

# WITNESS

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**N**estled on the Caribbean coast, Santa Marta is a beautiful place for vacationers to go in the winter. In the center of town near the University is Calvary Reformed Church led by Pastor Edison Flores.

Back in the winter of 2016, Dr. Neal Hegeman, the academic vice president of Miami International Seminary (MINTS), requested that RMS assist the church in constructing a worship facility complete with classrooms and a study for Pastor Edison. The first floor was completed through the efforts of 10<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, PA.



RMS assembled a team to travel to Santa Marta at the end of July and help with the construction of a second floor at a cost of \$20,000

(USD). Through the fundraising efforts of the United Reformed Missions Association (URMA) and the team, \$13,500 was raised to begin the construction. With this amount, local workers were able to complete the structural portion of the second floor by the end of August.

While the RMS team was there, we were able to assess the needs to finish the project. It was determined that an additional \$7,000 would complete the second floor. As of this date, the money has been provided once again by our brothers and sisters in Canada. Pastor Edison has begun the hiring of the contractors to complete this work, D.V., by the end of this year! In the future, the church would like to add a third and possibly a fourth floor for a large conference room and housing.

Calvary Church has several programs intent on commu-

nity outreach. One program provides low-income children with a warm meal, tutoring, and Bible instruction. Associated with that is a sports program that teaches these children teamwork and how to properly handle conflict. This instruction is grounded in the truths of Scripture, namely in how we are to interact with our fellow man. Another program they offer is a bi-weekly Bible study with the indigenous people of Colombia which takes place on a reservation nearby. The people there are very poor and are considered lower-class citizens. The gospel message is proclaimed, and many are turning away from their alcoholism and substance abuse to become Christians. Finally, the church has now begun street evangelism in front of their building. Many citizens are stopping by to receive the literature and Bibles that are handed out. Only God knows who will receive this message and turn to Him for their salvation.

Please pray for the saints there in Santa Marta as they spread the gospel message. Soli Deo Gloria!



*"...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

*Acts 1:8b*

**A**s followers of Christ, we often find that God has generously supplied us with tremendous blessings. Psalm 67 shows us how we are to respond to and share these blessings. We are blessed to be a blessing, to be “**so that**” people.

In verses 1 and 2, the psalmist is declaring that it is God who distributes these blessings. We as His chosen people turn to our God and ask Him to extend His grace to us, to bless us, and to turn His face toward us. This occurs **so that** in blessing us, His ways are made known throughout the world. His way of salvation is shown through His people among all the nations.

Verse 3 calls us to praise God **so that** all the peoples of the world will praise Him. We praise God and are glad in Him because He is a fair and just Judge who is not turned one way or the other but remains constant in His guidance of all the nations of the earth (verse 4). This is in contrast to the ways and whims of false gods. Even in the midst of trials and tribulations, we testify that our heavenly Father is sovereign over all. His ways are good **so that** we do not lose hope, and He will carry us through.

Verse 5 echoes the words of verse 3 in order to remind us and reinforce our need to praise our God **so that** all the peoples will praise Him. Even when we go through difficult times or when all around us seems to be in chaos, we know that we belong to Him and can praise Him.

In verse 6, God shows His goodness in material blessings as the earth yields its increase. We know that as God’s people He promises to provide for our needs. We here in North America have been given material blessings and have gotten very comfortable in our living. As His people, we are commanded to share with those who are lacking. We have the opportunity to share our material blessings through our offerings and gifts. As God’s redeemed, we have been given His spiritual gifts and the gift of salvation from our sins. The good news of this gift is the most important thing that we can share. Our Lord taught us that the one who drinks of the well of Living Water will thirst no more, and so we need to tell others of how they too can drink and be satisfied from the well of salvation.

Finally in verse 7, God gives us the purpose for the blessings He showers upon us. He blesses His people **so that** “all the ends of the earth will fear Him!”

We here in North America have been doubly blessed. The first blessing is that we have been given disposable income, much more than we need for our daily bread. “...Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required...” (Luke 12:48b). The second blessing given to us as God’s people is the gift of the knowledge of the Savior and a desire to serve Him. This is the treasure which we have been entrusted to share with the world. God commanded us in His Word to love Him with all of our being: heart, soul, mind, and strength AND to love our neighbor as ourselves. If we truly love God and our neighbor, we will want to obey His commands and share the only way to joy in this life and the life to come.

Charles Spurgeon once said, “Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.” It is time to examine our hearts to see how much we want others to be saved. It is time to share our blessings. You were blessed **so that** you may be a blessing!

### Psalm 67

- 1 *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—*
- 2 *so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.*
- 3 *May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.*
- 4 *May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.*
- 5 *May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.*
- 6 *The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us.*
- 7 *May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.*



*from the director's desk*

# TASC

TEENS ACTIVELY SERVING CHRIST  
SUMMER 2017

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*Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,  
Your faithfulness to the clouds.*

*Your righteousness is like the great mountains of God;  
Your judgments are like the great deep;  
Man and beast you save, O Lord.*

Psalm 36:5-6

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## Burlington, WA

I had the privilege of attending TASC in Burlington, WA this past summer, along with young people from my home church (Trinity URC, Caledonia, MI), Menno, SD (Zion RCUS), Visalia, CA (Trinity URC), and Burlington, WA (Burlington URC).



My name is Brian Vos, and I am the pastor of Trinity URC in Caledonia, Michigan. As I write today, the vast city of Houston is reeling from unprecedented flooding from Hurricane Harvey, Florida is bracing for the wrath of Hurricane Irma – the most powerful Atlantic storm in history

– Mexico has been shaken by a massive earthquake, triggering tsunami waves, and the West is suffering from some of the worst wildfires on record.

Such natural disasters are God's "wake-up call" to us all. As those who have been given life by God's grace, it is our privilege to proclaim the gospel to a suffering and broken world. It is often through service that we are given a platform to speak the gospel into the lives of others. TASC provides a unique opportunity to do exactly that.

As we spent time in devotions and in prayer (both individually and corporately), we also served together at a local Christian school, Habitat for Humanity, a homeless shelter in Bellingham, and a number of other projects: we weeded, we landscaped, we spread "beauty bark," we mowed, we painted, we built, we restored, we served in the name of Christ. All the while we grew together in the grace and knowledge of Christ, enjoying the blessings of friendship in Christ and fellowship in the gospel.

Before leaving the beautiful Pacific Northwest, we enjoyed a day away on San Juan Island. After a breathtaking ferry ride to the island on which we viewed snow covered mountains, we did a zip line course through the woods followed by some shopping and great PNW coffee. Following a beautiful ride home, we enjoyed our last evening together around a bonfire, giving thanks to God for his goodness and grace, and rejoicing together in his steadfast love, and in the privilege of serving Him!



# Pantego, NC



My name is Becky Van Essendelft, and I have gone to TASC for five years. Each year brought about new friendships, fond memories, and a time of spiritual enrichment. This year I attended a TASC in Pantego, North Carolina.

Being from New York, it was easy for me to spot differences in the way the people there lived and the way I lived, but shortly after arriving in Pantego, the group began to meld together. It was no longer one group from North Carolina, another from New York, Iowa, and Michigan; we all became one group. That is one of the things I love most about TASC, you get to meet other Christians from all over the states and spend a week working together and growing together in the Lord. Every night we would have a time where Rev. Tuininga would preach God's word. He talked about what our goal in life is and where our citizenship is.

As a college student, I never really feel sure about

where I am going to end up in the future, and it is something I often worry about. On this trip I learned something I feel like I already should have known, our goal in life is not finding a good job, or finding the right spouse, or having a nice house. These things are nice to have, but they are by no means everything. Our goal in this life, as Christians, is to live for Christ and show His love to everyone we can. We are strangers in this world; our citizenship is in heaven.

I went to a public high school and now attend a public college, so even though TASC is a work trip, to me it feels like a vacation. TASC taught me to appreciate and absorb all the moments I can because they do not always come very often. A very important lesson I learned this year is that I need to take the next step.

This was the last trip I could attend as a student, but

my journey of serving should not and does not end here. I've learned from TASC over the years that it can be very easy to serve while on a trip with other people watching, but I learned I needed to serve God more in my everyday life. I've learned to trust in God and His providence. Romans 8:31 says, "What shall we say about such wonderful things as

*"...my journey of serving should not and does not end here."*

these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" I thank God for all the blessings TASC has brought my life and how it has brought me closer to Him and other believers in Christ.





My name is Carole Curry, and I have had the wonderful opportunity and great privilege to be part of the TASC family for quite some time now. It all started when I volunteered to provide breakfast for a group of teens and sponsors each morning during the week that our church was the host church for the TASC group. Getting up at 5:30 each morning on my first full week off from work (I'm a school teacher) seemed like a great idea to serve and support such a group. It certainly was, and it changed my life forever.

TASC is a wonderful program that allows teens in high school to gather in various parts of the United States along with other teens from other states to become the hands and feet of Jesus for a week. Along with the special time of beginning and continuing great friendships, the teens and sponsors are hard at work helping the local community in whatever capacity they are called to do. Cleaning, painting, yard work and organizing are just a few of the jobs that they may need to do; however, there is always a chance that there will be plenty of tearing down the old and building the new. I am always amazed at just how much work the teens can accomplish and how willing they are to dig in and get a messy or physically strenuous job done.

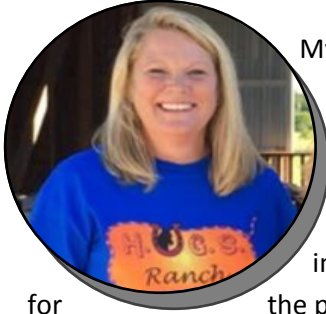
My very first TASC was serving breakfast, but my love for TASC started there in that hot kitchen. Getting the opportunity to meet the teens was a super experience.

Creating long lasting friendships with the sponsors was another added benefit. I have since had the joy of going on a few TASC trips and working side by side with the teens. We have laughed, cried and shared so much during our time together while we worked, played, prayed, worshiped and relaxed together.

After we are commissioned by our host church to go out and serve, we are given our jobs for the day and week ahead. It is such a terrific feeling knowing that we are going out to help those in need. While serving, there are always opportunities to share what we are doing and why we are doing it. The recipients of our labor of love are often overwhelmed with emotion and full of gratitude toward the group. Many are very impressed that we are there, giving of our own time, sometimes from across the country, to serve and encourage those we don't know. Jesus told us in Luke 10 that we are to show love and mercy to those surrounding us and those who need it most. The TASCers take this verse and put it into action with a loving and willing spirit.

We may only spend a week together, but a lasting bond is developed during this time. As we search the Scripture with our daily devotions and our group Bible sessions each night, we share a common bond that will not soon be broken. When it is time to part and return to our own homes, we know that we have all become TASCers for life.

# Wyoming, MI



My name is Lisa Carter, and I am the co-founder of H.U.G.S. Ranch in Byron Center, Michigan. The ranch has had the privilege of having several TASC groups serve

for the past few years. It is amazing to see so many willing teens and leaders come from all over the United States and Canada to help. They have spent long hours in the heat and rainy weather, determined to get all the jobs done while developing great relationships. I personally always like working with them and hearing their journeys.

These groups have served us in many ways by

painting, putting up fence, repairing fence, digging trenches, stacking hay, putting up shelving, landscaping, normal every day chores, etc. Through all their help, we are able to reach out and serve the children and families that come to the ranch.

We explain to the volunteers that they represent a spoke in a wheel. God represents the center, holding us all together. We need the love and support from all the spokes to help the wheel function. All jobs, whether big or small, are crucial in order for the wheel to work to its fullest potential.

Truly God is working. Children and adults are following what God has called them to do. The givers and the receivers are truly blessed in this ministry.



H.U.G.S. Ranch is a faith-based non-profit 501c3. Our mission is to encourage mental, emotional, physical and social healing to children and families, with assistance from equines either donated, unwanted or rescued, allowing these families to share together in the experience of

Hope   Understanding   Guidance   Support



# DUTTON, MI

My name is Matt Kloosterman, and I am a member of Dutton URC in Dutton, Michigan. TASC is something I look forward to all year, and I am never disappointed. This year I had the privilege of attending the TASC at Dutton URC. As always it was very productive and spiritually uplifting.

The theme text for the week was 1 Peter 2:6 which says "... you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We were taught 5 ways in which we could be living stones: stones of witness, stones of help, stones of worship, stones of reconciliation, and stones of unity.

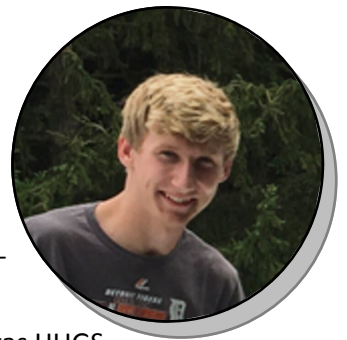
This year we worked with many nonprofit organizations. The Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) was designed to help pregnant women who may be struggling financially or considering having an abortion. PRC provides care for these women at a low cost and shares with them the gospel. We did a lot of painting and or-

ganization for them as well as building shelving units and sorting and boxing a lot of baby supplies.

Another site we worked on was HUGS Ranch where we set fence posts and helped fix the place up. The Potter's House is a Christian school in the inner city. They had a gym that needed to be painted, so we worked on that and installed shelving units for their upcoming school year.

We were also able to do a lot of work for church members and other families in need of help. Concrete was one of the bigger tasks we faced. We poured one family a new driveway and a sidewalk for another family. Many of our worksites also needed landscaping and mulching. We also did some power washing.

It was a very encouraging week, and all who attended are very thankful for it. We can't wait to see what God has in store for next year!



# New Hampton, NY



My name is Sandy Helms, and I attended the TASC at Hudson Valley URC. The theme of the week summarizes it all: "Love with-

out Limits." We came together in New Hampton, New York: 17 teenagers, 5 sponsors, and 1 TASC Master. Most of us didn't know what to expect. We came to bless others, and yet when the week was done, we had been blessed more than any of us could have expected. We raise our children to be examples of Christ, and we ask God to keep them safe and to use them for His kingdom. We send them out on a week like this, and a realization sets in that this is what God has called us to do.

Our daily schedule consisted of being up early and starting the day with personal devotions on the book of Jonah. We had breakfast and did our assigned daily chores. We would pack our coolers, and each of the 3 groups would head out to different work projects. A lot of painting was in store for some while others built shelves and made repairs, installed a hand rail, and were even able to assist a local fire department by washing all the fire trucks.

The work projects were our opportunities to show friendship, evangelism and to let our light shine. Some of the projects were at Christian schools where we knew the people we spent time with were Christians, but there were other projects where we could be a light in a dark world. We would attack each work project with hard work and a smile in hopes that others could see that we were different from a lot of teenagers. We tried

to bridge some gaps and show the hospitality that will hopefully, Lord willing, open some doors for the congregation at Hudson Valley United Reformed Church.

On Friday, the entire group was treated to a day away at "Splash Down Beach," a water park. When we returned to church that evening, we gathered in a circle and were asked about the best and worst things of the week. It was exciting to see a group of teenagers who started out the week so awkward and unsure of themselves have the comfort level to share with everyone what they enjoyed the most and to hear most of them say "the best part was all the friends I made."

I would encourage all parents and teens to take the time to participate in RMS. There is no greater satisfaction than seeing a group of teenagers putting themselves out there, and going outside their comfort zone, and glorifying God with the advancement of His kingdom and truly living out "Teens Actively Serving Christ."



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If you are interested in hosting a TASC in 2019, please contact us!

