

Good morning!

While we talk about the Pastoral Care Ministries COMMITTEE, pastoral care is really not just the work of one committee—it is what we all do to support one another every day—it is when we greet each other on the front steps of the church or in the produce department of Wegman's; it is when we drop off flowers to someone who has been ill, or when we send a card to someone who lost a loved one; it is when we pick up the phone to check on a friend we haven't seen in church lately, or provide a ride to a church event to someone who no longer drives. It isn't complicated; it isn't an exclusive club; it is loving, listening, and looking after the needs of the Good Shepherd's flock.

But we DO have a pastoral care committee here at Calvary—to help identify the needs and coordinate the good deeds of the congregation, so hopefully no one falls through the cracks. We endeavor to keep track of who needs our support through calls, cards, flowers, meals, or participation in a peer group, and we are trained to assist Fr. Robert with taking Communion to the homebound.

And it is important to clarify that Pastoral Care not only serves the needs of the parish, but we regularly reach outside the walls of the church to also serve the greater Buffalo community through our Prayer Chain and events like the Blessing of the Animals, meetings of Good Grief and Mothers Prayers, or funeral receptions for anyone having a memorial service at Calvary. And we support the missions of Outreach and other organizations by knitting and crocheting hats, mittens, and scarves for Journey's End and Friends of Night People, soap sacks for Hearts for the Homeless, and premie blankets for Sisters Hospital.

It is a mistake to think that we are simply an "Inreach" committee—the flipside of Outreach. Through our faith and our presence, Pastoral Care serves and supports inner emotional and spiritual needs at times when individuals require prayers and safe space or are grieving or feeling forgotten and alone. We assist with the practical needs that nurture individuals' well-being, connect them to others who understand their struggles, and provide a context in which faith may grow and heal the feelings of brokenness in our challenging world. Having the opportunity to do these things is a gift not just to those we serve, but even more so to ourselves. To share God's love and serve His people—to bring a smile to a sad and lonely face—is the most meaningful work we ever do in this world.

I would like to introduce the people who serve as Eucharistic Visitors and on the eight subcommittees that do all this good work, which you rarely hear about, because it may be confidential and often is behind the scenes.

First, our **Eucharistic Visitors** who take Communion to the homebound. Please stand and remain standing:

Lou Butenschoen, Amy Gorney, Elizabeth Harten, Ellen Marshall, Cindy Munschauer, Patty Rooss, Ellie Yuhasz

The **Altar Flower Ministry** is led by Ellie Yuhasz, who has had to step away for a little while, so Patty Rooss, Robert Firestine, and Lisa Barone have been filling in for her. Everyone who helps make bouquets from the altar flower arrangements to deliver to the people on our pastoral care list and those celebrating special events, please stand. Patty, just raise your hand!

I lead the **Congregational Care Committee**. Please stand if you make phone calls, send cards and college care packages, provide healing meals or rides.

Karen Davidson runs the **Funeral Receptions** with help from many who set-up, bake, serve, and clean up. Would all of you please stand, and if you're already standing, please raise your hand!

The **Good Grief** peer support group, which meets monthly with a regular attendance of 20 – 25 people and holds an annual Comfort at Christmas service, is led by Ellen Marshall, Patty Rooss, and Howard Craig. Please stand if you attend Good Grief events.

The 20 or more knitters and crocheters in **Hands2Hearts** are led by Janice DeLucia, and they work miles of yarn into hats, mittens, scarves, baby blankets, prayer Shawls and lap robes, worry dolls and pocket hugs, and even knitted knockers!! Ladies, please set down your knitting and stand up!

Our **Parent Ministry** has hosted Parent Free Nights in the past, but it is struggling a bit now to find ways to support the busy parents of the parish, while the **Mothers Prayers** group, led by Tina Reynolds, is flourishing. Please stand if you are in Mothers Prayers.

Chris Coburn-Miller and I lead the **Pet Ministry**, while a dozen or more other volunteers help with the Blessing of the Animals, the Pet Memorial Service, sending out new pet and pet memorial gifts, recognizing our pets, past and present, in the eNews, raising money for Pet Food pantries in our diocese, and maintaining the pet supplies donation area in the coatroom. Please stand or raise your paws!

Finally, the 40-some Pray-ers on the **Prayer Chain** honor all prayer requests and will be led by Sandra McCarthy beginning this week. Please stand or raise your hand if you are on the Prayer Chain.

Thank you all for all you do!

I hope others will consider joining this amazing group of people! We always need more volunteers. And thanks to all of you who wear your nametags, welcome visitors to Calvary, and share the needs and concerns of our parishioners with Fr. Robert or me, so we can love, listen, and look after the needs of the Good Shepherd's flock.