

2 TO 82: POAMN CHANGES THE LIFE OF A CHURCH

By Jeane Wooten

Last year I notified POAMN that I had to change churches due to the illness of my husband and that my new church did not have POAMN so they could remove my name from their mailings. They responded, "Come to Richmond Conference and apply for help in starting POAMN in your new church". They gave me a scholarship and I attended and presented a paper about my wishes. The conference was wonderful and I returned and got to work.

I asked the session for permission to begin this ministry and became Director of Older Adult Ministry at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Winston-Salem.

I would like to tell you about a wonderful year in the life of our church.

We are blessed to have young families with babies and small children so I wanted to include every one, as we are all one people. The children provide energy and enthusiasm and the elders provide wisdom, refinement and financial support.

Thus our year begins:

- **JANUARY:** One of our church initiatives is Hunger. We did a Stop Hunger Now event. Our fellowship hall was turned into a food packaging factory. We packaged 10,152 bags of food. This will feed 60,000 people. We are a church of approximately 125 people. You can make a difference in the world!
- **FEBRUARY:** We had a square dance and western dinner. We had dancers from 2 to 82! I wish you could have seen us.
- **MARCH:** Another concern of our church is the environment. We had a speaker from the Audubon come to talk about birds' effects on the environment.
- **APRIL:** We responded by painting bird houses for our garden.
- **MAY:** We have a community garden in which we grow food and give it away. We added raised beds so that everybody could work comfortably there. The little children loved planting the seeds and watching the plants grow and harvesting the crop. For the first time, we honored our seniors with a special worship service.
- **JUNE:** Because we are indeed one church, we began the practice of integrating our children activities in the worship service. They are being taught to take up the offering and be liturgists and acolytes. We have installed a few rocking chairs in the rear for when our babies need a little time out.
- **JULY:** Our mission this month was to prepare an evening meal for Family House. This is a facility near a local hospice; it is a Ronald McDonald for adults. Any person who is visiting someone at Hospice or a hospital patient in our city from out of our county, can stay for \$39 per night (even less if they cannot afford that amount). It is at least a 4 star property. All meals are prepared and served to the guests free. When we served our meal, many people came to thank us. One lady who was going through chemo asked for the recipe for the quiche. She said that was the first thing that tasted good to her. But the most touching was a

young woman who said she had always wondered why people would take their time to prepare a meal and come on a Saturday night to serve it to people that they did not know. We replied that we are the church in the world so we are called to be a servant people. She hugged us.

- **AUGUST:** When you have a very small budget, you reach out to other organizations in the community. We are working with The Shepherd Center (Senior Services). We allow their overflow groups to use our church and we benefit. An example is the Play Writers. They write original scripts and perform them. Our church members get to attend for free! We have just added a dulcimer group as well.
- **SEPTEMBER:** Because healthy living is so important we added Zumba on Monday nights. A Tai Chi group also meets there.
- **OCTOBER:** It's time for fun! We rode the Amtrak train to the State Fair and had a wonderful day there.
- **NOVEMBER:** We colored stain-glass type posters (3 are 2'x3' and 2 are 2'x6'). They were framed and used in our sanctuary during Advent. Everyone likes to color!
- **DECEMBER:** We went caroling with our choir and presented poinsettias to all of our shut-ins.
- Another mission of our church is the prayer shawl ministry in which we make baby blankets (for the Linus project), chemo caps and scarves for Cancer Services, and sew (pillowcase) dresses for the mission field.

Our church is growing rapidly, and I cannot help but feel that POAMN has made a difference. If I could have one wish, it would be that ALL CHURCHES COULD REALIZE THE VALUE OF THIS MINISTRY.

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