

Presbytery Mission Trip Spring, 2026

Due to devastation left by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, volunteers are still needed in the area.

Our team stayed at Spruce Pine Presbyterian Church May 31 – June 5 and worked on two different homes

One home up towards the Newland area, an elderly lady, Ms Sherry, that lives by herself. She was ill at the time and stayed in her house even as it was flooded up to her chest. It was 3 days until she was rescued. She is truly a survivor.

One home out near Bakersville, a gentlemen, Dwayne, known for helping others in the community in need even if it meant neglecting his own house. His damage was from run off water around and under his house, not from actual flooding inside.



Team Members

Left to Right: Hein & Els Vingerling – Hayesville, Brian Schroeder – First Gastonia, Gail Lehmen – First Franklin, Ken Unnasch – Long Creek Kings Mountain, David Unnasch – Long Creek Kings Mtn, Bob Abel – Hayesville, Bobbi & Phil Trick – First Hickory, Betsy Keith – First Gastonia, Margie Lang – Burnsville





Meeting with Larry, our UMCOR construction manager Sunday evening, bringing us up to speed with what has been going on in the area and what we will be working on this trip. We had worked with Larry before in the fall mission trip to Spruce Pine area.

Monday we stayed together, the rest of the week we split into two teams;
Ms. Sherry and Dwayne.



This was the first task. We expected we were going to manually move all this drywall up into the house. Boy, were we excited to see this boom truck lift all the drywall right up to the front porch.



These two fellows made short work of sliding the drywall off of the boom and into the house. We all just stood by and marveled at how easy they made it look and how glad we were we didn't have to do this. We all thought they took one look at all the gray hair and took pity on us. Whatever the reason, we were thankful, and they were amazing!!



The rest of the day on Monday we spent at Dwayne's house, tearing out the old rotten deck, taking off the under pinning, and starting the process of cleaning out the debris under his house.





Tuesday – Friday at Ms. Sherry's



Upper cabinets and drawers were painted green. Lower cabinet doors were removed to be prepped and also painted.

Hein and crew had to remove some flooring that had been incorrectly installed before proceeding with the new flooring.



Ms. Sherry is living in her house, so each room has to be emptied before work takes place. Then everything is put back as she wants it.

New flooring is going in without any problems. This room is almost finished.

Walls in this room have been painted already.

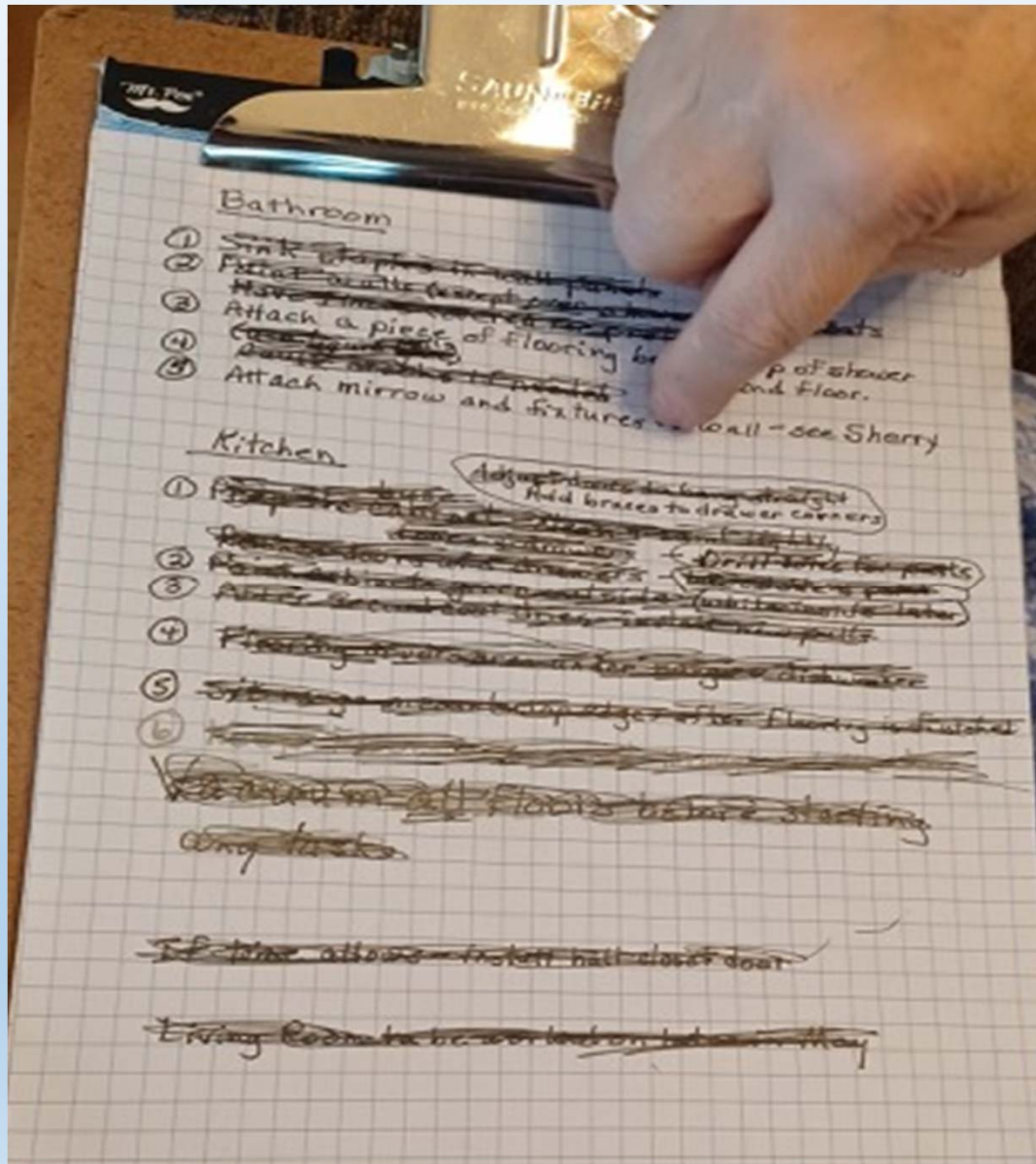


Gail is having fun rolling the cabinet doors that came from the kitchen. Doing this outside makes it easier. Certainly do not want to drip paint on the new floor.

Els is busy filling holes and patching any areas, then sand them smooth prior to painting these walls.



To Do List Almost Done



This was quite a punch list but they have almost finished everything listed.

They also spruced up the outside of the house, pulling debris and weeds from the beds and spreading some pea gravel on the walkway steps area.

Tuesday – Friday at Dwayne's



The crew made short work of finishing tearing out the old rotten deck.



With the deck gone and under pinning removed, we could then go under the house to clean out debris and remove old insulation.



Margie tried removing the old insulation without putting on the Tyvek suit. It was really hot that day and the Tyvek suits made it even hotter.



Removing old railroad ties used for a border was hard. They weigh a ton! Well, it felt like a ton. Dragging was easier than lifting and carrying.



With the under pinning gone and old insulation down, it was time to do the final raking of debris so we could put down the moisture barrier.

Bob shows us how to use a rake. Being a very tall person made it difficult to crawl under the house. He did an excellent job of raking out all the debris we threw to the side.



No, it's not a big white snake. It's the moisture barrier we had to crawl under and drag into position. It was a rather dirty job, but the Tyvek suits worked well to keep us clean.

Bob and Ken
work on
prepping the
underside of the
frame to provide
something solid
to secure the
new under
pinning to.



Installed new insulation and wrapped water pipes. Lots of insulation.



The moisture barrier made it much easier to work under the house. And helped keep the insulation off of us. It can be itchy work!



Betsy and Margie worked on wrapping the support pillars with additional moisture barrier.



Brian and Phil work on drilling holes through the pressure treated lumber for the rebar used to hold the moisture barrier in place and provide an attachment place for the new under pinning that goes on next.

The next work crew will be finishing this task. We don't often get to finish a jobsite, but we hope we do our job well so that the next group can come in and get right to work.

Mealtime





We don't scrimp when it comes to our meals. There is plenty of variety of good food. And, of course, desserts!!



Everyone pitches in and help prep meals and clean up.
And we have fun while we're at it.

Devotions



Every night after dinner, we talk about our day, share the stories of our homeowners and the joys we discover as we come together. We pray for those still suffering from hurricane Helene. We are thankful that we can help make their lives a little better.

Down Time





Wednesday afternoon is typically a time when we rest and do something interesting in the area.

We had a wonderful talk from Alex Glover, a Geologist, about importance of the mines in the Spruce Pine area. They are known for their mica, kaolin, quartz and feldspar.

The Spruce Pine area mines are the world's only producer of the quartz necessary for semiconductor manufacturing.



MountainTrue

Julie Lehman, gave a wonderful overview of MountainTrue, an organization that champions resilient forests, clean waters, and healthy communities across the Southern Blue Ridge, serving 28 counties in Western North Carolina, Eastern Tennessee, and Northern Georgia.



They clean up streams and rivers so we can paddle, fish, and play.

They help to restore natural habitats and preserve our ancient forests.

Hope you will consider joining the team for the next trip October 4-9, 2026.

It is a very humbling
experience to serve
others as part of a
mission team.

We have room for
YOU to join us.

