

## **Pandemic Bible Study**

By Shirley Holle, Member of the English District Board of Directors

The pandemic hit and most activities stopped, including in-person Bible study. So, it was with my group of women. We were just finishing the study of Joy by Deb Burma but were not finding much joy. We stopped meeting except for an occasional outside evening fellowship time in someone's backyard. We all knew each of us were facing challenges but how could we help each other?

We decided we needed exercise, fellowship, and Bible study. We met at the park and did a couple of laps before sitting on the bleachers in proper socially-distanced spaces. We decided we could do this and looked for health and fitness Bible studies. Nothing showed up for us to use as a study. It was also getting too cold and dark to continue this way.

Next step – Zoom. We could see each other! We could discuss our problems and encourage each other through the challenges. A member suggested we take a word, and each person would come to the next Bible study with verses from the Bible that they found helpful for themselves and share them with each other. And we had our Bible study!!!

We picked our words: physical health, mental/emotional health, spiritual health, prayer, trust, and peace. Each week's discussion would lead to choosing a word for the next meeting. A list of the Bible verses discussed was sent in a follow-up email, so everyone had them. The format has given us encouragement, new insights and has brought us closer to each other.

Through the discussions, we have also added hymns and podcasts that offer encouragement and sometimes just laughter. As we discuss the verses more verses are added. There is a high level of involvement and the discussions have impacted our lives in positive ways as we moved through the pandemic – support for each other, leaning into the verses we discuss and having more hope, peace, and joy throughout the week. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives as we are less anxious and stressed than a few months ago. Now as we are vaccinated, we are starting to think of meeting together again in the backyard and share our joy!