

'WOMEN OF THE WORD' ANNUAL REPORT, Year 2010

We continue to enjoy meeting at Waterman Presbyterian Church for the Thursday Morning Edition [ME] and Evening Edition [EE] 'Women of the Word' meetings. This is our TWELFTH year here, and it has been a blessing to all of us. We want to thank the Session, Pastor Sandi and WPC members for your support and blessing!

In January 2010, we began our second semester continuing the theme "You've been chosen... for such a time as this" [Esther 4:14] and concluded our Esther study by viewing the movie, 'One Night with the King'. Then we began a study of the books of I and II Thessalonians with our theme verse: II Thess. 2:16-17, "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say."

We drew names to pair up for Prayer Sisters within our groups, and also encouraged and helped the women write their 3-4 minute faith stories. It was great to see the difference Christ has made in our lives, and it helped us follow the command in I Peter 3:15: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

Other highlights were: hearing about Patt Schaefer's recent trip to Israel, a talk on Friendship Evangelism by Sue Hipple, viewing the movie 'Finger of God' produced by Judson professor Darren Wilson [very inspiring as it told about the miracles happening all over the world], hanging the framed 10th anniversary painting in the WPC Library - 'Celebrate God's Faithfulness' [thank you Jack Ryen!], and several 'Sit 'n Knit' meetings.

Instead of having an 'end of the year' special program at the church, with the Lord's leading we offered several ways to **ReachOut** to others with the HOPE and LOVE of Christ. Many of us took the 'Esther Challenge' to step outside our comfort zones to affect those around us in the name of Jesus! First, we made up over 50 B.A.G.S. ['Be A Good Samaritan']. Like Esther, each woman was to pray-listen-obey-and seek someone to bless with this bag containing a Gideon pocket-sized New Testament, toiletry items and snacks. Then, on Maundy Thursday, a group of us visited the Shabbona Healthcare Center and shared the message of Easter with a Mime group presentation, music, singing and visiting. About 10 of our women paired up to have regular visits with residents who seldom have visitors. We also had a 'Prayer Booth' on two Saturday afternoons in April on a street corner in downtown DeKalb. We were so blessed with the positive response of so many to our offers of tracts, prayer and encouragement! A group also visited the Lifespring Women's Shelter [Wayside Cross, Aurora]. We collected needed household, personal and baby items for them and also brought refreshments, a skit, testimonies, and needed words of encouragement. We found that no matter where we are in life, connecting in the Lord blesses all of us!

After our ReachOut events, we enjoyed 'Giving God the Glory!' with song and testimonies at our last WOW! Then a group attended the Beth Moore Simulcast in Aurora: 'So Long, Insecurity'. We learned how to kiss our insecurities goodbye and discover the joy of living with confidence!

After WOW concluded, a 7-week morning summer study began of Beth Moore's "Stepping Up: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent." We explored the major feasts of Israel through 15 psalms which modeled how we can voice our own petitions and praises to our God who is always available and ready to hear us. An evening study by Chip Ingram was also held in Paw Paw. Our annual alumni summer picnic was held on July 22 at member Kim Mapel's home in DeKalb. About 25 women attended for a fun evening of food, games and fellowship!

In August, we were blessed that our Leadership was invited to attend First Baptist Church, Geneva, for their Leadership Equipping Event. We attended break out sessions for 'Teaching the Bible' as well as 'Women's Ministry'. It was a time of not only inspiration and vision but also specific equipping with very practical and helpful take-aways.

In September we began our twelfth WOW year with our 'Growing in Godliness' seminar. Over 45 women entered the 'Tabernacle' through red velvet curtains, enjoyed an appearance of Holly and Granny Bible, special music from Sarah Jeter [a student attending Judson from Paw Paw] and interacted with each other as we contemplated the 'Fabric of our Lives'. We each chose a design of fabric that represented our life in some way. We also considered the different 'barriers' in our lives that keep us from both relationship with Christ as well as being in fellowship with other Christians. We offered a time for each of us to make a commitment to overcome our barriers and to enter the 'Holy of Holies' by laying our fabric squares on the altar. There definitely was a 'holy hush' felt in the sanctuary that night!

Our scripture focus this year is Hebrews 10:19-22: "Therefore, brothers (and sisters), since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is his body and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water**". [Our theme verse is the last one in bold letters.] There are 82 women registered: 53 in Morning Edition and 29 in Evening Edition. There are 21 new members with 32 different churches represented! We gave 6 scholarships this year. There are 3 Children's Program workers with 5-6 children attending each week.

We used Beth Moore's video study on the tabernacle "A Woman's Heart, God's Dwelling Place" which taught us: **1- A holy God's constant desire to dwell among His people** ~ through the tabernacle God began a deeper relationship with His Chosen People through reconciliation and the revealing of His glory; and **2- God's invitation for us to pass through the distant courts of our relationship with Him and to enter the intimacy of the holy of holies** ~ To go from the back of the room, to the front-even into the very 'holy of Holies'! We were challenged to prepare our hearts, like they did the OT holy of holies, to become a home for His love and glory... Imagine... a dwelling place for His Holy Spirit! We also obtained a 3D model and explanatory display posters of the Tabernacle to help us visualize this amazing way the Lord 'traveled' with His people.

Other opportunities this year have included: encouraging our members to remember their pastor during Pastor's Appreciation Month by providing lists of specific ways to encourage and pray for them; attending the 11/6-7 "Beth Moore LIVE" conference in Springfield; a fun Caroling Party with visits to the Shabbona Nursing Home, Shabbona Assisted Living, homes in Waterman, and the Garden Apartments; and staying connected with our internet Prayer Chain/POW [now over 100 members!].

We have made donations to the WPC Thankoffering [both WOW and WOW members], along with gifts for both WOW members and local area families experiencing needs.

We thank God that WOW continues to be a successful, productive program for the Lord. We are growing in our faith, reaching out to others, seeing many prayers answered and women are growing closer to God and one another. 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 we can be praying for you. => Thank you for partnering with us to affect so many lives for Christ this year!