

CONGREGATIONAL CARE HEALTH MINISTRY

HEALTH MINISTRIES in the church go back as far as the time of Jesus as we see Him providing wholistic care by healing people physically, mentally and spiritually. Because the ultimate healing work of Christ, through the cross, is a sign of God's mercy, we too are called to show this same mercy to others and point them to Christ (Luke 10:1-9). After heading up the encouragement committee and seeing that the needs of the body were greater than what could be covered by that ministry, the Lord laid upon Anita Boland's heart the desire to develop a health ministry at LPC.

As a nurse, she was aware of a scope of nursing practice called Faith Community Nursing that provided guidelines for developing a ministry focused on wholistic care. After pastor David Sinclair agreed that a health ministry with a goal to equip the people to care for the needs of the body was in the vision of the church, the first Congregational Care Committee met in February 2005. As the vision of the church has changed with the coming and going of other pastors, the current simple mission for Congregational Care of, "Making disciples of Jesus as we worship love and serve," points back to the Christ's original mission of healing. Congregational Care by provided tangible helps is focused on being the hands and feet of Christ and pointing people back to Him.

After assessing the health needs and desires of the congregation, the committee started the ministry by offering blood pressure screenings, visitation training, blood drive and health screening coordination. Because of home and hospital visits, coordination of resources from within the church and the community developed to help to meet the needs of the church body. Other focuses of the ministry over the years have included education in fire safety for seniors and children, Medicare updates, CPR/AED training, Caregiver support, Grief Share program for widows, and developing a care support system for those in the church tapping into existing groups of support within the church. The Congregational Care Ministry falls under the Deacons mercy ministry and has opportunities to assist those outside the church as well. Through this opportunity, Lexington Presbyterian Church, since 2008, has been a part of a Lexington Community Health and Safety Fair. This fair is a collaborative effort of area churches to provide access to health care and community resources, therefore, promoting a wholistic approach to health for the people of Lexington. A wide variety of screenings and fun activities are available free to the community. The fair has been located at LPC, the Rosenwald Community Learning Center and the Lexington Leisure Center.

David Sinclair told Anita that as the director of Congregational Care, she should want to work herself out of a job as the goal was to have the congregation "catch the vision" of caring for one another. Anita gets excited when she hears of small groups knowing and addressing a need within their group. All of us at LPC have a part to play in the health of our church body.

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." (Romans 12: 4-6)