

THE SAINT TIM'S TIMES

Did you know, I lived in Mexico?

by Vicki Cowal

I moved to Greenville two years ago after living in Mexico for 51 wonderful years. My son just informed me that the Mexican flag is unofficially considered the most beautiful flag in the world. I would extend that to saying that Mexico is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. I loved it from the start.

In 1970 I moved from Toronto to Mexico City with my husband and two small children. My husband worked in the international division of a large advertising company. We had been hoping for an overseas transfer and were thrilled when Mexico came up.

Mexico City in 1970 had a population of seven million, a far cry from today's twenty million and it was, except for the smog, a fantastic place to live and raise children. Our third child was born there in 1972. They all grew up bilingual and bicultural. I was fortunate that I spoke good Spanish before arriving, thus making adapting to a new life much easier.

I spent the first thirty-three years in Mexico City. During that time, I worked in many different fields – marketing with my now ex-husband when he left advertising, journalism while working with several international correspondents, cooking classes, food critic, and, to top it off, catering.

In 2003, it was time for a change. Leaving the city behind, I moved to a tiny village an hour away. It was paradise with its clear mountain air and rural culture. As the only English-speaking person there, I soon became the village language teacher. It was the perfect way for me to become a true part of the community.

In another turnaround, my son and I opened a restaurant in a nearby small city. We were very successful for ten years, but both of us were ready for a big jump -i.e., returning to the United States.



Egyptian Pilgrimage

by *Angela Mallette*

In April I traveled with the Greensboro Holy Trinity Episcopal Church Pilgrimage Group to Egypt. The Sphinx, Pyramids, Egyptian temples and the Nile...what an opportunity to experience things I'd only seen in pictures!

But what made this a pilgrimage rather than just a tour was the emphasis on Egypt's Biblical history and heritage. We visited Coptic churches, including one built over a cave where the Holy Family is said to have taken refuge after fleeing Herod. We saw ancient Coptic Monasteries and learned how the monks continue to live away from the world but connected to their community.

Our time in the Sinai was one of the highlights. Our guide described Moses and the Israelites wandering from place to place, finding water and making camps. He also explained how the Bedouins continue to live in this hot, dry place.

The Bedouins were gracious as they cooked our food over an open fire and guided our camels. We camped in the desert for two nights. Yes, it was hot and dry and exhausting, but camping under the stars and seeing the Milky Way from my sleeping bag was magical.

The next two nights we stayed at the base of Mt. Sinai in St. Katherine's monastery. St. Katherine's is home to many Byzantine Icons, including the oldest Icon of Jesus (dating from the 6th century). We made our way up Mt. Sinai (some of us on camels) and celebrated Eucharist on the plateau called Eljah's Basin. Some of the group continued up the 750 Steps of Redemption to the top of the mountain.

Traveling with an Episcopal Priest (the Holy Trinity Rector, David Umphlett) kept me grounded in the spiritual perspective of pilgrimage. We had opportunities for reflection, discussion and worship in places that bring the Bible to life.

I'm grateful to Holy Trinity for allowing their clergy the time and support to lead these trips, and for allowing me to participate.





Camp Trinity First Timer

by *Thaddius, rising 6th grade*

Camp was a lot of fun with many activities such as sailing, paddling, 4-square, crabbing, the pool, water carnival, and many other fun things to do. On day one on Sunday, they would get you situated with the schedule and you would go to your designated cabin and make your bed and wait for everyone to get to the cabin.

After everyone got there you would go to the activity center, and you would play games to get comfortable with the camp. After a while it would be dinner time. You would wait in a line of boys or girls depending on gender. Then the activity director, CeCe (for me at least) would choose who goes first into the dining hall. Sometime the people at the front of the line would play rock, paper, scissors and whoever won, that line would go first, or CeCe would pick the quietest line.

CeCe would put each one of you at a certain table. This would be your table for the rest of the week. Different staff would sit at your table every meal. Then all of you would say grace. Then you eat. After dinner you would play more games and go to campfire (sing songs until almost bedtime). After that, you would go back to your cabin, get a shower, and go to bed.



SPARK'Dwell Snippets

by the youth summer trip team

A team of six students and one adult traveled to Winston-Salem July 23-28 for a "spirit and service learning experience." A recap could last pages, but instead, here are a few reflections from the week. We encourage you to talk to any of our team members about their time!

SPARK'DWELL



Day Two: A Pilgrimage Through the Margins

Today, counselors from The Dwelling led the entire group in a simulation exercise designed to teach us about the systems they try to navigate in their lives. Counselors are individuals who have previously been or are currently unhoused. In addition to the groups our students were in (see below), other groups also sought vital documents like an ID, clothes for an interview, temporary shelter, addiction treatment, and food for their kids. Each group had a counselor who walked us through (quite literally) a narrative story that the counselor team wrote as an amalgamation of their experiences.

Fireworks

Our task was to locate mental health services. In doing so, we faced many challenges like having an ID, finding transportation, and open space at a clinic. After we did these challenges, we applied for mental health care but failed. There were several reasons for rejection, and some were contradictory. This gave us insight into how getting just one task completed is so hard.

Helen + Lucas

Match Boxes

Our task today was to do our laundry. To start, we had to walk 1.1 miles with two trash bags full of clothes. Upon arriving to the mat we had a quick lunch and explored a nearby shop while the things were washing. After a ten-minute trip the clothes were missing. Imagine it was really all your clothes and they are all gone... after waiting all day there is nothing.

Phoebe + Jack

Light Bulbs

Our task was to get permanent housing. We filled out paper applications in the public library, the internet wasn't helpful. We rode the bus across town to the property manager to turn in our application. He was not there, and we had to go back to work. He called later to give us an update. Of five applications, only one was accepted.

Lou + Sebastian



On the last night, we asked each student to reflect on something meaningful from their week, whether that was a service partner or project, a specific person, a worship experience or speaker, etc.

My favorite part was that SPARK'Dwell had volunteers who were homeless (either now or previously). It was my favorite because it showed everyone can work together to complete something. It helped me learn more when they all told their stories.

All of Wednesday sticks out to me. The soup kitchen was mind blowing the amount of people served and food given away was amazing. Then we went to the ministry gardens and met Mr Johnell and he was full of enthusiasm and love for everyone around him and his garden.

Having dinner at the Peacehaven trailer park was very enjoyable to me. When we showed up all of the kids who we had never met before were so happy to see us. I helped serve them all spaghetti and homemade cookies. After dinner we went outside and played 4 square, basketball, jump rope, and tug of war as well as drew many pictures on the sidewalk.

It was important to me to meet Zae and Q. Zae because he is just wonderful to talk to, he knows a lot and he's interested in everything. He's a great person. Q because he was hilarious, he opened up to us and told his story.

My favorite speech out of the week was on the first day when Cliff told us that he was a normal guy doing normal things when suddenly it all went down hill. One part especially stood out to me was he said put a hand up not just a hand out. Saying hello has an impact on how it makes people feel. Multiple times a day people would just stare at him or yell at him about being better. But when you roll a window down and say hello or have a great day, it could change their's. Even when you don't have cash or food just say hello. Cause even when it might not mean much to you, it might mean something to them.

OG Cheryl was so passionate about the Odd Fellows Cemetery. She talked to me about people throwing all of their trash into the graveyard because they are calling it a "dump". They will just stare at people cleaning and not help at all. OG is trying to get as much help as she needs to try and clean it all up.

