

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley



From Pastor Jeff.....

“Homebound”

It had been a long, hard week. I was physically, emotionally, and spiritual exhausted. I felt on the verge of tears (and I do not cry often). But as the music swelled, something began to change.

I was in Mizan Teferi, Ethiopia as part of Washington Presbytery’s quarter-century long mission partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). Over the last week I had travelled from Pittsburgh to Toronto, Toronto to Frankfurt, and then Frankfurt to Addis Ababa – the capital of Ethiopia. After landing in Addis on a Sunday morning at 7 a.m. I took a 12-hour car ride to southwest Ethiopia traveling over roads that were often stone or pock-marked considerably. We regularly had to come to a hard stop as animals grazed across the lanes of traffic. After arriving in Mizan, I was posted up in reasonably comfortable housing – though without running water and only the bare minimum of sanitation facilities. After just a couple of days, a certain grime seemed to cover my body that no amount of bird-bath style cleaning seemed to remove. My days that week were filled with lots of travel and meetings with our Ethiopian partners. The strain of cross-cultural exchange took its toll on me. The strain of missing Brianne took its toll on me. The strain of preaching – with a translator – took its toll on me (though, I’ll admit, was also thrilling and wonderful). So this is where I was as I stood and felt my knees (and soul!) tremble. This is where I was when the music began to swell.

The music was at the beginning of worship at a church we were visiting for Christmas (all the churches in Ethiopia use the Orthodox calendar which has Christmas two weeks after we Protestants celebrate it). As the music began – not even a tune I knew – and the people began to sing, I felt a peace wash over and through me. I realized in that moment that no matter how far from family and loved one, no matter how far from my normal routines, no matter how far from home, when the people of God gather for worship, we are truly home. Our home is in worshipping our God.

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

I relaxed and continued to let that peace wash through me as I swayed with the congregation to the music. And God – just to prove to me that He does, indeed, have a sense of humor – used this moment to tap me on the shoulder. Or, well, that’s what it felt like anyway. I felt a tap on my shoulder and I looked over and saw something on it. It wasn’t the polite tapping of a fellow congregant and it wasn’t a bug (as I initially thought it might be). No, it was bird poop. A bird had flown overhead (the church had a roof, but there were plenty of places for birds to get in) and pooped on my shoulder... just as I was feeling at peace for the first time in days. Well played, God, well played. Even still, the point remains that our home is in worship.

I share this story because I’ve returned to it in my mind a lot lately. Brianne and I have, of course, moved to a new area. Though Ohio is my home and I’m thrilled to return to it, this is still a new place full of new people for us. On one level, it is all very exciting and interesting. On another level, it is hard, taxing, draining in every way. Yet I remember that I have a God – that *we* have a God – who shows up in worship and who makes sure we always feel at home with Him.

Until such time as Marysville grows to be our home (as I have every confidence it will), I will continue to find my home in worship and in Christian fellowship. More importantly, though, I encourage you all to remember that worship is home for us all. It’s how we were created. As more and more people stream into our Marysville community, we should stay sensitive to how many may be looking for home. Let us all be committed to inviting these folks into the only “home” that can travel anywhere (even Ethiopia!) – a relationship with our Lord and Friend, Jesus.

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

SESSION

Since our last Pulpit and Pew, the Session has had three meetings and two congregational meetings. Below are highlights from these meetings.

- After receiving the report of the Pastor Nominating Committee, approval was given to call for a congregational meeting to be held on April 30, 2017 to nominate a minister to the congregation for election as pastor.
- Approval was given on April 28, 2017 for an open reception for the meet/greet for the pastor candidate.
- A special Congregational Meeting was called for April 30, 2017 for the purpose of extending a call to the Rev. Jeffrey A. Schooley. During the meeting the congregation voted eighty-seven (87) yes, zero (0) no to extend a call to Rev. Jeffery A. Schooley with a start date of July 1, 2017 and his first Sunday in the pulpit will be July 9, 2017.
- The Pastor Nominating Committee consisting of Mark Crosthwaite, Josh Dillahunt, Kathi Donnett, Jeff Groat, Grant Kearns, Donna Maley, and Allen McDonald were thanked by the congregation for their work and their support in the next year in assisting Pastor Schooley.
- The Confirmation Date of June 4, 2017 will be moved to June 11, 2017 due to conflicts.
- During the membership review, Richard and Linda Smith were placed on the inactive list per their request.
- Approval was given for church scholarships to graduating seniors Noah Danals, Whitney Ey, and Holly Rodenhausen and a Child of the Church scholarship for Dylan Koski with the money coming from the Helser Fund.
- Approval was given for THRIVE to participate in an overnight campout and canoe trip on the Hocking or Mad rivers at a date to be determined.
- Whitney Ey was approved as an assistant THRIVE leader, beginning on May 21, 2017.
- Permission was given for online registration for Vacation Bible School at www.planetreg.com/fpcmvbs and the approval of Rachel Hedges, Candy Brown, Whitney Ey, Justin Hedges, Tracy Koski, Traci Rutledge, Donna Maley, Debby Galloway, and Haley Van Duzen as teachers for Vacation Bible School.
- The financial report of March 2017 was approved and will be submitted for audit.
- Permission was given to purchase shirts for use by the Congregational Outreach Team for use during their functions.
- The revised By-Laws were approved by session and will be presented to the congregation for approval on May 7, 2017.
- The death of JoAnn Kyre on March 17, 2017 was sadly noted.
- Amanda Crosthwaite was approved for membership by letter of transfer

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

- Amanda Crosthwaite's membership from Rush Creek United Methodist Church to our church was received.
- At the Congregational Meeting on May 7, 2017, the following slate of officers was approved.
 - Deacons Class of 2020
 - A.J. Conti
 - Kathi Donnett
 - Ron Edwards
 - Donna Maley
 - Elders Class of 2020
 - Mary Bishop
 - Justin Hedges
 - Donna Patterson
 - Traci Rutledge
 - Elder Class of 2018
 - Janet Harbold - to finish this year for Scott Schnapp during his leave of absence
 - Nominating at Large Class of 2018
 - Amanda Crosthwaite
 - Whitney Ey
 - Mary McDonald
 - Judy VanDuzen
 - Audit Committee Class of 2020
 - Kim Godfrey
- Transfer of Membership for Amanda Crosthwaite was approved on May 7, 2017 from the Rush Creek United Methodist Church.

Debby Galloway
Clerk of Session

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Summer typically is a relaxing time in our church, when worship services continue but traditional Sunday School takes a break. But this summer is filled with excitement, as we look forward to exploring God's Word and God's world with our new pastor, the Rev. Jeff Schooley. Also stirring enthusiasm is our THRIVE youth group, who have continued to meet regularly in these warm months and recently took a canoe trip. To keep up to date with what is going on with these young folks, check out the THRIVE Youth Group Facebook page. You can find links to the page on our church's Facebook Page, which also is a great place to read inspiring passages, see photos and videos and even get a sneak peek at the upcoming Sunday sermons.

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

Summer Sunday School for adults continues at 9:15 a.m. through Sept. 3, focusing on “Calls from God,” from the summer quarterly *The Present Word*, and featuring Scriptures from Judges, Prophets and Acts. For further details, see Dick Mickley. Volunteers are taking turns teaching the class.

Vacation Bible School is starting up. Participants meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, July 17-21. For the first time, an adult program will be offered, under the capable leadership of Deb Groat. Because the cooks need some idea of how many mouths they will be filling during dinnertime, registration deadline was July 3. Still, the teachers are happy to welcome late registrants. If you haven’t registered and want to attend, please let Haley VanDuzen know. You can message her at christianeducation@firstchurchmarysville.com.

Have a blessed rest of summer!

Mary Ann Edwards
Education Team Chairman

HOPE CENTER HAPPENINGS

In this issue (and upcoming issues) of the Pulpit and Pew, I will share the philosophy adopted by staff and volunteers at The Hope Center.

Principles of Helping the Poor

Is the need crisis or chronic? - Triage may be the appropriate intervention in an emergency situation but it is hardly the strategy for continuing need. The victims of a devastating tsunami need immediate medical, shelter, essential supplies and hordes of volunteers. Over time, however, survivors need expert consultation, a practical plan and combination of grants and loans to help them rebuild their destroyed community. A similar distinction should be applied to those who utilize our food pantries and clothes closets as well as to those we serve on our mission trips. If their situation is a matter of life or death, then immediate action must be taken to “stop the bleeding”; otherwise a plan for helping them rebuilding their lives is more appropriate. Just as a physician, before prescribing treatment, performs a diagnostic “physical” to determine the severity of an ailment, so must helpers take the time to discriminate between imminent life-threatening situations and chronic poverty needs. (Note: what may seem at first like a crisis to helpers may in fact be a chronic reality for the poor).

Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life – Rethinking Ministry to the Poor

By Robert Lupton

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

FURNITURE BANK

The Furniture Bank continues to need volunteers. Thursday from noon – 3ish volunteers are needed to put away accumulated donations. Saturdays from 10 AM – Noon volunteers are needed to help clients pick out items from their applications. If you are able and willing to help, please call Teresa at 644-3216.

CCC

COME ONE! COME ALL!
NEW PICTURES! NEW DIRECTORY!

We have started a “New Page” in the life of our Church. Our new minister, Pastor Jeff Schooley and his wife, Brianne, have arrived. His first day in the office was Monday, July 3.

In trying to make it easier to get to know all of us, Life Touch will be here taking OUR PICTURES, **Sunday, July 23, 12:30 – 7:00 PM, and Monday July 24, 2:00 – 9:00 PM.** They have just added another day, which will be **Tuesday, July 25.** The times will be as Monday, **2:00 - 9:00 PM.** To make an appointment, please call the Church Secretary **Stacy Wolfe**, and she will help you get scheduled. The Church phone number is **937-642-5651.**

If you have a problem with transportation to the Church for your appointment, again call the Church Office and we will have someone come, pick you up and take you home. We feel it is very important as we begin this “New Page” in our Church for up to date pictures be available to Pastor Jeff so he can begin to put names and faces together. We also would like to see your faces again. It is an exciting time at 210 West Fifth Street. Please, Come and Join US.

Please join us for Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and Worship. The Pulpit and Pew will be mailed out to all on July 13. If you do not get one, remember this is by “snail-mail”, so, please call the Church Office to see why. If you have an e-mail address, **be sure** we have it, as E-NEWS travels faster!

From CCC.....Jean Kearns

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

MISSION TRIP

Another successful mission trip is in the books! What a great week for Emily Jewell, Holly Rodenhausen, Adam VanDuzen, and me! We would like to thank you for your support. Many of you helped us “eat our way” to Point Pleasant by attending fundraisers at Bob Evans, Culvers, Boston’s, and Fiesta Grande! Many of you supported us with your thoughts and prayers.

Each year, we are challenged to “share” our stories with our congregations...help you to feel as if you traveled with us. Emily, Holly, Adam, and I have done our best to put this life changing week into words. We hope you enjoy our stories and are proud of our efforts!

Judy VanDuzen

Emily Jewell

On behalf of those in which we helped during the week, my fellow travelers and myself, I wanted to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for not only your financial support, but the prayers and encouragements.

Over the course of the week, our work group spent time on 3 different sites within the trailer park and got to know many of the neighbors. We started the week working with Dave and Sharon, an elderly couple that needed a handicap ramp built off their back deck. Dave had recently suffered a fall and had injured his back, ribs and an ankle. Dave returned home from the hospital not long before we started work for the week. They were very gracious hosts and expressed their deep gratitude. We saw Sharon a little more often than Dave, but we were able to visit with him when he took his daily walks outside and of course when we took breaks.

The second family we helped was younger. We built a front deck and a set of emergency stairs for Darlene and her family. She is a single mother who helps to take care of her children, her young grandchildren, her mother and those in the neighborhood. Her boyfriend has spent his career serving in the Army National Guard and is being deployed soon for an entire year. As the caretaker to many and recently recovering from a car accident, she was overwhelmed with gratitude for all the love and support she was receiving and shared with us how much she had prayed for help. She often came to tears just talking about it. This is also her first time as a homeowner. For many of us, we can recall how empowering that made us feel, but also scared. Darlene and her kids showed their appreciation by thanking us constantly and providing us a scrumptious breakfast on our third work day. Sausage, bacon, and biscuits (the size of softballs!). It certainly slowed us down when we went back to work soon thereafter. We also got to know her two youngest children, Jessica and Justin. Jessica is going to be a senior in high school and plans to attend WVU upon graduation next year. Jessica and I discovered that we have a lot in common through our participation in 4-H, FFA, taking animals to the fair

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

and prior to this recent move, living on a farm. Jessica also mentioned her FFA Chapter attends the Farm Science Review in London, OH, every year and she promised to let me know which day her chapter will attend so we can catch up.

Another young girl we got to know well over the week was 8-year-old Erabella. She wasn't a part of one of the families we helped, but our first work day she came by one of the sites with a shovel in hand, no shoes on her feet, but ready to help. Warmed our hearts right off the bat, to say the least. The rest of the week she came to interact, watch, eat lunch and help in any way she could, but mostly to make friends. From what we had observed during that time and what neighbors told us, her mother had left and her father was occupied with an addiction and slept most of the day. Her neighbors looked after her. She often went from door to door asking for food. We learned the work group that came the week prior had fed her as well. A group of us bought food to take to her on our day off so she wouldn't be without. Despite the fact that we were leaving and unsure of what would happen, Jessica reassured me that she has taken Erabella under her wing to help guide her in a better direction and is doing her best to be a role model. And believe me, from the little I saw during the week, Jessica is wise beyond her years. She wants Erabella to strive to have a better life than her parents have given her. We're always told that it takes a village to raise a child, and in this case we were seeing it firsthand. Erabella provided us with her address so we could stay in touch with her. Since we left Point Pleasant, Jessica and Justin have added a couple of us on Facebook where we can receive updates on them, Erabella, and the community that surrounds them.

Off the worksites, in the evenings we enjoyed catching up with the other half of the group at dinner. Evening games were planned by Judy and then vespers were led by Jane Mosier. During our free time in the evenings we played several rounds of euchre, called our families, read or just visited with one another.

Even though there were 23 of us in total, I was able to get to know each person a little better throughout the week. Each person has their own story, different skills they bring to the table, but above all, they all made it abundantly apparent why they were on the trip. They were there to make a difference and to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. When we're working towards a goal on a project no matter what it is, it's easy to lose track of the main reason for being there. The foundation. The relationships. Spreading the Word. We were there to help families build better lives for themselves and instill in them the Word of the Lord. To inspire. Not only did everyone do their part in lending a hand to those in need, but they made ME feel, as a fellow child of God, that I belonged there with them making a difference. It's been 11 years since my last mission trip in 2006 when I was still in high school. I certainly don't plan on letting another 11 years go by before my next one. In fact, it's on my calendar for next year.

And p.s. I am happy to report that we finished all the projects we started for the week. Which is ALWAYS a good feeling. God Bless and thanks again!

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

Holly Rodenhausen

This year's mission trip to Point Pleasant, West Virginia was an incredible one, as each mission trip I have participated in has been! The main focuses on my work sites were to build a ramp for an elderly couple, a new deck for a large family, tear out tree stumps from a vacant trailer lot and repainting the inside of the Presbyterian churches' manse. But what meant the most to me on this trip was the people that I met while I was there. On our first day of work, I and a couple of other team members were digging out some tree stumps when a little girl with no shoes, grabbed a shovel from her trailer, and without a word she began to help us dig. Eventually we found out that she was an eight year old named Erabella. For the rest of the week Erabella hung around our worksite, trying to help as she could and playing with our lumber scraps. She is an imaginative, colorful, kind and smart child and it amazes me that even in the face of adversity she retains these attributes. It became a priority of the group to do all that we could for this little girl. We all understood that while our work on homes was important, the most necessary task at hand was to nurture Erabella. She lacks the parental care she needs and deserves, and meeting her brought to my attention how prevalent this kind of misfortune is in America. Meeting Erabella really gave me a deeper understanding of poverty close to home. Point Pleasant is only a two hour drive from Columbus, Ohio. Erabella struggles only two hours from where I live comfortably. I am very glad that the mission team could help her while we were in West Virginia. And I pray that God may continue to be with Erabella as she grows and faces different and new challenges. Thank you to the congregation for funding this trip and making it possible for me to meet this special little girl. I know God sent us to Point Pleasant to meet Erabella, and I thank him for blessing me with this opportunity.

Adam VanDuzen

I've been watching Judy and my sisters go on mission trips for a lot of years now and while I had wondered about going before, I never had. It wasn't one reason in particular that held me back, it was a variety. I had a daughter to care for. I couldn't take the time off work. It just wasn't the right time. I'm sure that when I asked Judy for information about the Mission Trip, she was surprised.

One night at THRIVE, Holly told me that I should really come on the 2017 Mission Trip. She told me how much fun she had and that she knew I would love it. It didn't take a whole lot for me to say, "Yeah, ok. I'll go." I think Holly was surprised at the ease. When someone asks me to do something at a future date, no matter how big or small, my response is always, "Let me ask my wife." This time, I didn't ask, I committed to go and told Haley it was happening. To my surprise she just said, "Ok."

I wasn't sure what to expect and our departure day came up very quickly. I got all of my supplies together the day before we were to leave. 14 shirts, 22 pairs of socks, 15 pairs of

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

underwear, 5 pairs of pants, 1 pair of shorts, toiletries and the rest of the necessities. I spent a little time with my family, knowing that Israel especially was not thrilled with me leaving. I got up early the next morning, with excitement as well as a certain amount of trepidation. I loaded my two bags into the van and we headed to church at Plain City Presbyterian. I enjoyed the service as the pastor's prayers reminded me of the lengthy prayers of Rev. Groat from my youth. After the service, we said goodbye to our families, ate an excellent lunch provided by the Plain City Presbyterian Church and headed out.

The first night went quickly and I had landed a middle bunk since I was the slowest of all the van drivers on the way down. After performing some, I'm sure, rather entertaining acrobatics to get into the bunk, I had trouble getting to sleep due to a mixture of excitement of tomorrow and missing my family. I awoke and was extremely glad to find that I was to be on the same work crew as Holly Rodenhausen and Emily Jewell. We went to the work site after breakfast and got to work building a ramp on a deck that had been finished the week before. We had a little trouble when the crew hit an electrical conduit while digging post holes, but we navigated that challenge successfully. I was having a little trouble seeing how this was such important work but I was having fun so I figured that I should continue to pour myself into the work as much as possible. Soon, Mike, the foreman, came back to our site and indicated that he needed a team to go over to a man's house who had flagged him down and dig out a couple stumps. Rea asked me to assemble a team to go with me and I indicated I was sure I could handle such a task. I chose Emily, Holly and Matt.

When we got over to this gentleman's yard, he introduced himself as Tim Mays. We quickly realized that the job was much larger than we had bargained for. There were in the area of 20 stumps, and the roots on the first two were a good 9 inches across and ran deep. We got to work quickly, digging and prying and pulling hoping to make it go a little easier. While we worked, Tim started to tell us his story. He had a small shed here on the site which he referred to as his "tiny home." He's been living there for a little while and had spent some time in the hospital last week after being beaten by a couple men who left him to die. His house doesn't have water or electricity but it's a place to sleep that is dry and it means he's not homeless anymore. Tim goes on to tell us that he was in the Army for 21 years and that he suffers from PTSD. He also had a career in a nearby chemical plant from where he is retired. By the time he was done talking, we had mostly finished up our work. I asked him for some pictures and he told us how thankful he was that we were willing to help him. He started to tear up as he told us that people don't generally do nice things for him and that he's been in and out of trouble for a long time. He's hoping that this will be the start of his new beginning.

As we were digging for Tim, a little girl from across the way came over with her shovel and asked if she could help. We asked her name which she informed us was Erabella and took some pictures with her as well. She will come to play a bigger role than any of us realized for the rest of the week. After returning to the main worksite, we were told by

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

the homeowner there that Erabella's father is an addict and doesn't do much for her. She doesn't have a mother and that the neighborhood generally feeds her as she comes begging. We wrapped up our day and headed on back to the church with those thoughts ringing in our minds for the remainder of the evening.

Day two came quickly and we all loaded up and headed back over the worksite, about 7 miles from the church. Not too long into the day, we split up the work crew again and Craig, Emily, Holly, Matt, Becky and I headed on over to a mobile home just down the drive. There was a small rickety deck at the back sliding door and a set of fiberglass steps I wasn't sure would hold any of us. We quickly measured out 4 post marks and began digging. I dragged the deck and the steps away from the house so that we would have an easier time. We worked for a while, talking from time to time to the grateful homeowner, Darlene, who had never owned a home before this one. Darlene had some tough times over the past few years and had gotten in a car accident in which she won a settlement. She used that money to buy her daughter, who is a single mother, a house and car and then used the remainder to acquire this mobile home for herself and her two children, ages 11 and 17, who are still at home. Darlene was in tears a number of times throughout the day and every time she apologized telling us she gets emotional sometimes these days. We wondered out loud where the little girl we'd seen the day before might be as it got on towards 11 o'clock. Just before the clock struck 11, Erabella appeared, thirsty, barefoot and hungry like she was the day before. We told her we were worried about her feet with the nails and screws we could theoretically drop throughout the day. She told us she is always barefoot and that we shouldn't worry! Around noon we broke for lunch and Erabella walked with us to the first homeowner's garage we were using as a base of operations. I should probably mention that the homeowners the ramp was being built for are an elderly couple named Sharon and David. We sat down on the floor of the garage and began to eat. Erabella told us that her father wasn't out of bed yet and that she hadn't eaten breakfast. We all reached in our bags and gave her some of the meals we had packed for the day. We couldn't have her going hungry after all.

After lunch was over, we headed right back over to Darlene's house to do more work on her deck. Erabella was close behind of course. Erabella hung out with us for the rest of the day, telling us how she mostly cares for herself, loves peanut butter sandwiches and macaroni and cheese and that her daddy slept all day Monday, following up with how she didn't really expect him to get up today either. We made a lot of progress on Darlene's deck but we realized she wouldn't be getting the two sets of steps off her deck we had hoped for as we hit a water line that couldn't very well have a post set where we needed it. I proposed that we go ahead and build Darlene and her children a set of steps for their emergency exit door since the ones there were rather weak looking. It was left at the, "if we have time," stage. As we wrapped up our second work day, we explained to Erabella that we wouldn't be there on Wednesday as it's our off day. She was very sad that she wouldn't get to see us. She wondered out loud what she would do all day without us. We said our goodbyes but promised we would return Thursday morning. That evening, we

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

realized that without us, Erabella would likely have to resort back to begging for food on Wednesday to eat and we just couldn't have that. We formulated a plan, made easier since I was one of the dedicated drivers, to run to the Piggly Wiggly in the morning to purchase some food and a cooler to drop off to her before we really started our day.

Day three was full of excitement. I awoke knowing that we needed to get the store to get the supplies we'd discussed the previous day. Knowing Erabella didn't usually wake until 10:30 or 11:00 we knew we had a little time so we decided to leave after breakfast, giving us about an hour before everyone would leave for the first activity. Our group, consisting of Emily, Holly, Mara, Matt, Becky and myself jumped into my van and headed for the Piggly Wiggly. We got a bag of apples, peanut butter, bread, mac and cheese, Lunchables and a couple other times. Becky picked out a pair of flip flops that were blue and white, Erabella's favorite colors. Everything that would fit in the small cooler we purchased with the bag of ice got thrown in and we set off to Erabella's house. We got there, set her cooler on her front doorstep where we knew she'd find it and hopped back in the van, knowing she wouldn't go hungry today. We made it back to the church just in time to leave for the River Boat Museum. After the museum, we all broke off into smaller groups and departed to wander around town, look at the flood wall murals, see the famed Mothman Museum or just go grab a shake at McDonald's. I spent my day with Holly, Emily, Matt, Paige, Isa, Becky and Will.

Will is an interesting guy. He came on Monday with his parents as they had other commitments and had to come a day late. He was rather shy and kept mostly to himself and his parents. I wanted to make sure he was included in the things we younger folks did and so I made it a point to try and get to know Will and include him. I asked him to come sit with us in our evening prayer service on Monday. We started to get to know him better on Tuesday and he hung out with us all day Wednesday and didn't really leave our sides. We even taught him Euchre. We found that once Will got to know us, he had a great sense of humor and was extremely funny. I'm glad he came on our trip. I really believe he made a really positive impact on us all. Dinner Wednesday night was made by the church members of the Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church. We intermingled for a couple hours with them and I enjoyed the company of their pastor, John. He was able to give us lots of information about the area and was an entertaining storyteller.

Day four came early and everyone headed to their worksites. Matt was overcome with heat exhaustion on Monday and Tuesday so he stayed back to work inside at the manse with Doug Short. We got to the worksite and Erabella came to greet us at around 9:00 which was unusually early. She told us that her dad had gotten her a new bunny the night before and that they were going to build it a cage. She asked Holly and Susie to come to her house to see it. Becky gave Erabella her new flip flops which put a rather large smile on her face. Of course they were also her favorite color! She, Holly, and Susie took off together and were gone for a while. We continued to work on the deck and Dan, Will, and I started the steps for it. Pretty soon Erabella, Susie, and Holly all came walking back

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

and Susie informed me I was about to meet Erabella's dad. He was nice and talked about how he wanted to build Erabella a rabbit hutch for her new pet. I talked to Mike and asked him if we could spare any lumber which of course, we could. Darlene's daughter, Jessica, came out and invited us all in to eat some breakfast that she had worked on. Homemade biscuits, sausage patties as big as hamburgers and bacon were on the menu. It was excellent! We worked the rest of the day with Erabella helping wherever she could. Around 4:00, four of us were hot and essentially done while the others were ready to work the rest of the night. We split off and headed back to the church to get cleaned up for dinner. Thursday night we were granted an extension on our bed time as Holly and I had driven to purchase the Mothman Prophecies and we all wanted to watch it.

Day five came nice and early after staying up late to watch our movie. All in all, I think it was worth the sluggish feeling Friday morning. The vast majority of the group was staying behind to work on the manse since we were close to finishing at our worksites. Our Friday group consisted of myself, Rea, Dan, Susie, and Emily. Dan, Susie and Rea worked on getting the deck finished up while Emily and I started on the emergency exit steps. We dug two more holes for the posts to be set in and hung the precut stringers on the house using a ledger board. Erabella came up early again, this time around 10:00. She informed us that today, she was going to her friends to swim but she wanted to come say hi to us and give us hugs before she goes. We told her that she may not see us again after today since we will be going home tomorrow. She was sad but knew that we have to go home too. She made us promise to write and send pictures, gave us hugs and takes off on her bike. We continue working but we won't see her again. After some discussion about how to angle the banister for our emergency exit steps and then some more discussion... and some more... we finally settle on an angle and a length for the banister. It doesn't take too long to finish. Our day abruptly finished on the worksite and after a short cleanup session, we hopped into the van and headed back to the church.

Dinner today was at the Golden Corral across the Silver Memorial Bridge in Ohio. We invited Darlene and her kids, Jessica and Justin, to dinner with us which they graciously accepted. We wanted to invite Erabella and her father but were unable as he was again sleeping and she was at her friends. Dinner was great. We had a lot of conversation with Darlene and her kids. They talked about themselves and how much they appreciated our work on their home. They have an outside gathering spot now for grilling and such. They can't wait to use it. Jessica tells us that she is looking out for Erabella's interests and that she would be happy to have us mail things to her to be delivered to Erabella. Once again, similar to the abrupt end of the day's work, dinner ends.

We head back in the pouring rain to the church where we go into the sanctuary for a small church service with communion. We all reflect on the things we have learned and our concerns for the members of the community we've met and spent time with. Of course we're worried about how Erabella will turn out as she grows up. We talk about

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

how we hope that our short presence and work will hopefully carry everyone on to great success and that we hope they continue to feel the presence of God in their lives.

Mara stood up to give out her last “Footprints” pin. These have been given out by group leaders all week to both mission trip member and community members who the feel have had the spirit of Christ in them or who have made an impact on the group. I gave my three to Erabella, Becky, and Darlene. Mara said that she had observed someone who went out of their way to include others, who had been awesome with the kids and other community members where we’ve been working as well as the younger members of the mission trip. I was trying to figure out who she might be talking about. Holly, Becky and Emily were high on my list of people it could be. Then, she said my name. It never really crossed my mind that I had done anything special. I simply did the things I thought were good and right. I appreciated the wakeup call from Mara that made me aware of how the little things we all do can affect others so profoundly.

Our last morning was a whirlwind of packing bags and loading vans. We didn’t have a bed time Friday night like we did the rest of the week. Emily, Holly, Will, Becky, Matt, and I played Euchre in the dining hall. Then we went down to the Older Youth Room to hang out. Paige and Isa were already there doing whatever it is that 15 year old girls do. We made it until about midnight when I decided it was time to hit the hay. To my surprise, everyone else was ready too. This leads me to our early morning on Saturday for which I was surprisingly awake. As I mentioned before, we loaded the vans and said our good byes to Mike. We then hopped in the vans and headed back to Plain City to meet our families. We were again, the slowest van and as such arrived after everyone else. After some more bittersweet goodbyes, we all parted ways.

I don’t really know what I was expecting from this week. I don’t even know everything I gained from it. One thing is that I have an appreciation for people. Especially those who are different from us. I got to experience how grateful people who are less fortunate than us when they receive something that may not seem all that important to others. I got to make a difference, even if just for a few days, in a little girl’s life. Most importantly I was able to help spread the love of Christ to others who may not see it every day. Thank you for being the ones who enabled me to do all of these things.

Judy VanDuzen

“Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God is there working for good! Christ who indwells you has something he wants to do there, with you and those you meet on the way. Believe this and go in his grace and love and power.”

The above quote was shared with us on our recent mission trip. What a powerful and perfect message when thinking about what we accomplished! One of things I most enjoy about mission trips is for four churches (Dublin, Plain City, Hilliard, and Marysville) to

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

come together as one body serving Jesus Christ. Many of us have traveled together over the years but each year we have the privilege of meeting new travelers. Each of us is in a different place in our journey with our Lord. Each of us is on the trip for a different reason. Each of us has something different to offer to those we are helping, as well as to each other.

This year, I had the privilege to meet Roy and Ann. Roy was 87 years old recovering from a stroke. His mind was sharp and his dreams were big but his body was not cooperating. His struggle was real. He had always been a giver. Now he was a receiver and that was not easy for Roy to accept. Ann tried her best to keep Roy under control but clearly that was not working well! No matter how hard Ann tried, Roy was on the loose when she was not looking. He found a way to get down the porch steps and across the road with his cane and get us lawn chairs so we could rest and be more comfortable. He found a way to get his 4 wheeler and cart out of the barn so that we could dispose of leftovers more easily. He found a way to drive the 4 wheeler and cart up into the holler and empty out the scraps so we could keep working. He found a way to keep us “helpers” out of the holler with his stories of copperheads and tall grass! Roy was serving Jesus Christ by serving us.

Ann was also in her 80's. She was in good health but also overwhelmed with eleven strangers working on her house...doing the things that she and Roy had always done. Our task was to use an existing deck and add a handicap ramp. As we removed a few decking boards to begin the top of the ramp, we quickly discovered that there were no support joists below. At about this same moment, Roy proudly announced that he had built this deck himself about 40 years ago! Now a new challenge...how to make necessary repairs while honoring the time and effort Roy had put into this deck. In the end, all decking boards were removed, support was added, all new decking boards were put down and the ramp was built. The 4 foot wide ramp extended 18 feet down from the house to a 4x4 foot platform, took a 90 degree turn and then extended 12 more feet to the driveway. Over the course of the week, Ann served us as much as we served her. Each morning, we were treated to warm cookies and cupcakes. She had a cooler of ice with various drinks for us. In the heat of the afternoon, she shared frozen treats with us. She even put a pink tablecloth on a table where we put our water bottles! She opened her home to us for cooling, restroom, handwashing, and of course, story sharing! She had her share of heart ache over the years. She had lost a son to an explosion on the river that left him badly injured for 18 months before passing. She had lost another son to the penal system for involvement with drugs. Sharing her stories with all of us appeared to be therapeutic for Ann. Building relationships is as important as building a ramp.

Our week went by fast in Point Pleasant, West Virginia. We were able to fully complete the project, which does not usually happen. Roy announced that he planned to live to be 106 and he thought he would probably need the ramp when he turned 103! As our vans pulled out of the driveway, we looked back and saw Roy trying out the ramp and smiling.

THE PULPIT AND PEW
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MARYSVILLE, OHIO

July 2017

Pastor Jeff Schooley

Perhaps our week with Roy helped him to deal a bit with getting older. Perhaps our time spent helped to ease some of the denial he was feeling. Perhaps our time there allowed Roy and Ann to feel the love of Jesus Christ in our smiles, conversations, stories, and work. Perhaps this one week changed each of us.

Being charged to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus is a job never done. While I thought the above quote applied beautifully for our mission trip, I now ponder on how to apply that to my daily life. Is this something we can all do? Sharing God's love and message can't be done only on Sundays and during mission trips. How will we all share the message through our actions and words... at the grocery store, while driving, when interacting with family, friends, and strangers? I hope you will join me in making our world a better place to live in.