The New Testament gives us multiple glimpses of what the function of church should be in the 50+ “one another” instructions.

“Encourage one another.” 2 Corinthians 13:11

“Build one another up.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Instruct one another.” Romans 15:14

“Accept one another.” Romans 15:7

“Serve one another humbly in love.” Galatians 5:13

“Teach and admonish one another.” Colossians 3:16

“Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” Hebrews 10:24

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other.” James 5:16

“Offer hospitality to one another.” 1 Peter 4:9

“Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10

“Have fellowship with one another.” 1 John 1:7

“I love one another.” John 13:34

How can we focus on one-anothering if we only see one another seated in rows with a view of the backs of one another’s heads? And when worship ends, we shake hands with the preacher and file out the door? How will we confess our sins to one another, pray for one another, encourage and build one another up? Is that not the purpose of the church?

We begin by rethinking our spaces and redesigning our building to reflect the purpose and function of one-anothering as clearly outlined in scripture. Function follows form in the world of design. The current design serves a time gone by. It was a time when church was part of everyone’s life and Naperville was growing by leaps and bounds. Newcomers knew what to expect before they walked in the doors; there would be coffee “somewhere” and Sunday School for kids “somewhere.” The building facilitated the needed programming quite well.

But today is different. Church attendance must be inspired. People don’t come to be counted, they come to be transformed. The building design must promote the mission to invite, welcome, nurture, equip and send disciples into the world. The space relevant to a visitor’s faith journey must be easy to find. The building itself must function as a warm invitation to enter and stay. When we forget what newcomers need, the building must be able to serve on our behalf and fill the gap--until we understand and live into what God is calling us to do.

Naperville is no longer growing by leaps and bounds; that time has come and gone, but 55 percent of Napervillians have no church affiliation.* Rather than planning for growing numbers, Grace must plan for growing faith.

Please take the time to review the renderings and floor plans you’ll see as you enter the main door of Grace UMC. On Sunday, October 8, there will be another informational meeting to ask questions and share your thoughts, in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. If, indeed, Grace UMC is to offer the hope in Christ that has long sustained us, the building needs to reflect that offer. It’s time for Grace to come together to love another.

* Sources: US Census Bureau, Synergos Technologies Inc., Experian, DecisionInsite/MissionInsite
United Methodist Women

By Phyllis Pepiot, UMW President

United Methodist Women (UMW) is a national organization with mission and support of one another as key elements in its foundation. Participation in the Grace Unit of United Methodist Women gives each of us an opportunity for growth in our individual spiritual experiences, as well as experiencing friendships that enhance each of our lives. It is an opportunity to give of our individual spiritual gifts while receiving invaluable insight and gifts from others of different ages and strengths.

The next all-inclusive unit meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 3, at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Those present have an opportunity to bring a Thank Offering. In the light of the October church-wide emphasis on the CROP Hunger Walk, our guest speaker will be Virginia Gramarosso from the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Virginia is no stranger to Grace United Methodist Church, having been a member even before her marriage. Northern Illinois Food Bank will receive 12.5% of the Naperville CROP Hunger Walk gifts.

More intimate groupings of United Methodist Women are circles and purpose-driven groups which include the Book Discussion, Quilt and Craft Groups. UMW members are free to choose. To learn more about the UMW visit us at (www.peopleofgrace.org/united-methodist-group-meetings).

Growing Up in Hitler’s Germany

Egon Gerdes will be the guest speaker for Over 50 Fellowship on Thursday, November 9. He was born in Germany the year before Hitler came into power and grew up in Hitler Germany. We will find out that November 9 is, in fact, a very important date in Germany. Egon is eager to tell his story to all who will listen. Be part of his audience in Fellowship Hall! Sign up in the office by noon on Monday, November 6. $10 cash payable at the door. All are welcome!

Grace Lenten Devotional 2018

What? It’s not even Thanksgiving, and we’re already talking about Lent? Yes, in order to properly prepare for the production of our annual booklet of Lenten devotions, we’re asking our Grace family and friends to begin prayerfully considering the offer of a devotion for the 2018 booklet. Theme and guidelines to come, but for now, mark your calendars with a submission deadline of January 19, 2018.

Bless the People of Grace!

For the visits, cards, emails, phone and text messages, meals, gifts, surprises, offers to help, hugs, hand-holding and prayers, we whole-heartedly thank you. The people of Grace were the sustaining face, hands and feet of our beloved Savior during Mike’s illness and recovery. May God bless you as you so generously blessed us.

~ Gay and Mike Craig

Want Grace Notes in Print in 2018?

You will need to request that Grace Notes be mailed to you after December 31, 2017! To make this request, please contact the Church Office (630-355-1748) and give them your name and current mailing address.

35th Annual CROP Hunger Walk Honors Phyllis Pepiot

By Rev. Matthew Johnson

When participants gather for Naperville’s 2017 iteration of the CROP Hunger Walk on October 15, there will be no one more veteran than Grace Church’s own Phyllis Pepiot. She’s been a part of the event, and all the planning it takes to execute this annual project of Church World Service (CWS), for 35 years now.

If there was only one word to describe Phyllis’s participation, it would be something like “persistence.” She began logging steps for the annual event, which raises funds to end hunger at home and abroad, way back in 1982. As she completed the route that year, Prince’s party anthem “1999” — predicting an apocalypse at the turn of the century — was topping the pop music charts. Yet, because the Cold War was well into its second movement, some wondered if the world would even make it that far.

Nevertheless, Phyllis kept supporting CROP. She walked for CROP through the end of the Cold War, and kept walking. She walked right through 1994, when the silver screen’s Forrest Gump got tired and went home. She’s supported CROP through six presidents, five recessions, and two Chicago World Series Championships.

But, had it not been for the enthusiasm of her then 8-year-old daughter (and that daughter’s school-aged friend), she probably wouldn’t have even finished her first walk. It started raining midway through the 10k route that year — which made two circuits through Naperville. As they returned to the starting point, Phyllis asked her progeny if she wanted to quit and get out of the cold, fall storm. “Oh, no!” she recalls her daughter saying, “We want to do the whole thing!”

So, they made the second lap, dripping from head to toe. “It’s amazing how heavy wet jeans are,” Phyllis said laughing.

“It was the same distance many people in [developing countries] had to walk daily for food and water,” Phyllis said. “I figured doing it once was the least I could do.”

This unique solidarity of physicality had Phyllis digging deeper into the CWS event. She was also inspired by the community building portion of its mission, and the way it shares the money raised globally and locally. Currently, 25 percent of the pledges raised by walkers is given to the Northern Illinois Food Bank and Naperville’s Loaves and Fishes and Community Services.

Because of this approach to ending hunger — and her service to Grace Church through its hunger ministries — Phyllis immediately became a part of the leadership team which organizes the annual walks in cooperation with representatives from CWS. And she’s done so ever since.

She’s seen the walk’s starting point move from downtown to the lower lot of Grace Church, which has also changed the way she participates.

“In recent years I just walk in the building getting things ready to help everyone else enjoy the experience,” Phyllis says, “but I usually get the same number of steps everyone else does. I just miss talking to the friends from the other churches I’ve made over the years.”

Now, the walk welcomes a third generation of Phyllis’s family, as her granddaughter participated last year and wants to do so again this year.

“It could be that she likes the little caveat at the end of a Colonial Sunday,” which is offered to all walkers, Phyllis said laughing, “but I think she also enjoyed the walk; she remembers why [the walk happens].”

Currently, Grace is one of a dozen churches that partner in the event by recruiting walkers and raising money and awareness of hunger issues. The Grace team has set a goal of $7,000 from its walkers this year. Those who’d like to do a 1k or 5k walk themselves can register on-line at (https://www.crophungerwalk.org/napervilleil).

Another way to participate is by making a pledge to sponsor Phyllis in her walk this year. To mark her 35th anniversary, gifts in multiples of $35 are encouraged and can be made at (https://www.crophungerwalk.org/napervilleil/ppepiot).

In 2016, more than 120,000 people worldwide participated in the walk the CROP Hunger Walk and raised $10 million dollars.