

“Growing Together” By Jan McPeak

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As you can tell from Chris and Dave’s sharing, the first adult mission trip was a great success! We worked hard but also had a lot of fun while demonstrating our LOVE for God while SERVING others, and GREWING TOGETHER as brothers and sisters in Christ. Does that sound familiar? – love God, serve others, grow together? That’s Baker Memorial’s mission statement. And we know that if we do our mission, we’ll reach our vision. (PAUSE)

I want to share with you the “growing together” part of our trip.

I don’t know about you, but, I can’t build a thing. My husband usually won’t let me have a screw driver, a paint brush, or hammer in my hand. (*hold up all three*) I can be dangerous. So, look out, I have all three here this morning!

But, you know what? I learned to measure, to hammer, to use a cordless drill and even run a chop saw! My building skills grew from nothing to actually having some! And I still have all my fingers!

This church’s mission statement includes the words “growing together”. And I am sure that the lack of my building skills were not part of that thought process when the Vision Team penned those words!

There were lots of opportunities for my personal growth on this trip – and I am not talking about growing my carpentry skills, but instead I am talking about growing relationships and growing stronger as a Christian - working with other’s on the team that I did not know well before we left St. Charles; meeting other volunteers at Camp Hope, the place where we all stayed in NO; working with the Habitat team leaders; meeting a Hurricane Katrina survivor named John Wilkes Booth to hear his story; working with a New York volunteer named Greg who became part of our work group; building a house for someone I didn’t even know and did not meet. I think that if you asked any person that was on this team, they would all say that we grew together as Christians in

God's service. I know everyone on this team has different stories to tell that affected their hearts in different ways and at different depths.

But I know that every opportunity to serve with others helps us grow; grow our skills; grow our relationships; grow our outreach ministries; grow our faith.

I know there are some of you in this congregation that thought about going on this first adult mission trip and for whatever reason you could not go – “I can't take the time off work now”; “I can't build, so why would I want to go”; “ I've never done anything like this before!:

Whatever the reason you had for not going this time, I have good news for you! I have been given the opportunity by our Staff Parish committee to develop adult mission opportunities for Baker UMC. And you will have more opportunities to serve on future trips! Our adult mission group has become part of the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, better known as the U M V I M. UMVIM is dedicated to serving others and growing together not only locally, but regionally, and also globally. To reflect the connection with the United Methodist world-wide mission effort, we have decided to change the name of our adult volunteer work groups to VIM and VIGOR.

There's another trip planned for VIM & VIGOR this year, 2010. This is a trip many of you may want to consider. We will be working at the Chatham (that's near Springfield, IL) Distribution Center for one day on October 22nd. Chatham is one of the centers that packages flood buckets, hygiene kits; emergency supplies for disasters like Nashville, Tennessee, Katrina, and Haiti; makes desks for schools, sews book bags for school children; ships educational supplies around the world. You'll see more information about that trip as we draw nearer to the date of October 22nd. Put it NOW on your calendar - October 22nd. Save the date!!

Also, because developing relationships and growing together in those relationships is not a one-time effort, VIM & VIGOR will be returning to New Orleans next year. We have not booked a time as of today, but we are looking to go back sometime around the first week of May 2011. So mark your calendar again!

If you have any questions, please contact me or talk to anyone here today that was part of our first trip. Also, after this service please come into Baker Hall to see the pictures of our April 2010 New Orleans trip.

I invite you to come be part of VIM & VIGOR & I Guarantee the God will work through you to fulfill Baker Memorial UMC's mission "Loving God, Serving Others, Growing Together" that GOD will move us toward His vision to become "A Hub of Christ-Directed activity radiating out to the world from the heart of St. Charles."