

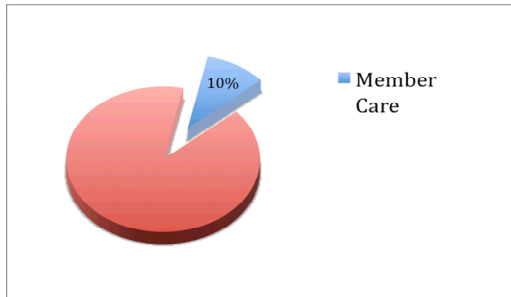
STEWARDSHIP TIMES

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FEATURE STORY: MEMBER CARE

Focus on Member Care



A panel discussion on Member Care was held last night at First Presbyterian Church in Haddonfield, New Jersey. Participants on the panel were Joe Routon, a Pastoral Assistant at FPC, Judy Sikora, Chairperson of the Member Care Committee at FPC, and Chris Mahoney, Chair of the Senior Ministry Council at FPC. The moderator was Johanna Forceno, a member of the Stewardship Committee at First Presbyterian Church. Let's enjoy some of the highlights of that panel discussion.

Moderator – Joe, we at FPC consider member care to be one of our core functions, but to some, it may be a “fuzzy” term. How would you define or describe member care?

Joe – Member Care is our being responsible for the pastoral care of our members who are elderly and unable to care for themselves, and those affected by illness, death, or crisis. God calls us to become disciples of Jesus and to love and serve others with the gifts and talents that God has given to each of us. When a member of our church needs support, it is our Christian obligation to do whatever we can to help.

Moderator – Judy, now that Joe explained the “why” of member care, would you please give us some specific examples of member care in action at FPC?

Judy – I'd love to! The Care and Share Ministry coordinates meals for families of the church who are sick or are in need of help in some way. We've had many situations where this ministry really made a difference, for example, this past summer with the Getman family. Volunteers provided hot meals and baked goods for the Getmans, relieving them of that worry during Bill's healing process. Health Ministry is comprised of nurses within our congregation who sponsor programs such as Blood Pressure Sundays, Flu Clinics, Saturday Retreats, and Health Fairs. The Prayer Chain is a group of people committed to praying for members of the congregation, families, friends, or anyone who has specific prayer needs. We also have Greeters who stand at the entrances to the church at two of the services to welcome members and visitors into the church.

Moderator – Chris, the more senior members of the FPC family are known to be an active group. What are some activities in which the seniors participate as it relates to Member Care?

Chris – The Prime Timers Lunch is the cornerstone of activity where a hot meal is provided to seniors on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of most months. This lunch is followed by a program or games for the seniors. There is also an exercise program twice a week for seniors. Another mission

of Senior Ministry is the sending of cards and the visiting of senior members of the Church. Seniors enjoying and helping each other seems to be the driving inspiration of the group.

Moderator – Joe and Judy, is there something new or more that we could do as a church family to enhance and/or expand member care activities if we had more resources?

Joe – We could expand member care activities by suggesting and providing opportunities for service and by offering guidelines for service. Each Sunday School class, fellowship group, or study group could establish a Member Care ministry to attend to the needs of the members of that group and other church members.

Judy – We started a new effort to reach out to the newest members of the church, to engage them early in the activities of the church and to show them that we care for them as a member of our church family. Also, most of the activities of the Member Care Committee have occurred with little budget impact, because many people have reached into their own pockets when called upon to serve. More members could be cared for if budget monies were available.

Moderator – I want to thank the members of this panel for enlightening all of us on a very essential function of this church, and hope that all members will consider how we can give of our time, talents and treasures to supporting these efforts.

“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

~ Romans 12:9, 13

Comments from the Congregation:

I have been pleased to serve as one of Judy Sikora’s meal-making “elves” ever since the Care and Share program was organized by Family Ministries years ago. Originally, the goal of the ministry was to provide meals to new mothers for a few weeks after they returned home from the hospital, but the mission has expanded over the years to include people with all kinds of needs, sometimes for extended periods of time. Year-in and year-out this program has served many, many families in a very meaningful way.

Our family was very grateful to be on the receiving end of Care and Share meals when Pete faced serious health issues six years ago. To be able to count on a delicious, hot, home-cooked meal several times a week was such a blessing during a difficult time. Care and Share is truly an example of God’s love in action.

~ Lisa Hurd

I can not express my gratitude enough for the meals that I received through Care & Share. Although it has been several years, I still remember how much help it was for me to receive those meals while Andy was recovering from his accident. Beyond the meal itself was the knowledge that there were all those people who cared enough to take time from their busy day and cook for my family, and then bring me the food. Seeing the congregation caring for me, It was truly a remarkable experience.

~ Margo Dark