

2013 'Women of the Word' Annual Report

January ~ Second half of our 14th year!

- Women from over 30 different churches and 12 different towns joined us during our 14th year!
- Our theme verse was John 15:5, "I am the Vine, you are the branches; the one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing."
- Our study, 'Fruit Bearing... God's Plan for Possession' reminded us that Jesus is the LIFE GIVING VINE. When we are connected to Him as the branches, all we need comes from that vine. And, then the harvest follows! What is the FRUIT He produces?: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF CONTROL! The Holy Spirit is the 'living water' inside of us to help us in our 'fruit bearing'!
- We held our annual Leader Potato Supper at Paulette Bowman's home on 1/3/13, for evaluation, planning, review and brainstorming.
- We finished our last two lessons in the 'Fruit Bearing' study and then on January 31st we began a 7-week study of the book of Galatians. In this letter written by Paul, we studied about God's Grace and the freedom we have in our daily lives because of that Grace. Several different Teaching Leaders taught about our study each week.

February:

- For something fun, we mixed up all of our groups on 2/21.
- We continued with our Prayer Sisters, our monthly Morning Edition prayer times and our monthly Monday evening Intercessory Prayer times.

March:

- On 3/7 we learned a lot about the Jewish/Islam/Arab issues through a Bible study written by Cindy Noll: "The Seeds of Abraham" & "Jerusalem's Future".

- On Friday, March 8, Cindy Noll/Covenant Restoration Church hosted "A Night with the King", a night of intimacy through prayer and worship.
- The Women's Retreat at First Baptist Church, Geneva, was attended by several WOW members on Saturday, March 16, 2013. Inspirational speaker Ellie Lofaro spoke "FROM BATTLE SCARS TO BEAUTY MARKS."
- On March 28th, 13 WOW members traveled to Lifespring Women's Shelter in Aurora to treat them to an 'Inside/Outside SPA Day'. We brought: many items collected by both WOW and Aurora Christian School, lunch, and surprises/a gift bag for each of the women and children in residence there. Thirteen Lifespring women along with about 11 of their children were in attendance that day. For the "INSIDE SPA", Sue talked about 'Fruit Bearing' and Kay Fick did the devotions on giving the Lord our 'filthy rags' ~ an object lesson using a flash light and batteries. Then Ginger Fay gave her testimony and led in singing 'Amazing Grace'. After the testimonies, we each went around the circle and shared a bit about ourselves and anything the Lord would have us share. Most every WOW gal gave some kind of testimony that connected and encouraged the Lifespring gals, who also opened up and shared some of their stories and prayer requests. The afternoon 'OUTSIDE SPA' included manicures, pedicures and hair cuts. We were privileged to hear the sweet and heartfelt words of our WOW sisters and to see the Spirit at work in the Lifespring women... and children!! Go God!!

April:

- April 11th was our Praise and Worship/Testimony Day. As it was our last gathering, we had a Potluck Salad Lunch in the ME and many appetizers for our EE group.
- Perfect Attendance awards: 7 members for Second Semester and 4 members for the full year!
- We tied three fleece prayer blankets for members going through chemo/rehab treatments.
- Yearly evaluations were filled out both by paper copy and online using 'Survey Monkey'. We value input from our members!
- We praise the Lord for our end-of-the-year 'Garden of Renewal and HOPE' event on Thursday, 4.18.13. Although the major rain and flooding kept many away, there were over 70 women in attendance. Our verses were: Proverbs 31:20, "She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.", and, Psalms 33:22, "May Your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our HOPE in You." Our hearts were touched by the personal stories of several speakers and the prayer 'concert' was a

sweet time of connecting with the Lord and each other over the 'Human Trafficking' issue. Did you know slavery still exists today - more than ever? There are about 27 million slaves around the world. Half of all slaves are children, with two children sold into slavery every minute--- 1.2 million a year! AND- the U.S. is #1 in the WORLD for trafficking! The majority of 'slavery' consists of sexual exploitation, but also includes selling for adoption, forced labor, forced marriage, and other atrocities. Awareness is the first step to action!! We distributed a Resource List and Prayer Point list so there would be continued in prayer for these issues. PTL we sold enough jewelry [made by those who have escaped slavery] to send \$1,000.00 to NightLight, \$330 went to Samaritan Creations, and \$50 to MadeBySurvivors. ><>

- For our 4/25/13 Mystery Meetings, our 'Core Leadership' made 'Garden' theme miniature saucer gardens! We are so grateful for how the Lord brings unity to such a diverse group of women!

Summer:

- Our summer study met on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for 8 weeks at Covenant Restoration Church in Hinckley. About 10 men and women did a book study on "Meet Me at the Olive Tree", by Julie Fisher. It contains stories of Jews and Arabs reconciled to the Messiah, and Cindy Noll added extra teaching and supplements.
- We held our annual picnic on July 19th at Sandy Gould's home in Maple Park. About 30 women attended for a fun evening of food, games and fellowship!
- Our Administration Team worked hard this summer to plan an exciting new year for our area women! Cindy Noll is our Head Teaching Leader, Julie Ness is our Secretary and Karen Orstead is our Treasurer. Our Morning Edition Directors are Esther Fay and Lori Stearns. Evening Edition Directors are Pam Gaston and Paulette Bowman.
- Registration was held August 29th along with our evening 'Growing in Godliness' Kick-Off Seminar which featured inspirational guest speaker, Paula Jarot, Shorewood. Paula is an author [*'Daughters by Design'* about their 2 daughters adopted from Cambodia] and missionary with New Tribes Missions, having formerly directed and taught at Grace International School in Thailand. Paula shared how she has received the Lord's STRENGTH most often through her own weakness along with 7 necessary KEYS of God's STRENGTH which help us open our own DOORS of His WILL for our lives. Anna Morgan McQuade from Montgomery also shared a little about human trafficking and her June mission trip to Thailand to encourage the women at Samaritan Creations. She brought handmade jewelry to sell which helps rescued Thai women begin a new life. About 45 women attended and were blessed to hear how the Lord provides us with KEYS to open the 'Doors' of His will for each

of us!! This annual evening is for anyone in the community, whether they plan to attend WOW or not.

September:

- This year's Bible study began September 19th. We're exploring the Old Testament account of Gideon by Priscilla Shirer in the video study, *Gideon: Our weakness. God's STRENGTH*. Priscilla is the daughter of Tony Evans, Christian pastor and syndicated broadcaster. Priscilla, author and speaker to Christian audiences, helps women discover that instead of ignoring, neglecting or trying to escape our weaknesses and insufficiencies, we can see them as a gift or KEYS, given specifically and strategically by God to unlock the treasure: the door of God's STRENGTH.
- About 65 women are registered with a few new members, and 8 children in our Children's Program. We gave scholarships to several women who could not afford to attend.
- Our KEY verse is found in Matthew 16:19 in the Message Bible: 'You will have complete and free access to God's kingdom, KEYS to open any and every door; no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven.'" Our theme song: 'How Can I Keep from Singing' by Chris Tomlin.
- Our theme this year revolves around a KEY Theme. A KEY is something that we all have and use almost daily. They are lost, found, stolen, worn, cut, misplaced, engraved, hidden, strung, inserted, turned, borrowed.... And, when we see and use it, they will remind us of what the Lord is teaching us! The main premise in this study is that our weaknesses are the conduits through which we experience God's strength. Weakness is a KEY, and like most KEYS, it's designed to open something. God designed your personal KEY specifically to fit the lock He has in mind for us. He uses our weaknesses, the areas and places where we feel the least strong, to open a divine door. Without this KEY, we would rarely experience God's strength.
- In honor of our 15th Anniversary, we each received an engraved carabiner KEY ring to hold weekly KEY cards of important thoughts and Bible verses to carry with us.
- Other general things we are doing this year include:
 - Supplying newsletters from 'Intercessors for America' [IFA] to help us grow in the area of prayer for our country and community.

- We offer two monthly Prayer gatherings- one in the morning and one in the evening.
- Weekly 'Unlocking the Love' envelopes which include optional activities to foster connection with the Lord and each other. This has been a blessing as some have stepped outside of their comfort zones and seen Him work through them!
- Promote use of the WPC Library.

October:

- We promoted Pastor Appreciation Month in October through prayer prompts and fliers listing ways to encourage our pastors.
- 10/17 Sharing and song from Nancy Rikken, our blind prayer partner in Eau Claire WI.
- We started a PHONE prayer chain for those members who do not have email.

November:

- We tied a fleece blanket and prayed over it as a gift of encouragement for a former member going through cancer treatments.
- We felt very blessed with our once/semester offering collection. We gratefully gave an offering to WPC Thankoffering from WOW, along with other offerings from individual WOW members.

December:

- We finished our Gideon study and ended our semester with a one week study on Christmas/Jesus' birth. It was a nice focus for us to have in the middle of a hectic season!
- Fourteen women had perfect attendance ~ including a 94 year old and, a young mom who comes from Steward!

- 12/12 was our Christmas Treasures time with extended worship time, 'Gideon' testimony stories, and ME chili/soup lunch and EE lasagna supper. We thanked our Children's Program teachers/helpers with gift baskets.
- A few of us joined with Cyrus Ministries [Big Rock] to go caroling at Shabbona Nursing Home as well as the Assisted Living.

As always, we depend solely on the Lord's provision for WOW. THANK YOU WPC for being a part of that! Thank you also to Dave Stryker for updating our information on the website! =)
Our Admin Team and POW-WOW groups [Prayers of Women for Women of the Word] pray for you and the church!! Let us know if there are any specific prayer requests.

Again- we are so thankful for WPC and each of you on Session who serve our Lord.

May many blessings be yours at the start of this new year!!

sue hipple ><> [WOW Administrator]