

Greetings from Port Ludlow Washington,

When Bob emailed asking for my memories of mission trips past I told him that I am happy to put some down on paper, but not ready to fly back to deliver them in person. It's hard to believe that eleven years have passed since my first trip to Mississippi, but time sure flies!!

I participated in six trips from 2007 through 2013. All were different in locations, but alike in the feelings of purpose and satisfaction from participating. There is a real feeling of camaraderie when 30 individuals come together to accomplish a worthwhile goal . . . to help those in need of a helping hand. I have fond memories of each separate trip, but there is consistency in the experience: morning circles to center our minds for the purpose of the day, evening circles to celebrate the successes of the day, shared time preparing and eating meals, working side by side to accomplish a task, and moments during the day that still make me smile when I think of them. "Smores" around the campfire in Mississippi, a spontaneous "Hokey Pokey" in the parking lot of a Galveston church, or Hallie Hollister and Peggy Redukers' middle of the night wake up in the church in New Jersey.

There were sobering moments as well: a drive along the coastline in Pas Christian Mississippi where for every house that was rebuilt, there were four or five empty foundations three years after hurricane Katrina, and the waterline six feet high on the wall of a church in Galveston.

I learned new skills on every trip: roofing, hanging dry wall, taping and mudding dry wall, framing a wall, installing siding. All this learning from talented and giving members and friends of this congregation.

The work is rewarding, the experience is life affirming, the work we do is greatly appreciated and the joys far outweigh the costs. I returned from each trip physically tired but joyful at what was accomplished.

I have spent a few hours this week looking at pictures from each trip (and a video of that Hokey Pokey) and I am grateful to have been part of the experience.

Dave Clive

Happily Retired in rainy, but not snowy, Port Ludlow Washington