

## Mission Without Passports – 2021

### King's Garden, Valley, NE – King Lake Flood Recovery

On October 10-16, 2021, members of the “Mission Without Passports” (1<sup>st</sup> PC – St. Cloud) and Mission Work Team (1<sup>st</sup> PC – Foley) collaborated with volunteers from St. Cloud and Shakopee and another from 1<sup>st</sup> PC – Mankato to form a group of 10 who traveled together to Elkhorn, NE to help with ongoing efforts in flood recovery following the massive flooding that took place all around Omaha, NE in March of 2019.

The Mission Without Passports group had worked in that area for a week in October of 2019, but then COVID hit, and volunteer assistance dried up, and people in the King Lake area were left to shift for themselves. Our group decided to return, and do what we could with another week of work, and so we teamed up with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and “The King’s Garden” (a Christian organization working in the community there to coordinate ongoing recovery efforts.)

A helpful video showing the effects of the flooding can be seen at the following internet link: <https://nebraskanewsservice.net/news/triumph-over-tragedy-how-the-king-lake-community-overcame-the-2019-flooding/>

During the week that we were there, we worked primarily on two houses – one house that was completely gutted, and the work included stripping off all the windows, doors and siding, removing part of the floor joists and subfloor, removing a steel tank that was under the house through the opening in the floor, framing new walls inside the house, installing new headers and door openings on the interior of the house, and new windows and doors for the exterior of the house.

In the other house that we worked on, we removed old ceiling panels and insulation in a bedroom of the house, repaired rotted rafters, reinsulated the ceiling, installed a new vapor barrier and sheetrock, taped, mudded and sanded all the joints, installed new trim around the window, doors and closet, and new baseboard and cove molding around the room, leaving it ready for final painting. We also helped to close in an open porch, and insulated the ceiling of the porch.

Other work that our volunteers participated in included sorting truckloads of steel siding that had been donated, but needed to be sorted to type and size, marked and wrapped with plastic, so it could be stored for future use...as well as preparing large piles of cardboard to be used along with shredded wood chips in establishing a large new garden plot which will be used to grow fresh vegetables for the community’s residents.

Lodging for our group was provided by Peace Presbyterian Church of Elkhorn, NE. That congregation provided a beautiful facility for us to sleep in, cots for those who needed them, a wonderful kitchen in which to cook our meals, and a beautiful meeting room in which to eat and

hold our devotional and planning meetings. Our mission team funds paid for the groceries we bought and prepared, as well as for the gas needed for transportation. We used our funds to also make a \$500 donation to Peace Presbyterian in thanks for their hospitality, and a \$500 donation to The King's Garden for the purchase of building / construction materials in their remaining projects. Special thanks to our congregations and private donors who supported our work with your prayers and generous giving. The funds we did not use for this trip will provide a starting place for some future mission trip!

Members of our Mission Team were as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> PC of St. Cloud – Tamara Calhoun, Lori Nelson, Mike Tollefson, Al Jergenson

1<sup>st</sup> PC of Foley – Beverly Brock, Jenny & Paul Seaton

1<sup>st</sup> PC of Mankato – Mason Bristol

Volunteer from Shakopee – Kevin Lyons

Volunteer from Rejoice Lutheran in Clearwater – Brad Johnson

It was wonderful to work in partnership with each other, and the trip provided us with a great opportunity to get to know one another better, as well as to get to know other volunteers and homeowners from the King's Lake area and other mission groups.

Each evening, when we returned from work, we'd prepare our supper meal, and then meet together for devotions. Our devotional topics included reflection and discussion together on various scripture passages that included the divine call to show kindness, to serve others sacrificially, to use our talents and gifts creatively, to give of ourselves generously, to recognize and give thanks for divine protection, and to pray without ceasing for all those who we are privileged to serve. We came to see that we, as mission volunteers, are called (in the words of our Presbyterian Book of Order in its chapter on 'The Church and its Mission') "to be...a provisional demonstration of what God intends for all humanity" and serve as a "sign, witness and foretaste" of what God is doing in and for all of creation.

Our "Centering Passage" for the trip came from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2, Verses 1-5:

*"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."*

In retrospect, we've all come to realize that there is so much more that each of us can learn through serving others with our God-given talents and gifts, and the opportunities for service are endless! We look forward to future opportunities for collaboration and service in Christ's name, and invite any who would like to join us to do so!