



WESTERN NC MISSION TRIP

June 1-7 Hurricane Recovery & Relief

TRIP INFORMATION SESSION
Sunday, April 13, 12:15 pm | Reveille House

Western NC Mission Information Session

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene forged a path from Florida through Georgia and into the Carolinas, bringing a level of flooding to the Appalachians not seen in over 100 years. As the rivers of the region rose, entire towns were wiped out, and many families lost loved ones, their homes, or their livelihoods.

Volunteers immediately converged on the area, and donations came from across the country. While immediate efforts concentrated on relief, it has taken months to begin recovery. Returning the area to its former condition could take five to ten years.



Floodwaters crest on September 30 in downtown Spruce Pine after 24 inches of rainfall.

In the days after floodwaters recede, local residents and volunteers begin removing contents from homes and downtown businesses.





Two months after the floodwaters receded, accumulated debris remained throughout the town and surrounding area.

What Is The Purpose Of This Trip?

Coordinated by the Western NC Conference, Spruce Pine UMC has committed to hosting mission groups devoted to relief and recovery. There is a dedicated site manager as well as church members who will be available to help while we're there.



What Will We Be Doing?

- Generally, this trip will be guided by the needs of the people we intend to serve.
- Residents are somewhere between relief mode and recovery mode.
- Examples of activities we may be engaged in include debris removal, replacing temporary fixes, demolition, delivering supplies, or light construction such as reframing or drywall installation.
- While project managers are overseeing the work, they may not be on-site at all times.
- In the weeks leading to our departure, we expect to have a clearer idea of specific work, but it is important that we be flexible!

Planned Schedule

- **Sunday, June 1** - depart in church bus from Reveille after 9:30 service, stopping for lunch along the way and arriving in time for dinner that evening.
- **Monday, June 2 through Friday, June 6** - on-site workdays (possible half-day excursion on Wednesday afternoon to Mount Mitchell or Penland Craft School).
- **Saturday, June 7** – depart after breakfast, stopping for lunch along the way, arriving mid-to late afternoon at Reveille UMC.

Accommodations

- We'll stay on-site at Spruce Pine UMC, likely in fellowship hall or classrooms. There should be a kitchen and showers available on-site (I will verify).
- Breakfast and dinner will be at nearby First Baptist Church which has been hosting other missionaries since Helene struck.
- Partial list of what to bring: Inflatable mattress, sleeping bag or bedding, headlamp or flashlight, toiletries, etc. For on-site work, we may need N-95 masks, nitrile gloves, Tyvek suits.

Note: We will have a participants' meeting in early May to outline specific group duties and items we'll need to purchase for the trip.

What Do I Wear?

- On-site: Old work clothes (T-shirts, comfortable long pants). Work boots or substantial sneakers. No sandals except away from site. Evenings off-site: Comfortable shoes, casual clothes. Light jacket or sweater. Be sure to bring adequate rain jacket.
- Spruce Pine altitude is appx 2,600 feet, with the surrounding area exceeding 4,000 feet. (Mount Mitchell, the highest point in Eastern North America at 6,684 feet, is just 32 miles away.)
- Daytime could be moderate to warm (mid 60s to low 80s), with nighttime cool (low 50s to mid 60s). At higher altitudes in the Appalachians weather can change very quickly!

What Makes A Successful Mission Trip?

- Remain flexible. We're there to offer our help to local residents in whatever ways they need.
- Prior to the trip, we'll divide up certain responsibilities. If you have special experience or interests, you'll have a chance!
- Mission trip leaders often have to make decisions for the good of the group. They may or may not seek input or consensus. Participants should be prepared to go with the flow!
- Take the opportunity to engage with those we are serving. They will appreciate being acknowledged, and it will make your experience more enriching.

Other Information

- This trip qualifies as an UMVIM mission, so participants will be enrolled in an available insurance program which includes coverage for accident medical expenses, sickness medical expense, emergency evacuation, and other insurance benefits.
- We're partnering with Woodlake UMC whose members will be staying at Spruce Pine UMC with us and participating in mission activity.
- Suggested donation for this trip is \$250, which will cover transportation and donations to our hosts.
- The deadline to sign up for this trip is **May 1**. All attendees at today's meeting will receive a registration form via email by April 18 to sign up and submit a donation payment.
- Thank you for your interest in serving! Any questions?