

CONNECTIONS MINISTRY

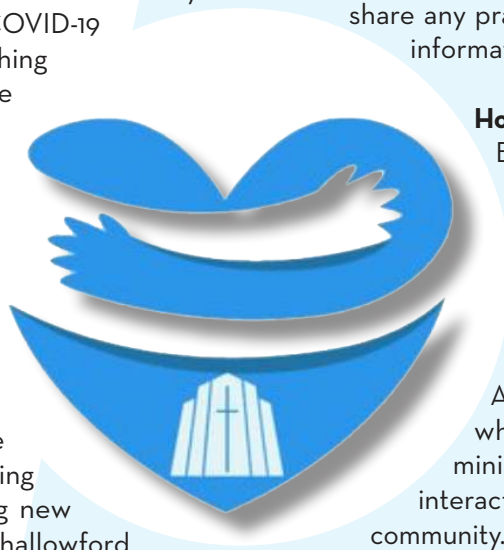
MEMBER TO MEMBER

Sometimes what we need most in life is to feel connected to someone or something. So, we become part of a group or a church. We make phone calls or go to events. We are in book clubs or running groups or men’s breakfasts. Experiencing a disconnect or feeling really isolated makes the need for connection real. There are places in our hearts that simply seek to be filled.

When COVID-19 brought our physical gatherings to a halt, a hiatus which left many isolated, a need was identified by Julie Burkhard and Bob Smithers for the Shallowford family to stay connected. Out of this need, the COVID-19 Call Center was born, focusing on reaching out to at home members to see if there were special needs or requests. With the meaningful success of the Call Center outreach, the question became “why not connect to all households in our church?”

Sherry Cross, the COVID-19 Call Center spreadsheet mastermind, feels that there was a lot more to the call center than just picking up the phone. “We quickly realized that, in addition to checking in on each other, we were discovering new friendships and connections with our Shallowford family.” She adds that the group wanted the same thing for the larger church membership. “We want to know more about our Shallowford family”, adds Sherry, “to bring us closer in a stronger, richer relationship.”

This April, Shallowford will launch Connections Ministry, an idea originated from the special meaning found through the call center. Connections leaders Sherry Cross, Kyle Kilch, Ruth Gronde and Bob Smithers have recruited 30 Shallowford members. These connectors will reach out to 15 households twice a year. Bob Smithers reflects, “During



a pandemic or more healthy times, I want our members to feel that even if they cannot get to church, they are still very much a part of our community, our Shallowford family.”

The first question they will ask is “how are you and what do you need from Shallowford? They’ll give you space to share any prayer requests or update any contact information.

How will this benefit us in the long term?

By having our connectors tracking the progress of these connections, we’ll be able to ensure over time that no member gets lost as our church continues to thrive and grow!

According to Rev. Bradley Kibler, Associate Pastor for Youth & Programs, who is overseeing this ministry, “This ministry will provide a cross-generational interaction as we share God’s love and foster community. In addition, we will engage volunteers in meaningful ways which allow them to use their spiritual gifts of relationship building and communications as we connect with our entire church. We are excited for this new opportunity to engage our mission statement of “inviting”. Bob Smithers likened this Connections Ministry to the concept of the Farthest Pew where we cultivate relationships and foster community.

Members of Shallowford, you may feel your pew is far away but it is much closer than you realize. Shallowford worships and Shallowford prays. As a church we Zoom, eat, step, and continue to connect.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

STEP 1

YOU’LL RECEIVE A POSTCARD IN THE MAIL FROM YOUR CONNECTOR!

STEP 2

YOUR CONNECTOR WILL REACH OUT TO YOU VIA PHONE CALL, TEXT, EMAIL, OR IN PERSON.

STEP 3

YOU RESPOND AND “CONNECT”!