

May/June 2023

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:4-6

During the last two months, I traveled from Birmingham to Wisconsin to the Dominican Republic, and then back to Wisconsin again. I said goodbye to some dear friends and reunited with others. I started my summer job and a summer small group. Through all of this, I have been blown away by the Body of Christ: a family of believers from all over the world. No matter where I go, I encounter friends who will encourage me in my faith and help me grow closer to God. It is such a blessing, and I pray to never take it for granted.

Highlands Highlight

I finished my first year at Highlands College in May. There have been so many amazing experiences and opportunities for growth, but I am most thankful for the wonderful people God has put in my life. Proverbs 27:17 says that "as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another," and I have felt that my friendships are truly shaping me to be a better person and a better disciple of Christ. (with some of my sisters in Christ! >>)



Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic



We headed to the Dominican Republic about a week after I returned home from school at the end of May. I was so excited to reconnect with everyone! Not only did I get to spend time with my friends from the DR, but two girls that I know from Rio Grande are spending the summer doing ministry at a church there, and they made a wonderful addition to our mission team!

We spent the majority of our time working on Jaime and Jackie's new mission house. They are looking forward to having more space to host mission teams as well as local pastors and their families. Our team worked on assembling rebar columns that will form part of the footing and walls, while a group of Haitian men worked on digging holes and pouring the concrete footings.

(assembling rebar columns in the car port at Jaime's house due to some stormy weather; assembling more rebar at the construction site; a house in progress!)





We also did two kids programs: one in the church in Villa Majega and one in the church in Sombrero. Sherlande, a friend of mine from the church in Villa Majega, helped Patricia, Yarixa, and I with the program, and Jaime's daughter Jaimeline joined us out as well. We lead songs, played games, and taught a lesson about the Great Commission. Then, after a coloring page craft, the kids were dismissed with a snack and a lollipop. Being surrounded by all the kids again brought so much joy to my heart!

(Sherlande leading game time in Sombrero; kids from Villa Majega with their coloring pages; Lilly with a cute baby in Sombrero)



An Incredible Testimony

On one of the last days of our trip, Jaime and my dad arrived at the construction site and were greeted with the news that the lead builder, one of the Haitian workers, had been taken into custody by Dominican immigration officers. Most Haitians living in the DR are there illegally, and if they are taken into custody, they will be sent back to Haiti. Jaime and my dad began searching for him, as the rest of the team prayed. By the grace of God, we were able to locate him, and the Dominican officials released him, which was a miraculous act of leniency. When he returned to the work site, our team gathered with the rest of the Haitian workers to pray and thank God for his release. It was certainly a celebratory moment! However, the story gets better! Just a few days ago, we received word from Jaime and Jacqueline that the same man accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized! Perhaps his personal story of God's faithfulness and provision moved his heart toward Jesus.

(Everyone gathered to pray and celebrate his release; the team visiting Pastor Patricio at his church)



Summer Fun (and Ministry)

I am spending my summer break working, spending time with family and friends, and serving at my church. I have also been leading a small group about evangelism and discipleship using the material that Peter and Joan taught in the discipleship training courses in the Dominican Republic. I am thankful for each person in the group, and I have loved seeing their enthusiasm as they interact with new material each week!



(Tell Your Story small group!)



Gratitude

- I am thankful for a restful summer at home! I'm enjoying spending time with my family and connecting with friends.
- I am thankful for each member of the small group and for their desire to serve God wherever they are and love those around them well!
- I am thankful for our mission trip to the Dominican Republic and for all the opportunities God has given me to travel and serve Him in different places!

(<< I had the blessing of seeing these dear friends again!)

Prayers

- Please pray for the construction process of Jaime and Jacqueline's house and for their continued ministry in the DR.
- Please pray for the small group and that God would continue to encourage and embolden the members to fulfill the Great Commission in whatever way He calls them to do so.
- Please pray for the rest of my summer vacation, for a smooth transition back to school in August, and for upcoming ministry opportunities (more information on that in the next report...)

Information

If you have questions or would like to hear more about my adventures in the DR, or my current adventure in Alabama, please email me at emily.stader@516NOW.org or message me through Facebook.

You can also visit my webpage at <https://516now.org/emily-stader/> to receive updates or to learn more about the organization of 516NOW.

If you would like to join me on this adventure as a financial supporter, there is a link to donate in the webpage above, or you can go directly to <https://516now.org/donations/support-emily-staderministry/>

Thank You and God Bless!
Emily