



# Church of St. Joseph - Mendham, NJ

## 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL APPALACHIA MISSION TRIP

### June 21 – 27, 2026



Thank you for your interest in our 2026 Teen Mission Trip to Appalachia to be held the week of June 21-27. We are excited to be planning St. Joseph's 18<sup>th</sup> Teen Mission Trip and partnering with Good Neighbors, Inc. in Paintsville, KY, for the 15<sup>th</sup> year.

This packet includes General Information and FAQs, Things to Bring, and Rules & Expectations. Please read the FAQs and the Health & Safety Guidelines before signing up as there is a lot of important information to understand.

***Sign-ups will open at 9 am on Saturday, January 10. The registration link will be available on the St. Joe's Youth Ministry Web Page: <https://stjoesmendham.org/youth-ministry>. (Priority will be considered for those who sign up by January 16.)***

We ask that if you are interested in attending, please complete all the information requested on the online forms. We will NOT be taking payment at this time.

Our procedure will be as follows:

- Please complete all the online information required in order to request a spot on the trip
- The week of January 26 – you will be notified whether you have a spot on the trip or have been placed on the waitlist. Do not be discouraged; often participants come off the waitlist
- If you have a spot on the trip, we will ask for payment in full of \$575 (through an online payment link) which will secure a spot for you.
  - If you must cancel more than 45 days from departure we will refund your payment minus a \$100 non-refundable portion
  - If you must cancel 45 days or less from our departure, the entire \$575 payment is non-refundable
  - Exception: In case of a medical or emergency reason, the entire payment is refundable
  - Every participant is required (they must sign off on this) to participate in our fundraising efforts as the cost of the trip is closer to \$1200 per teen. As always, the Board reserves the right to cancel participation, which will result in a full refund, minus the \$100 non-refundable

If the cost of the trip is a challenge for you, please contact Mark Tosso. We do not want the cost of the trip to prevent any teen from attending.

Please note that St. Joseph parishioners will receive priority.

All teens and parents are expected to attend the Parent/Teen Information Session on **Wednesday, February 11 at 7 pm** in the St. Joseph's gym when we will discuss trip preparations and fundraising plans.

May God bless you for your interest in and support of this mission!

**For any further questions or concerns, please contact:**  
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# **General Info and FAQs**



## **St. Joseph's 2026 Appalachia Teen Mission Trip**

Join us for a week of service to the people of Appalachia. We will help to build homes, foster relationships and grow spiritually in our mission to care for others and develop a feeling of community within our parish. We will work from Monday through Friday at pre-determined project sites. Jobs may consist of building porches, underpinning trailers, painting, installing ramps, repairing roofs and more.

**Dates:** Sunday, June 21 - Saturday, June 27

**Destination:** Paintsville, Kentucky

**Transportation:** Teens will be driven to Kentucky by chaperones who will be using vans and SUVs

**Cost:** The cost per participant this year is \$575. *We raise additional monies for food, transportation, gas and incidentals.*

**Teen Participants:** While we would like to accept all volunteers, we are limited in our number of participants due to job sites, chaperones, vehicle rentals, etc. and therefore will determine how many we are able to take based on these factors as we move forward. See above for 2026 sign-up procedure. Teens must be 16 years of age or over by summer's end OR a rising junior, rising senior or graduating seniors. St. Joseph parishioners receive priority.

**\*\* Mandatory volunteer and parent/participant meeting:  
Wednesday, February 11, at 7 pm in the St. Joe's Gym \*\***

**\*\* All participants are required to help in our fundraising efforts  
via the pasta dinner and church fundraisers \*\***

### **2026 Fundraising Dates:**

**2/19 - Friends & Family Letter Writing**

**3/14-3/15 - Nail Fundraiser**

**5/3 - Pasta Dinner**

**6/7 - Bake Sale**



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's):** **St. Joseph's 2026 Appalachia Teen Mission Trip**



### ***Who are Good Neighbors?***

Jason Benedict felt a calling to relocate to Johnson County, Kentucky where his father had volunteered as a young man and brought Jason along as a boy. Jason founded the non-profit organization to help the working poor in the area. Those he serves do not receive any government assistance. People in need reach out to Good Neighbors for help in repairing homes, putting on needed additions, etc. In return, those he helps are required to undergo financial training to teach them to budget and save and they often turn around and help others in their community. Good Neighbors is our host organization when we go to Kentucky. They arrange the sites we will work on, provide us with housing and help organize our evening activities. We have developed a special and tight bond with Jason and his staff and are thrilled to be returning to work with them again.

### ***What are the homes/families like that we help out?***

The homes we work on are often trailers or very small structures in real need of repair. Often we are called in for a roof repair, adding an addition for a growing family, insulating parts of a home or reinforcing or building a front porch in addition to many more projects. Often the repair is life changing for these families. The people we serve are all very different. We might have a military veteran with 5 children in a 2 room house that needs expanding, a grandmother who is a cafeteria worker and has to choose whether to heat her home or eat some days of the winter due to a lack of insulation, a couple who have holes in their flooring allowing cold air and creatures into their trailer, etc. All our families are working families who do not receive government assistance. They are proud and faith filled people and we are honored to serve them.

### ***How do we get to Kentucky? When do we return?***

We typically rent 10 and 12 passenger vans to transport the teens and chaperones to Kentucky. The chaperones drive the vans. We have a number of stops on the way to deal with bathroom requirements and if a driver needs to switch with another chaperone for a rest. We typically leave on a Sunday by 6:00 am and arrive in Paintsville, Kentucky by 5:00 pm. Our return trip is on the following Saturday when we leave by 7:00 am and typically pull into St. Joseph's parking lot by 5:30 pm.

### ***Where do we stay and what do we eat?***

Good Neighbors organizes our stay at the First United Methodist Church in Paintsville, Kentucky. It is a church and a school and provides us with plenty of space, a nice kitchen for preparing meals and a large gym for our many activities and for sharing our meals. The women typically sleep in the lower level. All female teens are in one large room. The men typically use the upstairs level which are separate classrooms, so there will be a number of boys in each room. Boys are not allowed on the girls' floor and girls are not allowed on the boys' floor. The main floor, where the gym and the kitchen are, will be where most of our time is spent when we are at the church. Everyone is expected to bring an air mattress (twin-size only), pillow and sleeping bag or sheets and a blanket.

Food is always excellent. Two or three of our chaperones run the kitchen and will always prepare meals for us with help by the teens. For breakfast there is an assortment set out and the teens help themselves. It could be oatmeal, cereal, toast, hard boiled eggs, fruit, bagels, etc. Always plenty to enjoy. Everyone makes their own brown bag lunch and dinner is a surprise each night but always fantastic. There is plenty to eat and if there are special dietary restrictions, we do our best to accommodate.

### ***What is a typical day like?***

Each morning begins bright and early. Everyone is encouraged to be at morning Mass at 6:30 am. After Mass teens dress, eat, pack lunches and are ready for morning meeting by 7:45 am. We then depart for job sites by 8 am. Each teen will have a job site that they are assigned to for the week. It is a nice way to get to know the people we serve and to see a job progress through the week. Remaining on the same site also builds relationships within our St. Joseph's community. The teens will have at least one adult who is knowledgeable with construction and can guide the teens for the week. Generally each site wraps up by 5:00 pm each day and heads back to home base for showers, dinner and ready for an evening activity. Each night is something different.

### ***How are the work groups / van groups decided?***

The job sites are the people you are with all week long. When we assign teens to groups we try to balance by gender, grade and the numerous schools that are represented on this trip. Our goal is to build community and get to know others. Parents who chaperone are generally not assigned to their teen's work/van group and siblings are generally not placed together. One of the highlights of this trip is to see teens get to know others, form new relationships and enjoy each other's company.

### ***What kind of work will I do?***

Every site is different. Teens may be working on siding a trailer or home, building a ramp into a trailer or home for a handicapped occupant, repairing a roof, pouring cement and laying a foundation for a new addition, replacing a doorway or window, painting a room, and on and on. There are numerous opportunities to work on but there will always be at least one adult to guide the teens, and generally two or more.

There are also chores to be done back at home base. Every group will be assigned chores which will rotate. They may be returning to home base early to help cook dinner, clear the tables, clean the bathrooms, take out the garbage, etc.

### ***What do I pack?***

Please refer to the "List of Things to Bring". It is very important that you do not over pack. We are a large group of people and the amount of luggage, sleeping bags, air mattresses, pillows, tools and food that we bring down is enormous. We are all limited to one suitcase or duffle bag and one twin air mattress, sleeping bag and pillow.

### ***Is there access to healthcare facilities in Paintsville?***

Yes. While our Appalachia team makes every effort to travel with a medical professional, there are times when a hospital visit is necessary. Paintsville ARH Hospital is a 72-bed facility serving several counties in Kentucky and is walking distance from our headquarters. The hospital offers a retail pharmacy, full Emergency Room medical services and a recognized wound care clinic.

### ***What does the \$575 cover?***

We are charged a fee by Good Neighbors which helps cover the building materials, our accommodations and some activities that we do in the evenings. We need to raise an additional \$50,000 to pay for the van rentals, to rent a trailer to carry our luggage and supplies, food, gas, etc., which is why we have fundraisers and why every teen is required to help in the fundraising effort.

### ***Do I need certain skills to attend the trip or to chaperone?***

The teens do not need any construction skills to attend the trip but must be physically able to get around a job site and be healthy enough to tolerate hot temperatures and sometimes difficult conditions (rain, mud, dust, etc.).

We try to have two chaperones at each job site; one who has construction knowledge and a second to assist and manage the job site. We welcome chaperones who have some knowledge of construction to share but if you don't, no worries, there is a place for all capabilities.

### ***How can parents and teens help out?***

Teens must participate in the fundraisers. Each of our fundraisers only work if everyone does their part, therefore, this is mandatory. Every year we have a waitlist of participants who really want to come and would gladly help out; so if you are not able to be fully a part of this, please leave the space to someone who is.

Parents can help out by volunteering to chaperone. If this is not an option, please help by volunteering to help with the fundraising. Please make every effort to attend the parent/participant meeting and be responsive to e-mails.

### ***What if my child does not want me to chaperone?***

First of all, parent chaperones and their teens are typically not assigned to the same job site or van group, so they will not be around you that much. When we are not on the job sites, the teens are pretty busy, so time with parents is not too easy to obtain. In addition, most teens would prefer that their parents not chaperone. The fact is that if we listen to our children and stay away from chaperoning, this trip would not take place. We are required to have a certain number of adults on each trip and if we do not have enough chaperones, the trip does not happen. The trip is meant for the teens, but adults also get a lot out of it; that is why we often have chaperones returning again and again.

### ***What are my responsibilities as far as fundraising?***

**\*\* Every teen participant is expected to participate in all fundraisers. We also hope to have parent participation when needed. \*\***



## **THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU**

### **St. Joseph's 2026 Appalachia Teen Mission Trip**



Work clothes for 5 days (at least one long sleeve shirt and 2 pair of jeans)

Work boots / socks for worksite & sneakers for off-duty time

Work gloves / safety glasses (required)

Tape measure / hammer (put your names on all tools) / flashlight

2 Towels / toiletries

Sleeping bag / air mattress / pillow

Hat

Sun block / bug repellent

Casual clothes (shorts/t-shirts) for evening activities

Jacket and poncho (for rain)

Bathing suit (no bikinis)

Two sets of underwear per day

Spending money (for incidentals or souvenirs - Meals/snacks provided)

Sleeping attire (PJ's, sweats - nights can be cool)

Flip flops or shower shoes

Medications (if needed)



## **RULES & EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR TRIP**

### **St. Joseph's 2026 Appalachia Teen Mission Trip**



Have a great experience. Stretch your personality. Remember that we are one body of believers.

Safety is an absolute priority.

NO drugs, alcohol or tobacco. If we find a teen using any of these, we will call his/her parents to come and pick him/her up.

No one goes off alone and no one goes anywhere without an adult chaperone knowing it. Directions given by chaperones are to be observed.

Everyone helps with cleanup and chores,

No males in the women's rooms and vice-versa.

Respect other people's stuff, space, quiet.

Keep the bathrooms / showers clean.

Everyone must be where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there: meal times, prayer times, work times, etc.

Modesty in dress. No halters, tank tops, belly shirts, short shorts, offensive slogans, bikinis.

Appropriate dress at work sites - no shorts or flip flops/sandals.

Cell phones: bring them BUT - do not use them at the work sites, during activities or in the common areas of the church

Do not touch stray animals.

Seat belts must be worn at ALL TIMES in vehicles.