

2008 WV Mission Trip

Kim Albert, Kenny Davis, Teresa Davis, Matthew and Russell Lee, Carl and Jacquelyn McAbee, and John Mele arrived in Gassaway, WV, around midnight last Tuesday, September 16, to begin our mission trip. The trip really began the previous Sunday when the congregation was invited to a luncheon of \$64 hot dogs. Due to the generosity of our First Folks, we raised approximately \$2,000, which we figured was an average of about \$20 per hot dog – you guys really got a bargain – a \$64 hot dog for \$20!

We had joked about Gassaway being almost exactly at the center of the state – turns out it is, and we saw the sign to prove it! Circumstances beyond our control caused us to be housed in a lovely old farmhouse in a beautiful setting instead of the planned metal building with cement floors, and our hosts, Nancy and Bob, were delightful. Nancy shared her country ham for breakfast one morning, and on Saturday night Bob let us all take rides on his Mule (the four-wheeled kind, not the four-footed kind, much to Russell's dismay).

As far as the work went, there were blessings around every corner. We had planned on repairing the front porch floor and supports, and installing a new front door and 4 windows. When we got there we found out the focus was actually on weatherizing the house, and in order to do that we had to undertake a much larger scale project. We were very fortunate to have a couple of the church members working along side with us, and Barbara, the pastor of Davis Memorial Presbyterian Church with whom we partnered, was on site every day. Every time we decided we needed more materials for another phase they were able to acquire them easily, and it was so satisfying to see their vision mesh with ours when the project began to outgrow its original scope.

The team worked from 7:00am to 6:00pm Wednesday through Friday, and from 7:00am to 12:00 noon on Saturday. During that time we installed a new electrical service and some new outlets and lights, repaired the porch floor and supports, enclosed the front porch including installing 4 windows and two custom-made doors, put on a new front door and screen door, replaced 4 windows in the house, insulated and installed siding on the back wall, repaired siding all around the outside, and painted the entire outside of the house. We had exhausted the materials budget from Davis Memorial after the first day, but because of the generosity of our First Folks we had the funds to keep working. They told us that they had never before taken on a project of this magnitude – with God's help we expanded everyone's vision, even our own.

The young couple who live in this house, Rachel and Josh, were so overwhelmed they were unable to express their gratitude. We were told that Rachel had been given the house by her grandmother on the condition that she could take care of it. Our dream is that we have given her and Josh a step up to being able to care for the property where they are trying to make their home. We hope that our energy and enthusiasm will be an example to them as they try to rise above the difficulties of a life of poverty. And we pray that our Christian love and faith will be evident and will in some way lead them to a fuller life in Christ as children of His kingdom.

Thank you to everyone who supported this mission through money, other contributions, prayer, holding down the home front while your loved one was away, and even just positive thoughts. It took all of us, all of you, all of the folks from Davis Memorial, and God to make this happen!