

Friday – August 13th

Happy Friday the 13th. First, we need to share how things went last night after I signed off. In looking at the radar when we laid our little heads down around 10:30, there was nothing that was coming our way. However, the high winds kicked up and very quickly the weather changed. A cell popped up right over Pine Acres. We were in a severe thunderstorm warning. Yikes. There are just too many things that could go wrong having those that are tenting out in the grass, so we got them all out of bed to safely watch out the storm under the pavilion. The third night in a row that Pine Acres got a belly rushing gushing storm. Let's just say, the one thing we are all looking forward to when we go home, pulling a shirt out of our drawer and it be dry. But the summary of the night, all were safe and all tents stayed dry on the inside. We thank God for keeping us safe.

With our delay in going to sleep last night (midnight), breakfast was delayed until 8:30. We had already delayed it to 8:00 so we could actually sleep in but we needed that extra 30 mins. We were able to sleep in because we had gotten all of the work done that was on our agenda in 4 days. Those 4 days were action packed and in the heat, it was quite ok that we had today off from work.

It's not abnormal when we travel to have a day off so why not take that same advantage being home. Breakfast this morning were breakfast sandwiches and Janet Trautman's potato recipe that has been tradition for us on mission weeks. After we were done with breakfast, we had a lot on our agenda for the day. We packed up the trailer with all that needed to go back to church and return Kathy's garage back home. We also made our first trip to the Lebanon Rescue Mission to donate some leftover food that we weren't going to get eaten.

The under 25s also voted to give G a meal off as we are all running on empty by today, so we went to the Brickerville House for lunch. The day was getting hot again, sigh. By the time we left the Brickerville House, it was 2:15. Our afternoon was to be spent at Hershey's Adventure Sports. The original plan was to do go carts, bumper boats, the batting cages and mini golf. The first activity was go carts. Vickie needed to steal the go cart champion title back from Pastor Dave.

The scene was set. The group talked the staff to allow them to all ride together. The gates opened and Vickie ran for her car and Pastor Dave got his car. The sad news for Vickie, she was to go out last and Pastor Dave was in the 2nd car. The final answer Pastor Dave still holds the title.

Next it was onto the bumper boats. Oh man, there were only 10 boats. The group went out for the bumper boats and chasing each other around the little pond spraying one another. A wonderful activity on a very hot day. The sad news, there was a storm a coming very quickly. With that, the batting cages and mini golf got bagged and some final minutes while we waited out the storm were spent in the arcade.

As the storm passed, we headed back home for a quiet evening at Pine Acres. We weren't very hungry when we got back with lunch being so late, so supper only started after 7 PM. Tonight was taco night. We are hoping for a quiet storm tonight. As I sit here writing this, the evening has cooled off quite a bit, so we're hoping it stays quiet.

The week has traveled by quickly, but it was a good week. I'll post the final post tomorrow. Signing off for tonight. Stay safe.

Thursday – August 12th

Happy Thursday morning. It's a beautiful morning. Breakfast was again at 7:00. We invited the Pine Acres men to join us for breakfast. Today was sausage gravy and biscuits. Off and running we left for our day's activities. We headed to church for our items on our todo list. You'll see most of them when you pull into the lot on Sunday.

We relined both parking lots so we can actually see where the parking spaces are. We'll see how this weathers itself. We also put in some new parking stops. We also did some rewiring to help improve the speed of the office computer.

After we were done at church, we headed off to Cindy Johnson's to do some trimming of the shrubs. As we arrived at Pine Acres we did some quick maintenance projects there. We took care of some bee nests and cleaned out the pavilion gutters so when the next thunderstorm comes it doesn't overflow the gutters.

We took a little breather before we headed to the home of Bill and Lisa Trovinger for the evening. They opened their pool for the group to use. As we sat out to enjoy the evening, we began to feel the breeze blow. And yes I'm sure you'll eventually see that the group celebrated Kathy's birthday. No, Kathy's birthday was not during mission week but it is close enough for the group to want to celebrate. And yes, it will be a special birthday this year of celebrating 60 years.

After a rousing evening of reminiscing and catching up with Bill and Lisa, we got worried as we again saw the skies light up. The storms are once again coming so decided we better head back and button down Pine Acres for yet another storm.

While today's post is short, it's not because the work was small. It's because Kathy is tired and is planning to soon head to bed. Stay safe and stay dry and we'll try to do the same.

Wednesday – August 11th

The morning is coming sooner and sooner as the days go by. Today was a day that sleep came easy and alarms were missed. But the team pulled together and breakfast was ready by the 7:00ish hour. Breakfast today was French toast. Today we were heading back to Coleman's park to do a mulching project. We were working with Craig again and we were to report to the playground area at Coleman's.

We arrived just a few minutes late. That was more on me (Kathy) as it's hard to leave Pine Acres when you misplaced the keys to open the gate. Yikes. But that got resolved and off the crew went. Craig and his team were unloading our first load of playground mulch. That was 10 yards. Craig left for the next load as we formed teams. We had the filling team, the wheelbarrow team and the spreading team. It didn't take us long to get into a rhythm.

While we waited for Craig to return for our next load, we practiced our skills on the playground. We can verify that the playground is best for those under the age of 12 because we were a little too big for the turbo slide, but we gave it a try. Craig returned with load 2, thus giving us another 10 yards of mulch to spread. This load we specifically were to put around the outer part of the larger playground to make it less of a trip hazard to get out of the playground.

And of course, we finished before Craig came back. This break, we specifically pushed water and for some of us, it was a good time to do some chiropractic relief for our backs. Here comes Craig back up the drive and this load he is going to drop at the smaller play area. As he hops out, he shared that as he came up the drive he said to himself there is no way we could be waiting on him. Um, yep we were.

If you're counting that was load 3 or 30 yards of mulch. Before Craig left to go for his next round, we took a group picture. Since our own Skip Wolf is on the board, the picture taken is to be sent to him to share with the board, be put on their website and be part of their annual report to the County Commissioners.

As we finish spreading that mulch, we are moving a little slower on break and definitely pushing the water as now it's getting hot. Here comes Craig with load 4 or our 40th yard of mulch. He said that he was going to go put his truck away as things are looking a 1000% better. Craig shared a stat with us. The playground was put in around 2014 and it was fully mulched. The crew has not been able to mulch anything in between because there just aren't enough hours in the day. The reality, our parks depend on volunteers to help cover the gaps that the staff are not able to get to.

Ok, looking at our watches, it is 11:00, now what. We head back down to the ballpark picnic area for our lunch and to recuperate for our afternoon activities. We sat and chatted/ate lunch and had our ice cream dessert provided by Skip before we decided it was time to head home. We headed back to Pine Acres for our afternoon of work.

Our project at Pine Acres has been to tear down one of the playground swing sets for a couple reasons. First, the swing sets were put in back in 1993, they are showing their wear and tear. Second, we have a tree right by that swing set that needs to come down due to the bottom rotting. While we thought was had done quite a bit of the work yesterday afternoon, we quickly came to realize that there was quite a bit of work to do.

We broke into 3 crews. The fire crew. They were to burn the wood as this wood was ROTTEN, particularly the legs. This set definitely needed to come down. Then there was the splitter or saw crew. They were cut the pieces smaller to make them burnable. And finally there was the demo crew. They were to remove the many, many, many nails that were put in by the installers. As we were working, the phones started to go off. You have got to be kidding me. Another night of heavy torrential rains. We definitely don't need to worry about the fire. The heavy rains put the finishing touches on that. We also realized another project we need to do tomorrow, clean out all the gutters because the rain is not going down any downspouts.

I haven't heard the reports on the water proofing of the tents, but the stakes kept them on the ground. That was good. And while the trees bent in the high winds, we were blessed by not having any of them break. We thank for your prayers and God for protecting us once again. We know where all the roof leaks are, where not to stand on the pavilion and where the high water in the grass is, but that's ok.

Supper this evening lasagna. Thanks to Cindy and Lil for making the lasagnas. After supper, we were supposed to have a vesper service around the fire pit, but that's ok. The pavilion served as our vesper area and singing This Little Light of Mine with our little candles (battery operated) just sounded so amazing amongst the crickets and the frogs as our background singers.

As I type this, I'm watching this amazing movement of the worms. They have decided the pavilion is the best place for them and they are moving by the hundreds onto the pavilion. I sit here listening to the group as the under 25s are playing a team game on their phones and the rest of us are just chilling from a hard day's work.

As happened last night, the evening has cooled and it is a great night to just sit out and hear God's creation. I'm going to go enjoy some of that quietness as I sign off until tomorrow.

Tuesday – August 10th

Here we are on a cloudy Tuesday morning. We look at the forecast....10% chance of rain. Oh weatherman, it's raining.....there's the 10%. That was a quick cloud burst. We didn't have to hustle quite as bad this morning. We only needed to drop garbage off at church on our way in town, so we could delay breakfast to 7:00. Those that were up for breakfast and lunch duty were up at 6:00 as breakfast was pancakes. Ok, that was most of us....some others were up at 4:30.

After breakfast, we headed to Coleman's. We were working today for Skip Wolf as he is heading the homerun hitting contest next week. We did weedwhacking in the way outfield. We also helped him line the 200 and 300' lines all the way around the field. As we finished up there, the sun was coming out to bring the humidity back. Oh great.

As we finished up there, we had lunch at the picnic tables above the baseball field. Skip joined us for lunch as he bought us dessert....thanks Skip. After lunch, we transitioned to work for Craig, the head of maintenance. He had weeding a flower bed on today's list. We had that knocked out in 20 mins. Now, let's be real, if you or I did the flower bed, it would've taken all afternoon to do, but with 13 people, it translates to minutes.

We decided to swing by church on our way home to see if we could put the parking stakes up for our relining the parking lot project on Thursday. We found the parking lot at the church was empty, so we decided to not only put the stakes up but also put the caution tape to "save" those parking spaces.

Now we're heading back to Pine Acres. No we aren't done for the day. We decided to start on our playground project. One of the original swing sets is being retired and a new one built. We are to take it down, cut the new wood and put it in storage awaiting for the tree that is rotting out from the bottom to be taken down.

We did get all the wood cut, however, we aren't quite done tearing apart the swing set. We needed to stop as the storms were beginning to threaten. We went into storm mode. The tarps were raised and all the items that could get wet or blow away were secured. We were eating our supper of burgers and mac/cheese during the height of the storm. I'd like to report all three out in the grass tents fared well. They stayed dry and didn't blow away.

Dessert for this evening was apple pie and ice cream. Umm, thanks G for the pies. After supper, we didn't have the chance to do a lot as Pine Acres was very, very, very wet. We did our bathroom cleaning duties. The under 25s played games on their phones as teams. We over 25s sat around and chatted the evening away.

Hopefully the storms are over for the evening. It is very nice and cool this evening. Temps this evening are down in the upper 60s.

Ok, this was a quick update, so hopefully I remember everything. Keep the oars out and the prayers coming.

Monday – August 9th

Wow, those nights are really short. We were up at the bright hour of 6 AM to get breakfast and lunch moving. We were up a little extra early because we needed to run errands before we got started for our day. More on that in a little bit.

Keep this thought in mind for the rest of the week. It actually was cool at Pine Acres. About 3:30 we woke up shivering. We will relish that feeling as the week unfolds. The other thing we realized is all the sounds of Pine Acres. And sadly it's not about the frogs, the cicadas or the owl. We have heard them. But what we've come to realize is 322 around Pine Acres is a drag racing area. You name a vehicle, we heard it. Yes, those sounds do echo around the mountain.

Anyway, breakfast started out week out simple this morning. We had cereal and cinnamon buns along with the normal sides...fruit, yogurt. Then we needed to roll out by 7:30 as the truck/trailer was going across town to Zimmerman's Mulch to unload the trailer of what we picked up yesterday with Pastor Dave/MJ.

The rest of us did a drop of recycling at Kathy's. Then off we all went to meet at the Nature Barn at Stoever's Dam Park to get our assignment for the day. We met our supervisor for the morning and he explained what he wanted us to do. It was a lot of weeding, weedwhacking, mulching and picking up sticks. We had no idea what we were doing at Stoever's so we guessed what we packed.

We spent the morning pulling the weeds around the Nature Barn. Josh and Kathy did a bunch of weedwhacking. Josh did all the weedwhacking where poison was involved, of which there was quite a bit of poison. Didn't matter if it was ivy or sumac, there was a lot. Nate headed a crew that played pick up sticks. There were quite a few sticks. We loaded those on the trailer as we figured we were pretty close to Zimmerman's, we could do another run.

We were done at Stoever's by lunch time, so what are we to do for the afternoon? Hmm, let's look over the list. We could run to the Fisher's as they had a bunch of trimming on the list. That makes sense because then we could do a run to Zimmerman's with both the Stoever's pile and what we got at the Fisher's.

We first needed to stop by the church to pick up a ladder for the trek. Then we arrived for the attack. I say the attack as we all know what it's like to own forsythia. They grow like weeds. We trimmed all of the shrubs last year and they came back like a vengeance.

Also, Al has been the photographer today since he is recovering from his back surgery. Let's just picture, Al with a camera in his hands, what could go wrong. We found out when we got to the Fisher's....the battery died. Sigh. The backup battery was plugged in back at Pine Acres. Josh had a battery charger that we could use to at least get a few pictures.

We arrived, we trimmed, we conquered. We left with a full trailer of brush. Our trailer is a 6x10 cargo trailer, so picture the trailer full from top to bottom. As we left the Fishers, we all had our assignments. Kathy and crew were on ice run to pick up for the rest of the week (we hope). Peg and crew needed to

run to get Timmy's allergy meds. Vickie and her crew had the exciting task of unloading the trailer out at Zimmerman's. That was not a fun task, but a task that they did very well.

We arrived back at Pine Acres to begin the process of doing showers. Yep, 13 people to get through showers with the size water tank that we have. It's go in, wet, turn off the water, soap, turn on the water and rinse. Doing that process, we've been pretty successful getting everyone through and still have lukewarm water. Oh yes, we have 14 people, but G takes her shower at home more from a safety perspective, especially since she does it when we're all out and about.

Josh and Zach started the grills for supper for chicken. As we sit around telling stories of the day, we smell charcoal and chicken. Not a bad smell to have, but having the chicken in front of us would be a better feeling. Oh, break time. Just heard the chicken is ready and dinner to be served.

Dinner this evening was grilled chicken and rice. After dinner we had a planned outing to Brickerville House Ice Cream for an evening out. What was a surprise was today was Vickie's birthday. We surprised her with a birthday celebration. We were actually somewhat on our good behavior, well let's say the under 25s were. We over 25s had a few too many stories to tell which generated a few too many laughs, but that is a good thing.

After ice cream, it was another round of Kan Jam and planning for our Tuesday. Signing off for now. Til tomorrow.

Sunday – August 8th

Here we are back again for another mission week. This year we are back using Pine Acres as our home base and doing work in and around Lebanon County. The day started early today. We had a rental group using Pine Acres today and we didn't want to interfere in their activities, so we arrived by 8:30 to do our setup.

For most trips, setup means unpacking food, unpacking gear and getting ourselves organized. But we couldn't do that. We could unpack our gear but it needed to be in staging areas. Well really I should back up a few days. Our mission prep didn't just start today but has been going on for weeks. That's been evident by the little slips of paper that people picked up for food and bought for the week. We send our many thanks for all of those that helped us in any way.

Once the food arrived at church, "G" organized and packed it ready for transport. Then thanks to Marj and Doug Hummel for coming in to pick up everything and transport to Pine Acres. But remember, with a rental group using Pine Acres today, the food and everything needed to be staged so it sat on top of the firewood box in the house.

Ok, now we are ready to continue our story. Our morning continued with those that were sleeping in tents out from under the pavilion and in the bunk house to set up their gear. Under the advice of the Pine Acres men, they advised the best place to put the tents to stay out of the gully rushing thunderstorms that we expect later in the week. But we only could do so much. For those of us under the pavilion, our gear got put in the garage for staging.

Now it's only 9:45 and what are we to do with the rest of the morning. Looking over our long list of todos, we decided to go pick up the trailer. Thanks to Tom Strohm for getting things ready for us. Once we had the trailer we were off to Lowe's for our lumber for a Pine Acres project later in the week. Just

to give you a sense of the lumber prices, when I priced the lumber 2 months ago til we bought it today, the price dropped a little over \$100.

One would think having a trailer that is 6x10, all of our lumber would fit. Well, almost. We got the 10' and 12' in the trailer, but then we had 2 16' boards. We developed the plan at our meeting last week and now it was time to execute. Yep, Kathy's van can transport 12' boards and have the hatch closed, so if we get our ratchets and bungees, our safety tape, we should be good to transport them in the van. We even got Tank, our stuffed turtle from 2 years ago involved to protect the windshield.

Upon arriving back at Pine Acres, we unloaded the lumber and began to gather our plan for the afternoon. But before we finalized the plan, we had our lunch of Bruno's subs. Thanks to Jed and Bruno's for your support of our mission. We appreciate all you do for us.

Now that lunch is behind us, let's review the list. We need to go to Trovingers for a wheelbarrow and to Kathy's to pick up the new parking lot car stops. Ok, let's divide and conquer. The truck/trailer will go get the wheelbarrow and the rest will go to Kathy's to get the parking stops and do a bathroom break. Now that the truck/trailer has swung by to get the parking stops, we head to Pastor Dave's and MJ's to pick up brush that will be taken to Zimmerman's tomorrow morning.

We make a quick stop at Vickie's to get some more air mattresses for everyone and off we go to Yogey's for the all important mini golf game. It would be men against the women to decide who is going to do chores on Monday. I don't think Heidi and Wyatt realized the seriousness of the game until the official scorekeepers were names....Peg for the men and Al for the women. It was a hot afternoon. A sign of what is to come. We decided to do the south course since 75% of that course is in the shade. It was a nail biter. Since the women were a player short, it was agreed the format would be to add up all scores and do the mean average.

The women finished a good 4 holes ahead of the men, so off they went to get something cool to drink while they waited for the finish. Finally, the scores are being totalled. Both numbers had a 5 in it. The women had a 6 in theirs. The men had a 2 in theirs. And drumroll please.....The men's average was 52. The women's average was 51.6. I told you it was a nailbiter. The women will enjoy their day off from chores.

Now we're off to the church for our list of items. What could we need at church? As I said, we had a group today at Pine Acres, therefore we couldn't bring any of our perishable food out. All of that food was in the kitchen freezers/refrigerators at church. And having just two refrigerators in the kitchen is a little tight when you are eating all of your meals out there. Therefore, we picked up the refrigerator that we have in the Youth Center and loaded on the back of Vickie's truck.

All of that afternoon work was done and back to Pine Acres by 5 PM. We unloaded all the food, the ice that we got along the way, the refrigerator and then went to work to finish building tent city. Peg and Vickie are in one tent under the pavilion and G and Kathy are sharing another tent. Our evening was very relaxing. We had hotdogs in the new fire pit. Thanks to the Trovinger family for that new addition. Then it was sitting around and telling stories. Oh wait, that was the over 25s. The under 25s played a rousing game of Kan Jam. That is our normal Sunday night activity, usually with waves crashing in our background, but tonight it was with crackling wood.

After the game was over, we couldn't quiet the fire until we had a round of smores. That will keep us going for the next couple hours. As I finish writing, we are doing our evening prep. We're taking showers and getting ready for our day tomorrow. Stay tuned for tomorrow's update.

Oh P.S. – since I'm running on people's personal hotspots at Pine Acres to post this, don't look for pictures as part of the blog. We'll have a time in September where we'll share pictures. Until then, Pastor Dave will post a couple pics on Facebook each day.