

## Nurturing Commission 2016 Annual Report

Nurturing Commission members included: Betty Anne Domm, Donna Gurecki, Suzanne Johnston, and Candy Yugo and council representative Jim Hansen.

The Nurturing Commission is responsible for the education and fellowship activities within the congregation. The commission is also involved in support of our church members. The major responsibilities in education are the Sunday School program (adult, child and youth), Vacation Church School, Confirmation, Youth Programming, and Adult Bible Study. Fellowship activities include monthly fellowship dinners, Grace's Greatest, Men's Group, Spring Picnic at Frozen Head, Advent Gathering and Christmas Caroling and other small groups.

This year, Nurturing has continued to make a strong effort to provide Christian Education for everyone!! The children's Christian Education consisted of Sparks rotational curriculum. There was a preschool and kindergarten class as well as grades 1-6 class. There was also youth (grades 9-12) class, using Sparkhouse "Echo the Story curriculum (old testament), and 7-8 grade confirmation education. Thank you to those who lead and helped to nurture our young people!

We offered 2 Sunday opportunities for adult education. The 9:30 am adult class led by John Munro discussed issues of faith, stimulated by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book "Life Together", and book discussion of Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber's memoir, "Accidental Saints". **The 10:30 am adult group, led by Betty Anne Domm and others, have used a video series and Bible study called "That the World May Know", experiencing the Bible in a historical context. They have also discussed and studied the Revelation of John.**

A special thank you to all of those who lead the Adult Sunday School sessions.

The Monday morning bible study led by Pastor Richardson continues with studies of the books of Romans, Job, and Matthew.

Margaret and Riley Cumberland have continued the Thursday evening bible study with Ray Vander Laan's video series "The Life and Ministry of the Messiah", and "Prophets and Kings of Israel" The prayer group led by Paul Gurecki has continued, and meets the third Tuesday eve of each month at 7 pm. The format includes scripture, time for meditation, a bit of music, and corporate and individual prayer opportunities.

Stephen Ministry got in full swing with 5 congregational members (Margaret and Riley Cumberland, Mike Lorenz, Merry Ann Hansen, and Donna Gurecki) being commissioned on May 22. This was after many months of intensive training. Betty Ann Domm, Sharon Riley, and Selma Harris had received the leader training the year before. 5 of the leaders or ministers have had or is currently with a care receiver. The plan is to continue a strong Stephen Ministry program and get others to get the leader training.

The youth group has been inactive most of the year. The group did go caroling in the neighborhood and helped stuff the little goodie bags to pass out with caroling.

In May we confirmed Heston, Ashley, and Jeremy Moua. A beautiful confirmation dinner was held to honor them. Nurturing also provided gifts for confirmands. Second year confirmands in the fall are Jasmine Moua, Daniel Joy, Quentin Fritts and Michelle Moua. First year confirmand is Hannah Mustaffa. This program is under the leadership of Pastor Richardson, Valerie Hansen, and Chris Parton and James Bauman.

We joined forces with First Presbyterian, and First Christian Church for Vacation Bible School. This year's theme was "Cave Quest Adventure". We had 6 children attend. We had a lot of Grace adult volunteers, as well as 2 of our youth helping for our 2 full day camp.

The once a month fellowship dinners continue during the school year. People enjoy good food and fellowship, and it is an important part of the life of the church. Our Thanksgiving Feast seems to get bigger and bigger each year. We had a wonderful program with some of our members and ESOL students talking about their immigrant experiences. Nurturing supplied 60 pounds of turkey, 30 pounds of potatoes, and 12 cups of gravy while attendees brought appetizers, side dishes and desserts. There was close to 100 attendees. Our Frozen Head Picnic in April is also another highlight. It is so wonderful to see all the wildflowers and enjoy a good cookout!! We also hosted a story teller, Judy Aebischer (previous member of Grace) who gave a workshop on how to be a good storyteller. 20 people attended the workshop.

We did not have an Advent gathering or women's tea this year. The Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Ministry is inactive.

Our annual Christmas Caroling was well attended. We were able to divide into three groups with one group caroling around the neighborhood, and the other groups to nursing facilities and individual homes. It is always a special time to give Christmas cheer to those who enjoy the spirit of the season.

The Men's Group typically meets once a month for fellowship, with breakfast being served followed by a guest speaker. They have their annual Valentine breakfast in which everyone is invited and the group was able to raise \$400.00 for Contact Ministry. They also host the Easter breakfast which is a special part of the Easter Celebration at Grace. They also hosted Liz Parmalee from Bridge Refugee Resettlement in September to talk about the opportunities for immigrant resettlement as well as sponsorship opportunities. The group also supported lawn maintenance, provided by Joe Lorenz. \$400.00 was given to Mr. Lorenz.

Grace's Greatest has continued. We are grateful to Judy Joy and Vickie Quraishi for coordinating this group. This is a group made up of older and wise members of Grace. They meet for a luncheon and have a guest speaker quarterly.

Other fellowship groups include Jigsaw Puzzle group, Prayer Shawl ministry, Writers of Grace, Friday Dinner group, and Via de Cristo (for those who have attend a spiritual retreat weekend).

Nurturing also provides the monthly devotional "Christ In Our Home". Graduating gifts were given to graduating seniors at Oak Ridge High School, Mitchell Brenner and Jacob Elam. Devotionals and gift cards were also sent to college age students.

Much is going on in the life of Grace Lutheran Church. New ministries and groups for fellowship, as well as opportunities for discussing life's difficulties in the spiritual journey, coming together as a people of God to pray for one another, along with opportunities for spiritual growth and fellowship. We are blessed indeed! We look forward to what God has in store for us in the New Year as we commit ourselves to nurturing one another in the faith!

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Gurecki