

# Celebrating

## *the Missions and Ministries*

### *of Our Saviour's*

### *Lutheran Church*

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*This month's highlight:*

## *Caring Ministry*

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### *Reflections on being a Care Giver by Gayle Sittaro*

When I reflect on what Stephen Ministry means to me as a care giver, the words that come immediately to mind are, "...blessed to be a blessing..." It just seems to follow that as we engage in ministry seeking to bless others, we find that we ourselves are blessed. Always relying on the Holy Spirit to guide, inspire, discipline, and empower us in our service, as we enter into these caring relationships, we discover that we are personally growing in grace and the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Throughout my 11 years of serving in Stephen Ministry, both as a minister and a leader, Paul's words to the Corinthians have spoken very profoundly to me: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."* (2 Corinthians 1: 3, 4)

I consider it a blessed privilege to have the opportunity to use my spiritual gifts, combined with my life experience and the faith given me to serve God by ministering to his beloved children in crisis! What greater joy can there be for any Christian than fulfilling the purpose to which one has been called by God.

This is not to say that the road has always been easy. That which is worthy so often seems to challenge us at the very deepest of levels. "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required..." (Luke 12: 48) It is from those depths, however, that we are able to grow in wisdom, understanding and love, thus being enriched to serve even more effectively as we continue in service. What an exciting journey this has been!

Rich relationships develop among the Stephen Ministers themselves as well. As we gather for continuing education, retreats and small groups within this ministry, profound and lasting friendships form that give meaning to our own lives and prompt us to grow. Yes, we minister to one another on the bumpy roads of our personal life journeys.

One cannot enter into the very deepest of life situations with others and maintain only a superficial relatedness, whether it be with a care receiver or a fellow Stephen Minister. Always trusting God to be at the center of these alliances, my own relationships have been greatly enriched, both with God and with others.

I've found that walking with others through their dark valleys has prompted me to better understand and grow from my own past suffering, thus imparting perspective and wisdom. Experiencing the depths of human experience, either mine or another's, has offered me the momentum to rise to the heights of God's "...kingdom here on Earth..." Praises to the Lord, our God!

## Highlights of *Caring Ministry* at OSLC

- **Stephen Ministry** trains and equips lay persons to provide personal one-on-one Christian care to those who are experiencing temporary or long-term physical or emotional difficulties. Our Stephen Ministers commit to 50 hours of initial training and ongoing continuing education. Stephen Ministry is celebrating their 20th anniversary at OSLC. Over its 20 year history, the ministry has trained 138 Stephen Ministers and provided care to 250 people.
- **Support Teams** provide help to others who may be going through difficult transitional times, bringing practical, emotional, spiritual support. Volunteers on support teams share “what they’re good at” and as their schedule permits, organized as a team with a team leader. Orientation twice a year.
- **Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry** provides monthly clinics to practice and pray for individuals and their physical and spiritual needs. Opportunity for individual prayer and anointing for healing is offered at Healing services the first Saturday of each month.
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry** brings together members who knit or crochet a shawl, and while creating it, pray their faith and strength into it. The recipient of the shawl may be facing a challenging time, physically or emotionally, and will be surrounded by these prayers within the comfort of the shawl.
- **Older Adult Ministry** is a group of retirees, (couples and singles) who meet for fellowship, day trips, meals, panel discussions, projects, Lifelong Learning, “Tischreden”(table talk) over lunch, and special intergenerational events.
- **Health Ministry** lifts up our understanding of the relationship between body, mind and spirit, and continuing care for the health and wellness of members of our congregation and community. The Taste of Wellness Health Fair, October 25, offers health screenings, resources to “address your stress” and flu inoculations.
- **Home Communion** ministers bring the sacrament and visit with those who are home-centered.
- **Hospital visitors** share brief visits with those who are hospitalized.
- **Caring Cooks** provide meals to folks in need, during a time of transition, usually just home from the hospital.
- **Volunteer drivers** provide rides to church or medical appointments.

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Through the years, Our Saviour’s annual budget has supported all these Caring Ministries (including staff leader salaries) as follows:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*
\$28,576	\$35,707	\$39,034	\$51,800	\$60,428
1.93% of budget	2.37% of budget	2.43% of budget	3.15% of budget	3.36% of budget

\*proposed

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### *To learn more about (or get involved in) Caring Ministry*

**Stephen Ministry:** talk with one of our Stephen Leaders (Gayle Anderson, Blair Gannegan, Kathie Gannegan, Karen Steil) or contact Pastor Gail Heidtke

**Support Teams, Prayer shawls, Older Adults, Caring Cooks, Volunteer Drivers:** call Carrie Hill, Older Adult Ministry Coordinator

**Health Ministry, Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry:** call Lois Coldewey, Parish Nurse

**Home Communion, Hospital Visitation:** call Pastor Heidtke

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Additional information can be found on the church website: [www.oursaviours.org](http://www.oursaviours.org) or in the “Opportunities for Ministry” brochure found in the literature racks.