

A NOTE FROM THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Dear Friends In Christ,

It has been my joy and pleasure to serve beside many of you during my two and a half years working here at North American Martyrs Parish. I would like to thank you for all the love and support you have given to me and my ministry here as the Pastoral Associate. I wanted to take a moment to share with you a very unique opportunity that I am participating in this coming summer. I hope that you will share in my joy of accepting this opportunity in mission and ministry and pray for me and those I am leading.

I have been a part of the New Wilmington Missionary Conference (NWMC) for over ten years. I originally went as a participant my first year and have been on staff ever since. I served on the Mission Staff while I lived in South East Asia. I then moved to the Young Adult Staff which is for the university aged students. Last year, I became a co-coordinator for the Young Adult Program and will continue that role for the next 3-4 years. The New Wilmington Missionary Conference looks to deepen the missionary spirit and seeks to live out the Great Commission. Here the mission interpretation meets the duty and ideal of proclaiming the gospel to all the world and making disciples of all peoples through worship, education, and hands-on service. You can learn more about this week-long conference that has been taking place for over 110 years by going to nwmcmision.org.

Every year the conference board sends a group of students, and their leader to some place around the world. This is called "Summer Service." Summer Service is an opportunity for college age, young adults to experience a different culture in mission. Each year 6-8 young adults are chosen to spend 6 weeks experiencing a difference culture. They return just in time to share what they have learned with the Conference family. All young adults who have been out of high school for one year and are not yet twenty-four years of age are eligible. The students have to go through a long application process and interview. Through prayer and discernment, the Summer Service Board selects a team, leader and a country they will service in.

This past Fall, I received a phone call from the Director of NWMC, Don Dawson. He asked me to lead the 2016 Summer Service trip. They are traveling to Central Asia. This is not a position that I applied for or even put my name in a hat for (there is no way to do either). I prayed about accepting this position, talked to Fr Joe, my family, and my colleagues in ministry. After guidance from the Lord, and the wisdom of those closest to me, I accepted this leadership role. Fr. Joe has graciously allowed me to keep my employment at North American Martyrs, and take a leave of absence for the months of June and July.

I am overwhelmingly honored to have been considered, asked, and trusted with the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of 8 students and take them half way around the world. I am at the feet of Jesus daily asking Him to guide me and help me to serve those students and Him well, and that He may be glorified. The nine of us will be joining missionaries in the country we are serving and work with them, encouraging those there, helping with special projects, and learning more about the culture and country we are in.

I have already begun praying for this trip and working hard on communication and unity within the team. I have spent time speaking with the people we will be working with in Central Asia, the Summer Service Board, previous team leaders and participants gaining insightful wisdom. There is a lot to prepare for and details to sort out before we leave in June, and it is my job to work on all these things. The trip will last from June 3- July 20, 2016. A NWMC will take place July 23-30. During the conference, we will have the opportunity to speak to all of the different age groups and the conference ends with us presenting to over 1000 people what God is doing in Central Asia and in our own hearts. I would love for you to all come to the conference and invite you to consider coming up for a day or the entire week. There will also be ways for you to follow a blog as we prepare and journey together and keep track of what's going on with us on facebook too. If you are interested in learning more or following any or all of these ways of communicating, just go to the website and click the link for Summer Service. Our team's pictures are already posted on there. Please pray for me and the 2016 Summer Service Team. We will need a lot of patience, compassion and flexibility traveling as a team in such a different culture. We hope to be the face of Jesus to all we meet and spread His love, no matter where each day leads us.

To the end that all may know,
Elizabeth
NAM Pastoral Associate