

MEET PTS



SMALL CHURCH—BIG HEART FOR MINISTRY

Recent **Church Planting and Revitalization Certificate** graduate the Rev. Dr. Judi Slater '91/'11/'18 pastors the First PC of Duquesne, located in one of the most under-resourced communities in Pennsylvania. “We are a smaller congregation with a big heart for ministry in the community,” she notes. “Our programs include a mission store, a community garden, monthly food boxes for senior citizens, food and library boxes in the yard, the Open Table mission that helps young adults raised in poverty move forward in reaching their life goals, and a children/youth community outreach program.”

Judi's also joined two other pastors in working with Lincoln Place PC—another smaller congregation, but one that's decided to continue serving the community. Lincoln Place does so via a weekly free lunch for some 50 senior citizens, Kids Club and family movie nights, and hosting many community activities in the church building.

Amid her busy ministry, the CPandR program helped Judi develop a “meaningful and joyful spiritual practice”: The Daily Examen for Families. “My project for my certificate program was to introduce this practice to several families in my church,” Judi notes, “and my husband and I started following it then. We find it to be a great way to connect with each other and to see more of God's presence in our days.”

A delightfully surprising way Judi has seen more of God's presence involves the large yard her church enjoys. “Two years ago, we got to know Grow Pittsburgh, which helped us plant an amazing community garden—the Duquesne Community Victory Garden,” she says. “Through this garden, we have connected with more than 40 people in the community who enjoy being a part of the garden family. The garden promotes healthy eating by providing free produce for the community, and it has also become a community gathering place. As we entered our second planting season, we were excited to add a children's section, a fire pit, and a flower garden. Our garden coordinator has informed me that he would like us to have chickens, so who knows what will happen next!”

Judi notes further that, for the last two decades, First PC of Duquesne has had a partnership with a larger, suburban church—John McMillan PC. “On Mondays, volunteers from JMPC come to Duquesne to provide dinner and leadership for our Kids Club, a community outreach program for children and youth. Kids Club has enabled us to connect with families in the community, and through those connections our church has become a cross-cultural congregation.” Yet another reason to celebrate!

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