

## **Dementia Friendly Congregation Ministry**

In 2018, some parishioners began exploring the ramifications of Dementia/Alzheimer's & Memory Loss, (D/ML), and the potential implications for St. Odilia parish. After discussions with Deacon Jim and encouragement from the Pastoral Care Council, they pursued the topic and surveyed members of St. Odilia to assess the level of impact. A small team was established to pursue the prospect of becoming a Dementia Friendly Parish and to coordinate ways to minister to those affected by D/ML.

Using statistics from the Alzheimer's Association and demographics of St. Odilia, it is estimated that as many as 435 parishioners are affected, either directly by D/ML or as a caregiver. Additionally, survey results showed a need for information about the disease and about available resources.

Efforts thus far to minister to these individuals include:

- With a grant from the Endowment Fund, the Parish became a member of the North Central Consortium of The Gathering in partnership with Lyngblomsten. Membership in the consortium gives preference to parishioners who would like to participate in The Gathering, which has a waiting list. It also facilitates access to "Second Half with Lyngblomsten" staff and resources that focus on parishioners who are in the "second half" of their life.
- Special liturgies (mass or communion service)
- Subject matter presentations
- Recommendations for change
- Parish library resources
- Resource material is available in the narthex of the church
- Identifying available resources within the local community, nationally, and internationally.

A major challenge for this Ministry is identifying who in the Parish should be contacted for special spiritual services. Deacon Jim welcomes everyone who may be interested to call him at (651) 415-3354.

The Dementia Friendly Congregation Ministry Team with Deacon Jim as liaison reports to the Pastoral Care Council.