

Rockport/Port Aransas Servant Event Trip Recap 2018

We would like to begin by thanking you all for your time, thoughts, prayers, and financial support throughout this process. This trip would have been impossible without your compassion and willingness. With your help, ten of us travelled to Rockport, TX while another group of ten travelled to El Paso, TX. Our group stayed just outside of Rockport in Corpus Christi at Trinity Lutheran Church and worked with the site coordinator, Chelsea Beck. Monday through Thursday, we drove into Port Aransas and Rockport to complete Hurricane Relief work. Some of the people we were able to help were Ava, by completing the building of an enclosed porch, and Noe, by removing old insulation, nails, and stringers and putting in new insulation. The entire trip not only gave us the opportunity to provide help and comfort to these people but allowed us to also strengthen the relationships we had with the other people on the trip through fellowship, Bible Studies, devotions and discussions throughout the week. The entire week led to us deepening our understanding of service for God and encouraged us to be flexible.

On Friday, we started off our servant event with the Commissioning Service. Both groups ate dinner together at Reno's after the service with our friends and family. Our group had an early morning, leaving from Chapel at 5:00 am. We gathered at the Chapel just before and with a quick prayer, Dan Winter drove us to Detroit Metro Airport. Because of some unfortunate delays and cancellations the night before, the airport was packed with people. However, we still made it through our lines with enough time to grab some airport coffee and food before our plane departed at 8:30 am. Our flight landed a little after 12:00 pm in San Antonio. Billy was our fearless driver for the week and rented the van that we would be using for the remainder of our time in Texas. We drove to Corpus Christi and after a late lunch at the Executive Surf Club-complete with shrimp tacos and deep-fried cheese cake- we headed to a park near the water before getting our orientation of living in Trinity Lutheran. Dinner was brought in most nights by different volunteers. After dinner on Saturday we met part of another group who was staying at Trinity Lutheran from Minnesota, although after our travels we called it a night shortly after getting settled.

On Sunday, we spent the morning getting settled in and meeting with Bible study partners for the week to get to know each other more and start some planning. We went to Trinity's contemporary worship service and met some of the members before snagging a quick lunch and heading to the Malaquite Beach for some much-needed sun and ocean swimming. We all were able to get in the water, splash in the waves and toss a football around. It gave us the perfect opportunity to relax around each other and start to get to know the funny sides of people, especially through an impromptu photo session run by Jenna. In the evening we met with Chelsea and the Minnesota group to find out where we were all going the next morning.



Monday started off with breakfast prepared by Anyssa and Libby. After a devotion led by Pastor Beck, we made our way to Port Aransas. Sara, Judah, Jenna, Anyssa and Libby worked with Bob (from the Minnesota group) to build a porch for Miss Ava, who needed the porch to be enclosed for her bird and sturdy enough to hang her dart board. Alexa, Addie, Billy, Lauren and Michael worked out of the volunteer center in Port Aransas, which was run by a retired couple from California, Oscar and Elsie, who were running the center as their "vacation". The center set them to work prepping Noe's house by taking out old insulation and LOTS of nails. Both Noe and Ava had lots of stories that they shared throughout the week. We ended the day with a stop at Winton's Candies (recommended by Chelsea and her kids). After the day's

work we returned to Corpus Christi and tried our luck at Rudy's BBQ for dinner. We finished off a late night with a Bible Study, showers and some great conversations.

Tuesday we packed up, had our devotion with Pastor Beck and intended to work outdoors in Port Aransas, but thunderstorms wasted most of the morning. After regrouping for lunch, we headed to Noe's house to work on putting in insulation. Even with limited tools, we soon had an assembly line of people cutting and stapling insulation. Alexa took special care in installing the insulation. At one point we were down to one staple gun, but with a hair



tie and some ingenuity, Sara was able to “Macgyver” it into a functional tool again. Noe bought us pizza and kept us entertained with more stories about his work and life in Port Aransas after we finished for the day. Then we headed back to Trinity for dinner and another Bible study.



Wednesday brought sun and a familiarity with the work sites allowing us to pick up on Monday’s work and cruise. Half the team put in a full day of insulation work, getting all of the walls and most of the attic space as well. The rest of the group joined Bob at Ava’s to finally finish up the porch. Anyssa showed off her skills with the miter saw while she worked with Judah to measure out trim boards. The porch came together fast and by the end of the day the porch was screened. Both groups met at the ice cream shop and rounded off the day with a quick look through some of the Port Aransas tourist shops. We took the ferry back as it was our last time working in Port Aransas. The experience was great and allowed us a chance to even see a few dolphins. We finished the day with dinner at Trinity and a Bible study and started writing our closing letters to each other.

Thursday brought us new challenges. We worked in Rockport through a new volunteer center. Then, we spent the morning at Ivan’s house working to remove part of a ceiling and moving old boxes and furniture. Our group of ten made quick work and by lunch time we were looking for another project. Lauren and Addie had a chain of people running from the back of the house all the way to the curb in front to haul out items. We stopped for lunch at another church and found work for the afternoon in helping Justo clear out a storage unit and transporting things back to his ranch. Lauren had an unexpected ride on the back of the trailer as it was repositioned in front of the unit. During unloading, some quick engineering on Judah and Michael’s part lead to a dolly’s creative use as a carrier for some of the larger barrels that lacked proper hand holds. The storage unit was being pulled down due to hurricane damage and while salvaging what Justo wanted to keep, it was incredible to watch him find things he had thought had been lost in the hurricane.



On Friday we ate breakfast and headed to San Antonio where we spent the afternoon touring a cave at the Natural Bridge Caverns. A few of us even attempted their high ropes course. Naturally, we had to try the famous What-a-Burger before we hit San Antonio’s Riverwalk. There we all did some window shopping and spent some time lazily strolling along the river. It was beautiful and Judah’s photographer side came out. We wrapped up our night with dinner at Café de Ole before driving back to Corpus Christi. Alexa once again proved to be an exquisite navigator as she and Billy got our tired group back to Trinity. We pushed off our Bible study for the next morning to give people a chance to rest and pack.

Saturday brought a second trip to San Antonio as we caught our plane from there. Before we left, Chelsea took our photo and we finished packing the van. By the grace of God, our flight back was smooth, even landing about 15 minutes early. Mike Nevells was in the Martin Luther Chapel Mini-Bus waiting to greet us to Michigan.

This trip allowed us a time to grow in many ways, including in our relationships with each other and God. While getting to enjoy each other’s humorous sides, we were able to discover the depth of service and the importance of listening to those we serve. The joy that we experienced through the people we met on the trip and their stories was life changing. With a renewed passion for service we are excited to continue this back home, strengthen the friendships we have made and share our experiences. We could never thank you enough for this opportunity.

In Christ,



(L to R) Judah Pemble, Lauren Martin, Michael Vanbemmelen, Sarah Bollstetter, Anyssa Schember, Addie VanBemmelen, Libby Lyons, Jenna Morehead, Billy Seeger, Alexa Seeger