

My Faith Story

I am Jean and I never knew that I had a food ministry, until one of our members asked me about it. It all started when I noticed how widows will not cook much for themselves.

I was always in the habit of sending food home with anyone who attended a dinner at our home. Family dinners extended to those friends we knew who had no other family nearby. There would be times we never knew who would be coming to dinner. We would invite people on the spur of the moment as we heard they would be alone that day.

One couple I met through a United Methodist Women visitation. As we talked, the wife talked about how she once canned and cooked large dinners. Eventually the topic went to what they enjoyed eating but no longer could cook. Thankfully, it was **Pennsylvania Dutch food**. I started preparing dishes that the wife made in the past and giving them some of my canned goods. When the wife moved to a nursing home, I continued to take food to the husband. At times I would even grocery shop for him and another elderly woman from church. It seemed that they just wanted my time, conversation....and food! Some Sundays, I visited two nursing homes after church and delivered the bulletin, conversation, laughs and treats to the women.

Through daily visiting to my husband's mom in a nursing home, **I developed a connection** with the staff and would make birthday cakes and treats for the residents. That branched into the Methodist Women's Ministries going there for hymn sings and social time afterward with gifts and treats (*of course*). This gave me new insights into the world of nursing homes and how we could be a blessing to them.

Another elderly woman I met through mutual friends. She was quite an inspiration. She had both legs amputated at the knees but continued to cook for her extended family (*which sometimes included my husband and me*). We would discuss canning, recipes and trade our goods. She was my go-to canning expert. She gave me some old cookbooks, recipes, and many memories. She was always a joy to visit because she was so upbeat. We shared our lives.

Now my husband and I continue to share meals with those without nearby relatives. I and a neighbor exchange soups and treats so regularly that her husband just tells me to "keep practicing" when I make sticky buns. He gets to try the samples. We have a new single neighbor who does not cook, who has adopted us – calls us "Aunt Jean and Uncle Bob" and mom, he calls "Mom". I send food to him regularly, invite him to meals. I also gave him recipes and cookware. **God has blessed us which enables us to bless others.**

Matt. 25:40 (NIV) states: "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' "