

APPALACHIAN EXPERIENCE 2017

St. Joseph's sent a group of 10 participants on this year's Appalachian Experience June 17-24. Volunteers included Ezra Bard, Bill Curtin, Dave Czerny, Dan & Sean Fejes, Aaron Hluch, Hannah Mann, Chris Rector, Mike Schilling, Caleb Self.

Members of St. Joseph's in Mantua have been participating in this outreach effort since 1998. Participants volunteer for a variety of household repairs at owner occupied homes of low-income residents of southwestern Virginia. This year was the first year that our adults and high school teens participated in the Binns-Counts Community Center's Housing Repair Program. A non-profit grassroots organization established in 1974, the center is committed to education,

health care and decent housing for all. They are directed by a board of community people and staffed mainly by volunteers and work in partnership with college, community and church groups.



From 1998 until the end of July, 2016, Sister Jean Korkisch, C.S.C. (Sisters of the Holy Cross), who was based at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Clintwood, (Dickenson County) Virginia, coordinated the Housing Repair Program. Born in upstate New York and growing up in Maryland, Sister Jean came to Dickenson County, Virginia, in 1983. She first worked with the housing repair program at Binns-Counts Community Center (then in Nora, VA). In 1998, she began the St. Joseph's Housing Repair Program at St. Joseph's in Clintwood, VA. This program ended due to changing diocesan regulations and other concerns. The hope is that this work continues with high school & college students joining the efforts of the Binns-Counts program.

After making the 700 mile trip & then settling in to their week's accommodations on Saturday, our group went to Sunday's Mass at St. Joseph's in Clintwood and then were invited to attend a farewell pot-luck dinner for Sr. Jean. She was getting ready to move to her order's motherhouse in South Bend, Indiana (look for her farewell Facebook post included on our website's Appalachian Experience page under Ministries & Organizations).



The week of volunteering included building or improving the porches and steps of several homes. As in year's past, some of the group made the trip up the mountain to Birch Knob, an old fire tower that has spectacular views. They also heard music and stories from Jimmy Mullins and his fiddle playing friend. In addition, they were able to present a couple of the homeowners with lap quilts that had been made last year by the Garrettsville Piecemakers Quilting Group. Though not as busy as in years past, the group felt a sense of accomplishment in what they were able to offer the people of this area.



Visit our website for more photos and history of all the trips our parishioners have made.



Chris Rector, Aaron Hluch, Caleb Self, Hannah Mann, Ezra Bard, Sean



Mike Schilling, Bill Curtin, Dave Czerny