

## 2011 Convention Report – Chaplain to the Retired Clergy and Surviving Spouses

The West Missouri Chaplains to the Retired Clergy and Surviving Spouses, Jerry and Brenda Kolb and Kermit and Lillymae Smith have invited the retired clergy, spouses and surviving spouses to gatherings on several occasions. Kermit and Lillymae have hosted a gathering of clergy and spouses in the Southern half of the Diocese at a local restaurant where they had an opportunity for companionship and discussion.

Brenda and Jerry gathered the retired clergy and spouses on two different occasions at Bishop Spencer Place for lunch and a program. The first program was an introduction with our new bishop. He shared a little about himself and answered questions. A number of clergy and spouses from the Southern half of the Diocese came to KC for this meeting. Attendance at these meetings range from 25 to 35 people.

In October we gathered again for lunch and program at Bishop Spencer Place. The program consisted of Liz Cessor, VP of Charity Care at Saint Luke's Hospital, and Kar Wu who assists St Luke's in dealing with homeless patients. Often times homeless persons come to St Luke's ER for treatment. But because they are homeless, they fail to follow-up with medications or change behavior. Kar Wu provides a service where he (or people who work with him) will actually come to the ER, pick up the patient and transport them to a facility that will care for them for a number of days. This prevents them from re-entering the ER and thus save money. While this program was begun by St. Luke's, many hospitals now support the program called, "Artists helping the Homeless."

Our programs help the retired clergy, and especially surviving spouses, to feel connected to the Diocese. Often, when a clergy person dies, spouses feel suddenly 'cut off' from the Diocese. Our purpose is to make sure that does not happen.

We plan to continue our luncheon gatherings in 2012. Whether we have quarterly gatherings or fewer just depends on what is happening. That's the nature of 'being retired!' We'll measure our success by the interest in our gatherings. The purpose of our gatherings is precisely to reflect our baptismal promises.

Jerry and Brenda Kolb

Kermit and Lillymae Smith