

Saturday April 21st

Summary report of first mission trip to Joplin, Missouri:

The demise of the fifth Cedar Rapids mission turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The trip to Joplin, which was a last minute alternate mainly to deliver the truck load of tools donated by the Westminster congregation, turned out to be a great success. Steve Hughes and Ken Govaerts, the only remaining members of the mission, were able to provide some troubleshooting expertise for projects that other volunteers had not been able to complete or simply did not know how to proceed.

Joplin is a very popular destination for volunteers from churches of all denominations. Hundreds of volunteers are arriving daily from all parts of the nation (and Canada) or are scheduled to arrive during the summer. One limiting factor for volunteers getting the construction work done in Joplin has been lack of tools. The Westminster tool drive could not have been more timely. The tools were immediately put to good use by teams of volunteers.



Tools donated by WPC members were very appreciated

The on site organization managing the majority of the influx of volunteers is Catholic Charities of Southwest Missouri. PDA does not yet have a work camp in Joplin. The tools were given to Catholic Charities to dispense and Steve and Ken worked on projects managed by them. Our jobs involved plumbing, cabinet installation, tile setting and reconstructing a large floor in an office building that had rotted out beyond any use.

The vast area in the heart of Joplin destroyed by the May 2011 tornado is still essentially barren of buildings and vegetation. The high school is a large pile of rubble and the hospital is a twisted shell still standing. A few scattered homes are beginning to spring up in neighborhoods, but it will take many years before the community is anything but a reminder of nature's destructive power.





The hospital was destroyed. It is still awaiting demolition.

Westminster can look forward to providing building assistance for Joplin residents for the foreseeable future. Recruiting a large group of skilled volunteers for the August 5 mission will be an important project for our congregation.

If you are interested in volunteering for a mission trip, or donating tools, please call the Westminster office at 402-475-8702 to let them know of your interests.