back to their work details as they went off to steal a hug. They use all kinds of Spanish words of endearment with them. And the puppies love it.

Weather has been better than expected. No rain (only a few isolated showers). Cloudy so we have not roasted. We've awakened in the middle of the night a bit cold.

We thank God for a wonderful, productive time here in southern Mexico.

More tomorrow!

Day 4

Boy, was it cold last night! Many of us had a hard time sleeping and at one point I was shivering so much I was convinced that the antibiotics the doctor gave me were not working.

We woke up early, had a quick breakfast of cereal and juice, and packed up the vans for the trip to Santa Maria Tepexipana. We were on the road before 8am and we arrived at around 4:30pm. We stopped just about every hour, enjoyed quesadillas and cafe de olla at the place where we also bought some brightly colored alebrije, animals made from limbs of the trees in the mountains. It was chilly when we were at 12,000 feet above sea level, but the temperature and humidity rose quickly as we reached our destination.

After unpacking, we walked through the village and visited the home of Juan Carlos' grandmother. Juan Carlos grew up at Casa Hogar and now is director of Simply Smiles' Oaxacan operations. After dinner everyone settled down to playing cards, talking and playing with some of the children from the village, and singing along with excellent guitar playing by Peter Allen, our Simply Smiles leader.

As dusk sets in, the sky is being lighted with bolts of lightning. We are sleeping in tents and plywood platforms, just as we did in Oaxaca City. The big difference is that we have no

Mexico Mission Trip Daily Journal Continued

power or running water here. But there are big improvements over last year...the toilets have doors (instead of curtains) and the toilets are now bucket flush instead of latrines (a septic tank has been installed)!

Tomorrow we will work on a perimeter wall and fence at a local school (the villagers asked for them because teenagers from another village keep vandalizing the school) and set up for Friday's food distribution.

Messages may be sporadic from now on. At night I can get a cell tower signal from Candelaria, a village 45 minutes away by car. But the signal comes and goes, so I might not be able to send updates every day.

Bye from Santa Maria Tepexipana!

Day 5

Exhausted. Educated. Amazed. Sad.

There are just so many feelings on our sixth day of the mission trip.

We moved food for the distribution tomorrow into a large tent. But it was no easy task. Last year the truck made it up the hill with the supplies and we only had to move it into the tent. But we learned that on the way back to Oaxaca City after our food distribution last year the engine and transmission went. So we carried about ten tons of food up a rocky hill. We did it in four different stages, and unfortunately, because of the way the truck and trailer were loaded, the lighter items of oil, salt, and soap came out first. Then beans and rice. The final move was 110 pound bags of sugar. We were exhausted, to say the least. A new activity included a walk/hike up the side of the mountain to see coffee plants, banana trees, and everything from lime trees to a vanilla plant. People here are incredibly resourceful and grow every possible kind of food they can to survive. We then went to Don Cato's house where the seventy plus year old man showed us how coffee is harvested, shelled, and then roasted and ground. He and his family then served us coffee.

I was educated to the fact that the middleman makes all the money in the coffee trade. The farmers here earn about \$160.00 per 100 pound bag of coffee beans. The average farmer harvests 10 bags of coffee a year in December and January. That's \$1800 for 6 months of work. And the reason they sell it so cheap is that they desperately need the money and the buyers know it. Only a small fraction of the price of coffee is paid to the farmer.

Before dinner, the two sons of Javier, a guy who showed me three bullets still lodged in him because he objected to the charge for a birth certificate for his child, befriended me and wanted to see what I had in my tent. I showed them my old, personal cell phone and let them play with it as I laid on my mat. They giggled each time I fell asleep. Both told me that their goal was to someday own a cell phone as no one in their family owned one.

They asked if the phone had music or games, and I honestly thought it did not and told them so. Within a minute they had the phone playing a song and in another minute later they were playing games on it. I was amazed that two young children could manipulate a cell phone Better than I can without ever having one. So there is hope that even though they lack the most basic of modern technology that they have the smarts to learn it so quickly.

It is movie night and children from the village are at our campsite watching a DVD projected on a blue tarp. Simply Smiles provides all the popcorn the kids want. A young boy, about 7 years old, kept emptying his cup of popcorn into a small plastic bag and when others finished their cup, would ask for a refill along with the others. I leaned over and gently asked if he was bringing his popcorn home to his family. He sheepishly said "yes". I told him it was ok for him to eat a little himself and that we would give him more. Only then would he eat some popcorn. It broke my heart that a 7 year old felt he had to not eat any popcorn so that others in his family could have something to eat.

That alone is reason enough for us to use a week out of our busy lives to be exhausted and sore.

Day 6

A dog slept outside our tent last night on my side and both snored and whined during his nightmares.

It poured today and I think there will be mud in the soles of my sneakers for the next year.

When it didn't rain, the sun was so strong that I burned (and rarely do I ever get sunburn). The mosquitos think I am the local Red Cross blood drive for Oaxacan wildlife.

We distributed food to 2,842 people today. That made all of the above irrelevant.

Thanks to all for your support to make this possible. Thanks to the youth and adults who gave 1000 percent of the energy. Thanks to God for allowing us to part of God's ministry to those in need.

Sorry this is so short. We are all totally exhausted!

Day 7

We left the jungle at 5:30 am today, and two and a half hours later we were in Huatulco. It is a newly developed beach resort...a huge change from the living conditions of a few hours before. We had rooms at the Isla Hotel, and everyone enjoyed their first normal shower in a week. Some headed to the beach while others swam in the pool. The teens discovered the computers with Internet access and got onto Facebook for the first time in a week.

At 1:30pm we headed to the airport. Due to the tropical heat and humidity, I got a Diet Coke, my first since leaving Oaxaca City. There was soda available at refreshment shacks in the remote villages, but never Diet Coke. It finally dawned on me yesterday that anyone in the jungle who had seven pesos for a soda was not going to get anything without calories...every source of nutrition, even what we consider junk food, is light years ahead of starving.

The plane ride to Mexico City was uneventful. We rented a 15 passenger van to get to the hotel and then it was time to rest and decompress. Dinner consisted of salad from Wal-Mart (where else?) and Pizza Hut pizza.

Cannot keep my eyes open! Final report tomorrow!

Day 8

Just a few, final reflections as we sit on our plane in Mexico City heading to JFK...

- Getting up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, I fumbled for the headlamp needed find my way to the bathroom. Did not realize we were not in the jungle.

- If one of us throws toilet paper in the trash barrel, please understand that we have been conditioned to not put it in the toilet!

- Our bug bites are just beginning to itch. We were too busy to notice all week long even though we have had the bites since day one.

Thanks again to all for your help in making this trip possible! Special thanks to our "younger folks" for shouldering the bulk of the physical labor. It's been a great week and we all feel blessed for having the opportunity to experience it and to do God's work.

Door on the plane is about to close, so I have to sign off!

***** Rally Day *****

September 11th

Registration for Sunday School

Service of Dedication of Teachers

Sunday School classes for the coming year will be grouped as follows:

Grades 7-12 (teachers Dan & Ashley Jones)

Grades 4-6 (teachers Barbara Mazzei & Kathy Riiska-Lovejoy);

Grades K-3 (teachers Cathy Shugginis, Leeann Marvin, Deb Storrs);

Nursery-Pre-K (teachers Debby Kane & Julie Davy).

*We could use some help in lower grades, those interested should see
Barbara Mazzei, Sunday School Superintendent.*

Picnic after worship service!

Little League Field, Rowley Park - on Willow Street

Hot dogs, chips, drinks, and ice cream will be served.

Followed by kick-ball game!



Sunday School Report / Events:

- There will be a teachers meeting on Tuesday, Sept 6 at 6:30 pm to go over scheduling and curriculum for the Fall.
- Whole People of God curriculum has been ordered for the coming year.
- Kindles are available for use by all classrooms. They will have Bible information downloaded prior to start of classes.
- Weekly offering routine for young people will be reinstated to aid in the understanding of the importance of stewardship. The weekly offering will now be taken before the young people leave for Sunday School classes.
- **The classrooms have been organized!** Thank you very much to **Debby Kane** and her helpers **Dawn and Tim Hughes!** You won't believe the supply closet is now a supply room!



♫ Cherub Choir – Youth Choir

Cherub Choir will begin rehearsal the Tuesday, September 20th from 6-6:30 PM. We look forward to a harmonious year singing God's praises!

There has been some interest in a Youth Choir, but the problem has been finding a rehearsal time. As a result, we will see if Sunday, either before or after worship service might work.

If you are interested in either choir, please call Debbie Storrs 860-482-3491.

9/11 REMEMBERED!

This is a little-known story from the Pentagon on 09/11/2001:

During a visit with a fellow chaplain, who happened to be assigned to the Pentagon, I had a chance to hear a first-hand account of an incident that happened right after Flight 77 hit the Pentagon.. The chaplain told me what happened at a daycare center near where the impact occurred.

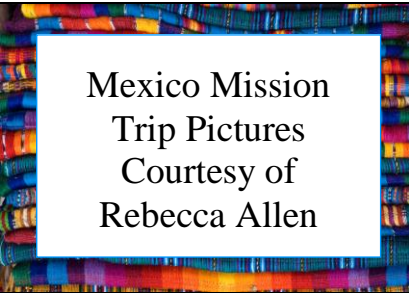
This daycare had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do. There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants that would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers.

Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, 'Well, here we area" on our own.' About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac and the Pentagon.

Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The chaplain then said, "I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there. There wasn't a dry eye in the room. The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon." Remember Ronald Reagan's great compliment: "Most of us wonder if our lives made any difference. Marines don't have that problem."

Please pray for our men and women who have served and are currently serving our country, military or first responders, and pray for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.



Mexico Mission Trip Pictures Courtesy of Rebecca Allen



Welcome!

Rebecca

Wendy

Julie

Courtney

Sarah

Julia

Laura

Charles

Work Groups:



Los Cigalesos	Los Peritos	Los Armatillos
Julie	Mike	Julie
Rebecca	Julie	Julie
Courtney	Julie	Julie
Olivia	Julie	Julie
Rebecca	Julie	Julie

Meeting:

Day	Topic	Lunch	Other
Sat
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thurs
Fri
Sat



Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars!

<i>Celebrate With Us...</i>		<i>Looking Forward</i>	
Sunday - 10 am	Worship	Sept 3-5	Goshen Fair
Monday - 6 pm	Rehearsal~Worship Choir	Sept 5	Labor Day
Tuesday - 6 pm Sept 20th	Rehearsal~Cherub Choir	Sept 10	Steam Vent Coffee House
Wednesday - 7:30 pm	AA / Alanon Meetings	Sept 11	Rally Day
Thursday - 6:00 pm	Rehearsal~Laurel City Singers	Sept 20	Cherub Choir rehearsals begin
		October TBA	Church Tag Sale
		October 7-9	Riverton Fair
		October 8	Steam Vent Coffee House
	<i>Board Meetings...</i>		
	September 06	7:00 pm	
	September 06	7:00 pm	
	September 20	7:00 pm	
	September 27	7:00 pm	
		PM Board	
		Board of Christian Ed.	
		Deacons	
		Cabinet Meeting	

Birthdays

September BIRTHDAYS

10 - Beth McCusker
 11 - Kelly McAllister
 20 - Liam McAllister
 20 - Danny McAllister
 20 - John Eggering
 21 - Ann Jones
 23 - Melissa McCusker
 26 - Pastor Michael Wu
 27 - Chelsea Jarboe
 27 - Wade Roberts
 27 - Chelsea Jarboe
 29 - Mel Lee
 30 - Pam Allen
 30 - Shirley Calkin

September Anniversaries

♥ 08 - Bob & Carol Miles
 ♥ 20 - Ed & Kathy Weaving
 ♥ 26 - Brett & Susan McAllister



STEAM VENT Performers SEPT 10th

Performers

6:00 – Open Mic – 5:30 sign-up
6:30 – Patti Wilion
7:00 – Bill Benson
7:30 – Gale Gardiner
8:00 – Don Lowe
8:30 – No Strings Attached-John Malm & Bill Clark
9:00 – Beal Cayman
9:30 – Open Mic/Jam

Free Will Offering to Benefit Missions

STEAM VENT CAFÉ LASAGNE NIGHT!

MENU:

Meat or Cheese Lasagne
w/ garlic bread \$6
Add Salad for \$1
Bowl of Salad alone \$2
Deserts \$1 - \$2
Beverages \$1.00



*You created every part of me,
 knitting me in my Mother's womb.
 For such handiwork, I praise you.
 Awesome this great wonder!
 Psalm 136:13-14*

"Prayer Shawl Ministry" to begin this fall. The group will come together to knit or crochet shawls to be available to the congregation to be given to those in need of prayer. Barbara received a prayer shawl during her recovery from surgery this summer and thought this might be a good way to bring people together in prayer. Volunteers can knit in groups or individually at home.

Those interested please call Barbara
 Mazzei
 860-379-2900

**REMINDER:
 CHURCH
 TAG SALE
 IN
 OCTOBER**



CDC had a Facelift... thanks to a donation and the hard work of Dawn & Tim Hughes, Debby Kane, Julie Davy and Pastor Wu. Painting...we are newly painted and landscaped!

Openings are available in the **Tuesday-Thursday program** which meets from 9:00-1:00. This program is geared for a first introduction to school or for children who would like to augment other programs with additional Discovery opportunities.

Photo: John Eggering



September 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Artist: Karen Delton	April Birthstone: Sapphire 	April Flower: Aster 	Astrological Signs Virgo: Aug 23 – Sept 22 Libra: Sept 23 – Oct 22	1	2	3
4 Worship Service 10:00 am Worship Choir 9:30 Worship Choir 11:15 Rehearsal	5 Worship Choir No Rehearsal Labor Day	6 Chris Ed 7:00 Property Maintenance Board 7:00	7 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	8 Laurel City Singers 6:00	9	10  STEAM VENT Coffee House 6-10 PM Lasagne Night!
11 Worship Service 10:00 am Worship Choir 9:30 Rally Day Patriot Day	12 Worship Choir 6:00 pm	13	14 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	15 Laurel City Singers 6:00	16	17
18 Worship Service 10:00 am Worship Choir 9:30 am Worship Choir 11:15 Rehearsal	19 Worship Choir No Rehearsal	20 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm Deacons 7:00 pm	21 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	22 Laurel City Singers 6:00	23	24
25 Worship Service 10:00 am Open Mic Sunday	26 Worship Choir 6:00 pm	27 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm Cabinet Meeting 7:00 pm	28 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	29 Laurel City Singers 6:00 Rosh Hashanah	30	Oct 1
May 1 Worship Service 10:00 am Worship Choir 9:30 am	May 2 Worship Choir 6:00 pm	May 3 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm	May 4 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	May 5 Laurel City Singers 6:00	May 6	May 7

STEAM VENT



Coffee House

Musician's Showcase
Every 2nd Saturday
6 - 10 PM
Open Mic/Jam at 9



LIVE MUSIC - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!
Folk - Country - Bluegrass - Jazz - Light Rock
For more information call 860-482-3491

Steam Vent Café - Open 6-8 pm

First Church of Winsted 95 North Main Street

SEPT 10th PERFORMERS:

- 6:00 – Open Mic – 5:30 sign-up
 - 6:30 – Patti Wilton
 - 7:00 – Bill Benson
 - 7:30 – Gale Gardiner
 - 8:00 – Don Lowe
 - 8:30 – No Strings Attached-John Malm & Bill Clark
 - 9:00 – Beal Cayman
 - 9:30 – Open Mic/Jam
- Free Will Offering to Benefit Missions

STEAM VENT CAFÉ

SERVING
LASAGNE!

BELLRINGER

