

ST. JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH OF AIKEN

MISSION IMPACT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025

Featuring Activities July - September 2025

**SEEING THE LORD AT WORK THROUGH MISSION PARTNERS –
LOCALLY, REGIONALLY, INTERNATIONALLY**

SPECIAL SALKEHATCHIE EDITION

Each Summer St. John's announces that our leaders and youth are spending time at Salkehatchie Summer Service. St. John's has been a part of this program for decades. Those who are the leaders are drawn to the program, not because of duty, but because it is a calling to show the love of Christ.

St. John's Mission Impact provides some of the funding for four annual camps throughout South Carolina and participates as workers in two of those camps. The camps are Salkehatchie Sand River (St. John's Adults and other churches youth and adults), Salkehatchie Edisto (St. John's Youth and Adults), Salkehatchie Santee (funding), and Salkehatchie Marlboro Flowers (Pee Dee funding). St. John's activities have been led for years by Bobby Coker, Jeff Snow, Marsha Mikes, and Jimi Whitesell. Camp volunteers also prepared food, delivered popsicles, needed supplies and moral support -in spite of extremely hot temperatures.



Recently some of the leaders of the camps were asked about this year's program. Read further to learn more about camp experiences:

SAND RIVER CAMP

How many people in total were present? Sand River Camp had 30 volunteers this year. This camp has struggled to get our numbers back up since a 2-year shut down due to Covid. At one point this camp was up to about 90 campers, teens, and adults in total. One of the churches that used to come had a youth minister change and now the youth are doing other service projects that does not include Salkehatchie.

How many houses had work completed? Sand River volunteers worked on 3 homes this year. One was a mobile home that required a new roof, as well as cleaning of the outside and decking. It was actually the home of a St. John's member who is 97 years old and lives alone.

She suffered damage to her roof during the Helene storm and could not get the help she needed. Salkehatchie Summer Service was there to meet the needs.



Another home needed a metal roof replacement, a new back door and a rotted frame replaced. The outside of the house was completely washed, including the decking. A ceiling fan was replaced in the living room, along with a light in the kitchen and in a bedroom. The living room, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom were repainted. A new shower surround was replaced in the bathroom. Two new kitchen cabinets and shelving were put in the kitchen to help with much needed organization. Vinyl flooring was put in the laundry room. Carpet was replaced in one of the bedrooms along with a new windowsill that was replaced because it was rotten. Lots and lots of organizing events happened that week.



What life lessons are taken away from each week of service and in your opinion do you think the teen and adult volunteers take life lessons to practice after the week ends? Some life lessons all volunteers take away is how blessed we are in our daily lives and that there are a lot of people who struggle in this world and really need our help. Often times they are completely overwhelmed with how to even begin to start to correct the things that need attention in their homes let alone have the money to afford those repairs. The people in these homes put their trust in us that week that we are going to come in there with a group of teenagers and complete the work that we discuss with them prior to starting. It can get a little hectic during the week because things get torn up before they get put back in place.

However, by the end of the week they see it all come together, and they are always so appreciative.



Do you believe the people we help can feel the Lord's presence during the time that is spent

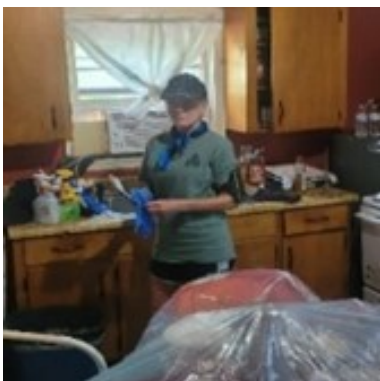
at each work site? During the week we really get to know the homeowners and they get to know us. We try to show them love by working on their home, bringing them food from the camp, and just talking with them. We truly are the hands and feet of Christ during that week.



We always have the youth write up a prayer on a big poster that we present to the homeowner on the last day. The youth do a wonderful job of that. Every home also gets a wooden cross that we build from lumber that was used during the week. Salkehatchie is written on it along with the date and everyone who worked on the home signs the cross. It is placed out in the yard so not only does the homeowner get to see it, but the neighbors do also. The neighborhood is usually aware that something good is happening that week to their neighbor's home. We also invite the homeowner out to join us every morning as we have a devotion and prayer which is led by the youth.

One Volunteer stated – “My daughters began doing Salkehatchie when they were 15 and 14. I truly believe it has given them a servant's heart from working with those in need. They realized that not everyone in this world is so lucky. Once you begin serving the Lord by helping others it changes you forever. You begin to look at people differently and it becomes hard to ignore the needs of others. I feel that everyone can serve in some capacity. I may not have a lot of talents, such as singing, playing piano, or even being able to witness that well to others or have great carpentry skills but I can work hard, and I can serve others and show them love along the way. You have heard the saying, if not me, then who?”

What are some great memories from this year? A great memory from the week was when the young son Alex who was living in the home, saw his bedroom transformed from a dark dungeon of a room, because it had no overhead light and dark carpeting to a clean bright room that had an overhead light, new carpet and light color walls, He stood in the room and just looked at all of us and said, I love every one of you all!



Another great memory was when the mother Ms. Francis Crowder walked into the kitchen and saw the bookcase shelving the team had found at the Habitat store so we could organize all of her canned food, she was just in awe. We installed two wall cabinets that got things off of plastic shelving she had been using, and they were neatly organized behind closed cabinet doors. She really loved it. We took her kitchen from a cramped disorganized kitchen to nice clean, brightly organized one.

SALKEHATCHIE EDISTO CAMP

The Edisto Camp had 84 youth and advisors as volunteers this year. They worked with seven families on the island. They plumbed 2 entire houses, completed three full roofs and a couple other roof repairs. They totally gutted three kitchens, two of them all the way back to the joist and installed all new cabinets and appliances in a couple more. They even coordinated for a family to get a new well and are continuing to work with families to make sure their homes are safer, dryer, and warmer. When asked specific questions, the replies were:

Do you believe the people we help can feel the Lord's presence during the time that is spent at each work site? **Jimi Whitesell, Camp Leader** – "I absolutely believe that the families we were able to work alongside felt the presence of the Lord that week. (I know we did!). They often participate in devotions and prayer with us. We were even able to worship with a couple of them at their home churches on Sunday.

Maddie Zeigler – Youth Volunteer - I truly do believe that God's presence is felt by everyone, the homeowners and the people working on the site! There is so much love being shared throughout the week, encouraging everyone to put their best effort into helping at each work site. No matter what happens, through the ups and downs of working, God is always with everyone. It takes a lot of trust and faith to let a bunch of teenagers work on your home, and I really believe that God allows the homeowners the strength to do so!

Mary Davidson – Youth Volunteer - Yes, I do. For me, I hate talking to new people, especially about God. Every Salkehatchie I try to make some conversation with the homeowners, but for the most part my job is getting work done. Still, even without directly spreading His Word, it is clear that God is working through the people at Salkehatchie. I think that for most homeowners, just watching everyone spend a week of their summer doing construction for free is enough reason to see that God is looking out for them. On top of that, in every group I have worked with there is always one person who takes time to make a connection with the homeowner and pray for them. It helps everyone feel God's presence and shows the homeowner why we come to Salkehatchie.

What life lessons are taken away from each week of service and in your opinion do you think the teen and adult volunteers take life lessons to practice after the week ends? **Avelyn Yeh, Youth Volunteer** – The main life lesson taken away, for me personally, is that God can be seen within those who act for Him, and it is a beautiful thing. Not only does this apply to the volunteers, but for those we serve. Possessions or status of individuals does not determine who is closest to God or His image as the homeowners are the kindest, most selfless people I have ever met. As for takeaways from teens and adult volunteers, there is no doubt we take these lessons into practice once we leave. Salkehatchie is the kind of experience that lives on in you, so your service to God and others never ends.

MARLBORO FLOWERS CAMP

Marlboro Flowers was initiated by the late Rev. Neil Flowers, a past St. John's youth leader who went forward to become a Methodist pastor in South Carolina. This camp recently sent a note of appreciation to St. John's which reads,

"Dear friends in Christ, Thank you for your generous support for Marlboro-Flowers Salkehatchie. We are doing our best to continue the mission led by our dear Neil Flowers. His leadership gave us a solid foundation in Marlboro County, and we are aware that St. John's was an integral support – always!" This camp had 65 volunteers and repaired the homes of six families this year, each owned by Marlboro County residents who lived and worked in that area for decades. They were active in their community but entered their later years and are unable to maintain their homes. This project replaced three roofs, repaired two kitchens and two

and are unable to maintain their homes. This project replaced three roofs, repaired two kitchens and two bathrooms, and removed a collapsing section of a house, replacing it with a new bathroom edition.”

SANTEE SALKEHATCHIE SUMMER SERVICE

Ward Smith of the Santee Salkehatchie Summer Service reported that 39 campers were able to help four families in the Manning and Summerton areas. Shingle roofs were installed on two of the homes. The other two homes also needed roof repairs. Other repair projects included a ramp redo, ceiling and flooring replacement and a kitchen countertop. They are grateful to the members of St. John’s Methodist Church for the financial assistance to make these projects possible.

THE STORIES CONTINUE THROUGHOUT SOUTH CAROLINA

St. John’s is a large part of the work of Salkehatchie in South Carolina. Our thanks and gratitude are extended to the other camps and leaders throughout the state who are working hard to improve the lives of others and to carry forth the message of Christ!

Our thanks and gratitude are also extended to each of you who faithfully make a Faith Promise commitment and donation. A portion of those donations were used to support the work of these Salkehatchie camps.





DATES TO REMEMBER

October 5 - 12, 2025: Adult Churchwide Mission Trip - Honduras Agape Foundation

October 9 - 19, 2025: Thailand Now Prayer Mission Trip

November 30, 2025: Missions on the 5th, 10am in the Faith Center; Watch bulletin for information

February 4-8, 2026: Mission Impact Celebration

MISSION LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

Stockton Altman	Diane Brace	Doug Davisson	Don Hayes	David Long
Logan Murray	Renee Reid	Judy Phillips	Debi Rood	Julie Shade
Deane Wyllys	Nancy Wyllys	Rev. Will Altman, Staff Liaison		

*This Newsletter is printed quarterly by St. John's Methodist Church of Aiken
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