

Southwest Good Samaritan Newsletter: June, 2017

Greetings, Friends, from the Rio Grande Valley. We remain in the glow of Resurrection Day, and now celebrate the birth of the church through the Pentecost story as written in the Book of Acts. For Jesus to promise the Spirit to abide in us as helper and advocate was to give us the bridge that carries us even to this day. The Spirit of Truth lifts us up when we are discouraged, and constantly reminds us of the love and promise of God through our Christ. Our gift to God is to arise each morning with prayers of gratitude for the opportunity to do God's will. We pray that God opens minds and hearts to think of creative and compassionate ways to work toward a healthy and productive life for all of God's children.

It is always important to remind you, our friends old and new, that we work in concert with U.S. Customs and Immigration to help facilitate the journey for political refugees from many countries arriving at the U.S./Mexico border. That journey involves not only travel, but often months of "processing" to gain asylum status. We help those we can with shelter, food, clothing, medical care, legal advocacy and transportation. In all my years of this ministry, I have not witnessed the border rejection of asylum seekers I am witnessing now. As a result, persons who have traveled in some cases thousands of miles and months of time are stranded in makeshift camps on the Mexico side of the U.S. border. Those persons not only suffer for want of housing, nourishment and health care, but they are victims of theft and violence by local thugs. Churches on both sides of the border are doing what they can to provide basic services, and a Cuban pastor and his wife are ferrying goods from us and others to the squalid camps. We celebrate that Week of Compassion has come to the rescue, recently providing \$15,000 for this specific emergency. Week of Compassion also offered a regular installment of support that they have been providing for our programing over many years.

I will be traveling to Indianapolis July 7-12 for the General Assembly of our Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and will be sharing space in the Exhibition Hall with other units of our Division of Homeland Ministries. That puts me closer to many of you than I am deep in the south of Texas. So I pray that you will join me at what I regard as a REUNION celebration, and that we can share time together. It is always a blessing to be in conversation with those who love and support this ministry, and to make new friends.

In the heat of summer, we will participate in some food ministries designed to help those who normally get meals at school. Hunger does not take a vacation when school is not in session. No matter what the season, we embrace the needs that arise, stretching every dollar for the greatest good. I cannot adequately express my gratitude for your prayers and your gifts. Each Dear Reader of this missive is an angel to us. May God bless you in ways that bring you joy, including the joy that comes from supporting God's work in this world.



Thank you, Dear Friends.

Your partner in Christ, Feliberto

There is more to celebrate. Jan Flavin's team from Azle...

In over three decades of ministry here, we seek to help not only refugees but the poorest-of-the-poor here in the Rio Grande Valley. Jan's group came with a single-mindedness: "Here I am Lord. Send me." We would love to welcome you to the Valley.

Jan said:

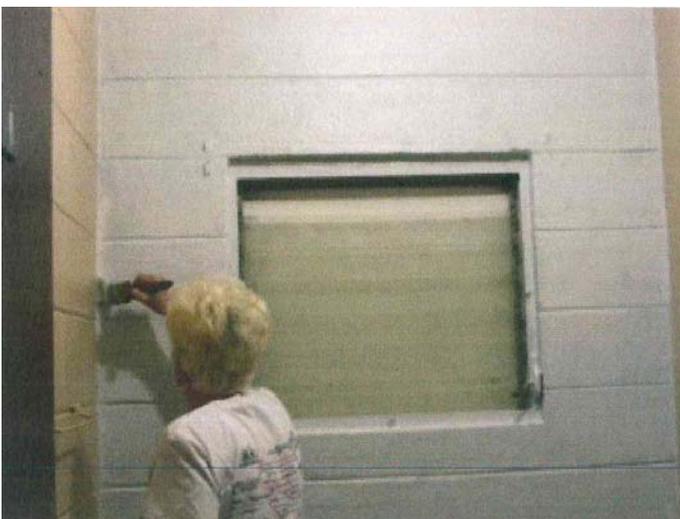
A friend of mine recently said that SWGSM had opened her eyes to needs that she had never before witnessed. And that is so true! Azle Christian Church has an Outreach group that came in 2003 and has come back every year since. This year, 2017, we had 21 in our group and we worked on 4 different projects plus a food crew of 5!

We work 4 days of the week we are here, the 5th day being a "free day" where you can shop, go to the beach, go fishing -- whatever you want to do. Then we gather for a Friday night BBQ and reflect on the week's activities. It is more rewarding than you can ever imagine!

One group added a utility room to a woman's small house, worked on the roof and extended it to cover the added paved patio for her table & chairs. Another group worked at the church in Los Fresnos painting women's bathrooms. A third group sorted and put in groups by gender the donated clothes in the warehouse so that it will be easier for those who come for clothing to find what they need. And a 4th group repaired roofs on 2 buildings at Bayview.

There can never be too many work groups as the need in the lower Rio Grande Valley is needy. The people are so appreciative of whatever you are able to do for them. I encourage your church to go to the website, SWGSM.org and prayerfully consider a mission work trip! Call them and ask your questions; feel free to contact Azle Christian Church, 817-444-3527 if you want specific information about our work trips or want to join us!! Once you meet the staff you'll want to help, too!

This ministry welcomes volunteer work groups of all ages, won't you seriously consider providing a workforce to enable God's work to continue in the Valley?



A Note from Kay Van Dorn

SWGSM has opened my eyes to needs that I had never before witnessed. In the 90's I first came with several others on a fact-finding mission about the ministries. I immediately felt God's call to respond to the hopeful, pleading eyes of refugees seeking political asylum, to the poor and attention-starved children at Casa Betel, to the helpless widows living without adequate shelter north of the river to the hungry and oppressed on other on both sides of the border.

SWGSM has also opened my eyes to see the face of Christ in the grateful smiles and hopeful attitudes of "the poorest of the poor". Thanks be to God for SWGSM.

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Azle Mission work group picture showing new utility room.
April 2017 Eva Ramos small house.



Added a utility room at to a Church ladies small house by Azle Mission work group 2017.

A Note from Polly Goodier:

You've probably all heard the story about the beachcomber who walked along the beach throwing starfish back into the ocean after they had been washed in by the tide. Even though the beachcomber couldn't help all the starfish they made a difference the every starfish they touched. SWGSM is similar to the beachcomber, with the changes in government policies there are not as many refugees coming into the country and those who do often spend time in detention centers. However, when a refugee comes to SWGSM they receive the help they need for a new life. This Easter the members of the church in Los Fresnos celebrated the baptism of a recent refugee who accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. This refugee sot personal safety I the United States and found not only that but eternal safety because of the ministry of SWGSM.



Organized the clothes at the warehouse Azle Mission work group 2017.



Replacing rotten wood Joel's office by Azle Mission work group 2017.