

Caring Ministry Team 2024 Annual Report

The Caring team consists of Rev. Beth Parsons (chair), Arnette Anderson, Marcia Goodwin, Noreen Nash, Orma Paton, Ruth Schulz, Carol-Ann Staples, Rev. Win Stokes, Elizabeth Surerus, Joanne Thomas (secretary), and Elaine Zandee, with Rev. Blyth Hughes as an affiliate member. Beth took over chairing the committee in September and Joanne took over secretarial duties when Orma Paton stepped down from that role. We extend our appreciation to Orma for 6 years of secretarial support.

The Caring team supports members of the congregation through visits, calls, cards, letters, and food. This past year, over 30 cards were sent to those who were bereaved or experiencing health concerns. The bulk of pastoral care is handled by Rev. Beth Parsons.

The Caring team started the year with a sock drive collecting five (5) large bags of socks, three of which were delivered to Our Place and two to Mustard Seed. In February, Rev. Beth Parsons and Laurie Mueller coordinated a panel-led workshop, Dying to Know, covering how to write an obituary, planning a celebration of life, and wills and estate planning. In April, Caring provided a \$200 grocery gift card to Olha Shuliak, who emigrated from Ukraine with her two children and often attends our church services. Thanks to our Knitting Group and Berwick House Knitters, our Caring Committee has been able to provide the NICU and foster parents with extra small clothing for premature babies. Outreach in action.

Caring held seven (7) Cafés during 2024 and they were well attended. On average, 24 people attend and almost always 2 – 4 people attend from the local community. Banners and a sandwich board advertising the Café are put out on boulevard to attract guests but more outsiders come when there is a concurrent sale event. Our thanks go to Ron Norman who promotes these events in the local papers. At the June Café, Caring held a book, baking, and jewelry sale raising approximately \$2500 for the church. At the December Café, Caring sold baked goods, hand-made cards and lavender, raising \$2,275 for the church. We extend appreciation to the congregation for supporting our sale with generous baking donations.

We continue to work on a substantive project headed by Rev. Win Stokes to put together a useful resource package that guides families to helpful sites when death of a family member is imminent or realized.

There are plans to re-establish the Healing Touch ministry within our church and to begin offering body energy sessions on-site to our congregation later in 2025.

Working with Rev. Beth Parsons, the Caring team actively tries to support our congregation and reach out to the community. Our Caring Resource library in the Friendship Room has a selection of helpful resources (caregiver support, dealing with grief, guides for seniors, health, meditation and healing, etc.) that can be borrowed or browsed through.

Respectfully submitted
Joanne Thomas, Secretary