

Staff Profile - Trudy Smith

One in an occasional series on our staff from your SPR committee

If our church had a crown, Trudy Smith would be one of its jewels. She's our Director of Congregational Care. While pastoral care is all-encompassing, congregational care is nearly so, minus a few things such as baptisms and blessings of the elements. Her title though doesn't quite capture all that she does.

If you are ill, struggling or suffering, Trudy is a phone call away. Before Covid restrictions, she made hospital and home visits. Since Covid, she's on the phone a lot and looks forward to resuming face-to-face contact. For Valentine's she made a number of cards for members, especially those staying home during the pandemic. That's Trudy, who knows that sometimes the small things matter most.

Here's a poorly kept secret- even if you don't need care, if you are happy and healthy, just being around Trudy makes the day better. Fanci Coyle has worked first hand with Trudy and says, "She is always so positive, a ray of sunshine in the room." She also provides a sense of peace and strength. For example, in Bible studies, she makes everyone comfortable, sharing her own life stories, gently including even the most reticent.

Besides bible studies, she participates in a number of group activities, many of which benefit the community at large, such as an Alzheimer's group, a cancer support group, Camp Hope, and the Epiphany Prison Ministry. The prison ministry involves trips to the Brownwood to meet with teenage girls. Fanci Coyle knows that Trudy, "brings Jesus to them in a beautiful way." And many respond to the message of God's unconditional love.

Trudy sees untapped potential in our Stephens Ministry, which broadens those who can be called on for help in times of need- not just the pastor or Trudy, but highly trained lay members who meet confidentially and don't pass judgement. With Pastor Joel, Trudy and our Stephens Ministers, our church is rich in resources for both those experiencing darkness in their lives as well as those who wish to help.

She grew up in State College, Pa., the oldest of four girls, graduating from Penn State. During college, she waitressed at an Elby's restaurant. One day, she decided she could pick up two coffee pots in one hand (one was empty). It didn't go as planned, with hot coffee and broken glass spilling over her. Cliff Smith, a cook at the same restaurant, stepped in with a bag of ice to administer first aid. As they say, the rest is history, 40 plus years and counting.

Cliff was in the Air Force and the family moved frequently. Arriving in a new town, Trudy looked for good schools for sons Danny and Ben, a pediatrician, and a Methodist Church. She grew up Methodist and the church provided an anchor for her.

A decade and a half ago, they moved here from California. As usual, she stepped in at Aledo and began volunteering. Others recognized her talents and gifts, and persuaded her to join the staff, first as a youth director, then children's director and now congregational care. Trudy also welcomes and engages visitors and new members, participates in worship services, helps fellow staffers, and plays banjo. She attributes

the late Bob Bull as a mentor. Bob was a driving force behind the prison ministry and Stephens Ministry, among others.

She has many favorite bible verses, but one rises to the top. Micah 6:8- What does God ask of us? Seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. With Trudy's guidance, maybe we can all do what God asks and experience the sunshine.