



Women of the ELCA



Grace Unit Newsletter.....June 2021

vicki.marthaler@gmail.com editor

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (Proverbs 4:23)

Oh, the messages we heard from our youth on Sunday, May 2! I am still taking it all in. If you weren't able to attend or be online, I encourage you to go to the Grace Lutheran website and find the recording of it. Our young people shared from their hearts. I know it will also touch your heart.



One of the Grace Lutheran Quilter traditions is to gift each graduating senior with a personalized quilt. The quilt has the name of the graduate as well as the school colors of their high school and a few symbols meaningful to each student. During the service, the students are “wrapped” in the love of the congregation as we pray them on their way to new chapters in their lives. What a gift to us to be a significant part of a graduate's journey through this complex, often precarious world.

Each of the four graduates shared a bit of their journey thus far.

Nelson shared her confirmation Bible verse, Proverbs 4:23:

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Above all...guard your heart...

I went to my Bible and looked up

Proverbs 4 and began in verse 20 “..Pay attention to what I say;

Turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight,

Keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find

them and health to one's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart,

For everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity;

Keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead;

Fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths of

your feet and be steadfast in all your ways..”

Keep God's Words within your heart. And what are God's Words:

Love God. Love one another. Love yourself.

Serve God. Serve one another.

Forgive yourself. Forgive one another.

Be still and know that God is God.

Ask, Seek and Knock. God will hear and guide and open doors.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son

That whosoever believes in Him, will not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus promised that He is with us always, even unto the end of the age.



Yes, let us keep God's Words tucked in our hearts. They give our life direction and hope. They are words that inspire, restore and create!

Yes, guard your heart. Your heart filled with God's living Words are life. A life that is to be shared. A life that is an everlasting life.

As women of the church, the body of Christ, we lift up God's Living Word to each other and especially to our young people. We pray for them. We celebrate with them. We care about them enough to wrap them in our love and send them on their way. To Dustin, Noah, Jake and Nelson – thank you for sharing your life with us. God's speed as you go forth into the world! Know that our love and prayers go with you.

May the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord make His Light to shine upon you and give you His Peace!

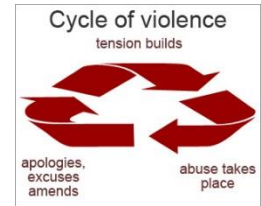
Vicki Marthaler, President of Grace WELCA

Ministry of Hope at the Swannanoa Women's Correctional Facility
at Black Mountain, NC

Thank you to all who "zoomed" with Lauronda from the Ministry of Hope last month. The Zoom Meeting replaced our in-person May General meeting. Lauronda was a wealth of information about this women at this correctional facility and the ministry that Covid can complicate but not shut down!

Tidbits from the meeting:

- Ministry of Hope was established in 1999.
- The correctional facility is a minimum security prison.
- Before Covid the residents numbered 374. Currently, 180 women are residents.
- 90% of the residents are victims of domestic violence.
- Average stay is 2-12 years.
- Addiction is the major contributor to incarceration.
- Average age of the residents is 36.
- Chaplains provide pastoral care, spiritual guidance and grief counseling.
- Website is: www.ministryofhopewnc.org for further information.



The Ministry of Hope also has a Mentor Program. A priority goal of the Ministry of Hope is to lower the number of repeat offenders. Statistics are showing that women who are mentored rarely return. More information about mentors is on the website.

It was stated that upon a woman's release from the facility, she has basically nothing. No clothes. No money. Only the opportunity for a new start.

Lauronda shared that the greatest needs of the women are:

- To be respected.
- To feel they are worthy of a new start.
- To exercise their ability to change their lives.



Some who have left were able to change their lives and now are available to help others who are still incarcerated.

Lauronda stated that the greatest need for the chaplains right now is community support. 20-25% of this organization's income comes from fundraising lunches. The Spring luncheon at Lake Lure and Fall luncheon at Montreat were, of course, both cancelled due to Covid in 2020. If you are interested in sending a donation, the mailing address is:

Ministry of Hope
Attn: Lauronda
P O Box 998
Black Mountain, NC 28711



Time to Update the WELCA Directory

2020 was a year of changes for WELCA at Grace.

Would each Circle Chair please review your list of members and send updates to Bonnie Pierce. bnpierce16@hotmail.com

Dorcas Circle – Joan Florine remains as a member but has resigned as the Chair.

Brenda Sigmon has moved away. Other changes?

Leah Circle – Chair Sandy Jardot. Rhoda Hargrave has passed away. Other changes?

Maria Circle – Chair Alejandra Oviedo Not aware of any additions or deletions.

Naomi Circle – Chair Bonnie Pierce. Norine Eckstrom has moved away.

Other changes?

Rachel Circle – Chair Lynne Wenz Are Lisa Johnson and Peg Whitman additions?

Sarah Circle – Chair Chira Kirkland? Judy Stoltenberg? Any additions/deletions?

Quilting Circle – Chairs Irene Carlson & Janet Harms Rhoda Hargrave passed away.

Any additions or additional deletions?

Prayer Shawl Group – Chairs Sandy Brust/Lori Schaefer Norine Eckstrom moved.

Any other deletions or additions?

The Officers remain the same as 2020. Thank you for your continued serving!

President, Vicki Marthaler

Vice-President Shelley Clay

Secretary Chira Kirkland

Treasurer Kathy Stancar



The Committee Chairs, however, have taken a hit this year.

Mission Action (Global) – Vacancy Rhoda Hargrave passed away

Mission Action – Local – Janet Harms

Mission Growth – Vacancy Barb Koch resigned.

Mission Community – Vacancy Nancy Chiarenza resigned.

Communications – Vicki Marthaler and Kathy Stancar

On June 12, six women will be joining Grace Lutheran. Last February 2020 there were 13 women who joined Grace Lutheran and, of course, we haven't had an opportunity to properly meet them.

Let's make 2021 our year to especially seek out the new ladies and connect them with a Circle or group. AND, I (Vicki Marthaler) would be happy to highlight new members in our newsletter so keep that in mind when you mentor a new member or are introduced to one! Let's grow WELCA!

Looking Ahead

September – In-person General Meeting “Getting Re-Acquainted!” Possibly the 18th

October – Thankoffering/Quilt Sunday Possibly the 17th

December – Christmas Tea Returns! Possibly the 4th

Once the church is truly “open,” we will be working with the church calendar to get things scheduled.

If you are breaking loose and having opportunity to travel and worship in other places.....drop me a line about any new or different ways of serving, gathering, connecting, worshipping, supporting, or studying that you see women are doing in other churches.



Mark and I were blessed to travel to Minnesota the last weeks in May to reconnect with family and friends. There were joyous reunions! On Pentecost Sunday (note the red scarf I have around my neck) I was privileged to be the guest pastor at a small country church outside of Erhard, Minnesota (population 148). The church is open from Easter to Thanksgiving and is served by a variety of area pastors. My message centered on what God has planned for His people. The followers of Christ that were gathered in the upper room when the Spirit descended and “flamed” them up, were able to speak in all languages so everyone would hear about the love of God found in Christ Jesus. And, we are still to be about that! Go forth! Tell the Good News! Everyone needs to hear! Jesus is risen. He is risen indeed!