

ANNUAL REPORT
SWEET MONDAY ~ WIDOWS' MINISTRY
First Baptist Church, Meredith, NH
Widows' Ministry on a Shoestring ~ Tied to a Generous God

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Ps. 119: 103

Our Sweet Monday mission is "reaching out to widows one sweet invitation at a time for Christ."
Our goal is to

- 1) Keep it Simple: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." Matt. 6: 33a;
- 2) Sweet: "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Ps. 119: 103; and
- 3) Salty: "You are the salt of the earth." Matt. 5: 13a.

On the first Monday of the month, April through December, Sweet Monday ~ Widows' Ministry meets to meet the needs of the widows of our church and other communities.

Jesus is always our special guest. The Scriptures tell us that, "The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow..." Psalm 146: 9a. I am very thankful that this church has a heart for widows and demonstrates it through prayer and financial support.

The devotions used at Sweet Monday are for the purpose of pointing every woman to Christ, the "Best Encourager" there is! Every verse used reminds me of God's promise that His Word never returns void. Many of our widows take extra copies of the devotion home with them to share with a shut in or family members. Praise God for opportunities to witness to others using His power and strength.

This past year held both sweet and sad moments. Each month I marvel at how each lady reaches out to others in compassion and understanding...sweet. We also suffered bittersweet emotions when one of our own, Phyllis Wheeler of Laconia, went home to be with the Lord, and left behind a sister, Betty Newell, another widow in our group. So we rejoice with those that rejoice and we weep with those that weep. All the time God sustains us.

We had such fun with our themes this year: The Soul Train, likening our soul's trip to heaven someday to a train ride without all the baggage we carry around today. Special guest was Leo Boiseneault from the Winnepesaukee Railroad. Recipe for Friendship was all about "Carry(ing) each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 6: 2. Our own Sweet Carrie Constant played so beautifully for us, helping us say good-bye to our helper, Connie Trott as she and Bud moved to Massachusetts.

The Pioneering Spirit spoke to our willingness to step out by Faith and do for Christ whatever He is asking each individual to do. Sweet Diana Ladd arrived in period costume from the Pioneer days and demonstrated what a typical day in her life would have been like.

We took our annual "outing" in July this year. Those who were able to travel a distance went along to the ocean at The Commons at New Castle, NH, where we enjoyed our bagged lunches and time to walk the beach or just sit and enjoy the sunshine and sound of the sea. Our devotion encircled around Jesus' encounter with Peter, James and John as fishermen who had not caught any fish, yet were taught to have faith in Christ as He taught them to be fishers of men. We experienced our own miracle as our rented van would not start when we were ready to come home. We all prayed for God's help and when I went to start the van "one more time" it started right up!

In August we all were amazed at the DVD by Louie Giglio, "How Great is Our God," showing us some of the intricate workings of the human body. A local EMT and fire fighter came to show us what a good first aid kit should look like.

"Hope When We Need it Most" was our September theme. Our devotion came from the time in King David's life when his son Absalom betrayed him and how David regained hope in his God (found in Psalm 42 and 43). We were blessed to have as our guest, Sharon Malone, from Christian radio stations FM 88.7 and FM 91.7 out of New Durham and Sanford, ME. Sharon actually lives on Mt. Hope!

Both Nancy and I thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Richmond, VA, in mid-September to the annual Sweet Monday convention. We were treated like royalty by Kim Newlen, CEO and founder of Sweet Monday and her secretary Jamie Breeden. We were able to serve the Lord and Sweet Monday by pouring tea for all that attended the convention...around 300+. It was such a blessing to spend time with Kim and Jamie and to meet members of the Board of Directors and other Sweet Monday facilitators

Then in October, we brought out our crockpots, handed out our favorite crockpot recipes and learned how we can be like a crockpot when "We are to God the aroma of Christ." 2 Cor. 2: 15. All enjoyed a delicious Pear Caramel Pudding Cake made in crockpots and served with Sweet Monday's new signature tea, Pear Caramel. Nancy and I shared our special moments in Richmond with our Sweet Widows through pictures and stories.

November came and I was at home assisting my husband after his rotator cuff surgery. Our own Jane Jepsen stood in for me and, to all accounts, did a marvelous job of delivering the devotion, prayer and welcome time. Sweet Nancy Larrabee served faithfully and expertly in the kitchen and around the tea tables. All enjoyed Brenda Goodearl, our guest, who demonstrated her skill and talent of oil painting and sculpting.

December brings our annual Christmas Luncheon at Food For Thought in Belmont, followed by a gift exchange and a celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I wish to thank the leadership and members of FBC for supporting this ministry. I know that just this fact alone has spoken volumes to our widows about the love of Christ.

I also wish to thank my dear friend, Nancy Larrabee, for her wonderful support, love and prayers for this ministry of Sweet Monday and towards me personally. She has been a tremendous help

to me and is loved by each Sweet Widow. She exhibits such a sweet heart for older women and widows in particular. Bless you, Nancy.

In regard to the 30 or so widows who receive an invitation monthly, close to two thirds attend regularly. Some of the others are now too disabled to leave their homes or now live in a nursing home setting, which opens up a whole new dimension to this ministry. I believe with prayer and proper planning, a visitation arm of this ministry could be added. I ask all of you to join with Nancy and me in praying about this special opportunity. Perhaps some of you might feel a tug from the Holy Spirit to be involved in this area of Sweet Monday. What a difference it could make in the life of a widow. Thank you for prayerfully considering this.

Thanking God for His goodness,

Marj Newcomb, facilitator

Nancy Larabee, facilitator helper