

# What Have St. Peter's Solos Been Up to during the Pandemic?

St. Peter's Solos Group members were getting lonesome to see each other, to have fun and receive spiritual nourishment. Co-leader Phyllis Swanson decided to clean and sanitize her garage, rearrange furniture for social distancing, and turn one wall into a church sanctuary!

Thus began St. Peter's Garage Church Fellowship! Next step: invite solos to come wearing a mask and bringing their own beverage, treat and hand sanitizer.

How do you prepare a garage wall into a sanctuary? Daughter Laurie ordered a 6 x 4 foot sturdy mural of gorgeous mountains, beautiful flowers and imprinted with Romans 15:13,

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

The noun joy became our theme. We then positioned Arne Witt's Joy wooden statue on the cement floor in the corner. Then placed a cloth from the Holy Land (from son David & Patti) over a metal 3-shelf unit to become our altar, positioning it below the mural, with a small wooden cross (made by Merlin Bauer) on the top shelf. Grandson Tate's old cassette tape player became our piano, organ, instrumentalists and vocalists!

The Solos love to visit! Several attendees said they also loved the devotionals, music, guest presenters, writing greeting cards to others, prayer requests and Birthday celebrations! Attendees included Evonne Clay, Marilyn Finneseth, Deb Groenwold, Karen Johnson, Mary Ann Larson, JoAnn Morgan, Roberta Morse, Jo Odell, Hazel Peterson, Dolly Roush and host Phyllis Swanson. 4 to 11 came 9 times from June through November.

Dolly commented, "It's just great to get together outside!" Great listener JoAnn said, "I loved hearing the inspirational readings!" Marilyn said, "I enjoyed the camaraderie of gathering with our friends in our St. Peter's Solo Group! The joy of viewing the changing colors of the trees was enhanced by the reading of Joyce Kilmer's poem, 'Trees', and the singing of it later." Youngest Solo member Deb commented, "I truly enjoyed guest Mary Fransen's way of getting us to think about how we've spent our time during Covid by asking, 'Of all the things you have done during this challenging Covid time, what are you the most proud of doing?' I also enjoyed Marilyn leading us in singing older songs we remember like 'My Country 'tis of Thee' and 'Daisy, Daisy!' Also, enjoyed and learned about Hazel's very informative and possible heart procedure as . . . we all have hearts in common - to not only repair physical distress but sibling relationships as well!" Hazel shared, "These special meetings added substance and warmth to my restricted summer and fall - quiet times listening to sacred music, meaningful readings, the warm response to my sharing the gifts that my Grandson sent from Dubai, and Mary Fransen guiding us to think on the good we have done during this crisis." Evonne commented, "It was so nice that Pastor David was able to ride his bike over on that very beautiful August day to dedicate the inspiring mural. So good to be with Solo friends."

Fun Birthday Party Celebrations included: June 8 - Phyllis; Sept. 23 - Roberta; Oct. 7 - JoAnn, at which time Solos enjoyed delicious cupcakes, fun birthday cards, candles, music, devotions and balloons!

Solos last gathering on Nov. 4 began with their quiet time, eyes closed, deep breathing and again listening to "On Eagles Wings" by Father Michael Joncas. A couple days later President Elect Joe Biden told the world that one of his favorite songs is "On Eagles' Wings!" Thanks, Mary Kay for your very timely "Shelter Me" prayer - song article on page 6 in our May "Visitor". Composer Joncas hopes "Shelter Me" will provide comfort during this pandemic. The musical notes are also in Mary Kay's interesting article.

We Solos have indeed felt lifted up, even in our isolation, being inspired by Isaiah 40:31: "Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high On Wings Like Eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."

Remembering Veteran's Day on Nov. 11, Marilyn Finneseth's presentation about "My Country 'Tis of Thee" gave depth & meaning to this patriotic song & she reminded us to thank our Veterans. It was fun to sing along with her beautiful voice. Fun to see her book, Then Sings My Soul compiled by Robert Morgan with 150 hymn stories!

As usual, we again signed 'Thinking of You' cards, this time for Arly Boyum and Jim & Corky Stenstrom. Reminding of our JOY theme, we found JOY in our mural as we read Romans 15:13 together for the ninth time!

Phyllis expresses thanks and acknowledgements for help from 1. Pastor David dedicating the mural on August 13 and using his inspirational *Visitor* articles re: God's creation & G words - Nov. Visitor 2. Mary Kay for using her *Visitor* Music Notes, so interesting, especially August, July (with 10 favorite hymns) 3. Richard Collman for interesting, helpful articles, especially "Can Our Desert Bloom" in April and "A Cappella" in March 'Visitor' 4. Pastor Duane Everson's book "Non-Perishable Stories (by a Parish Pastor)" given to 10 Solos on Sept. 23 for inspiring reading 5. All of the solos for liking the joy songs & "You are my Sunshine!" 6. Terra Wiersen for her beautiful Parish Visitors. (apologies for any omissions)

Joy in Jesus, Phyllis Vik Swanson, member since 1964