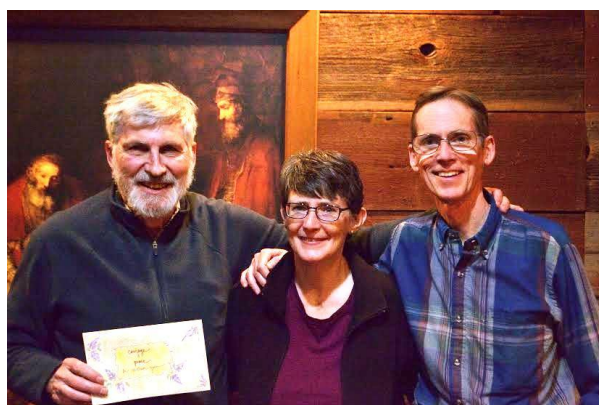


Dear friends in the Nurturing Communities Project Network,

In the past month I've not traveled because of Joanne's recovery from surgery. Her surgeon thinks the operation got all the cancer, but has begun a series of chemo treatments as an added precaution. We are surrounded by good care and many prayers. Thank you to all who have stood by us.

Following are a few highlights from earlier visits and news of the NCP network:

I was with the Catholic Worker community of South Bend, IN, for a three-day retreat in Mid-May to work on some long-standing tensions over community structures that were poorly diagnosed until the Holy Spirit led us into a deep time of confession, forgiveness and insight. Much work



remains to be done as people transition into new ways of relating. I remember our time together now as a communal work day, a family therapy session, and an experience of Pentecost (a la Acts 2) all wrapped into one event. God is good and is gathering some very special people for kingdom work.

This year the Nurturing Communities Project has been encouraging the formation of regional groups to host intentional Christian community gatherings. These times of mutual edification also help communities discover the companions they can turn to in times of need. Here is what Andrew Howard wrote about a recent weekend gathering hosted by Genesis Communities in Minneapolis in which sixty persons from twelve communities participated on June 3-5.



I wanted to share with you that the MN/Midwest/Regional Nurturing Communities Project gathering this past weekend was great! We had a full schedule on Saturday, and low key connecting times on Friday night and Sunday morning. Lots of interesting discussions, lots of networking with communities, most of which are a bike ride away from our community. We passed out a lot of the Called to Community books. Sara (my wife) made great food. We (by a miracle) had enough childcare workers and the kids had fun during the weekend too. Lots of new connections. Notable ones are with InnerChange, and Elmendorf. Many other connections too with small independent community houses. Good times of worship, and some late night discussions



Praise God for His provision.

Andrew Howard

Tomorrow I (David Janzen) am leaving for nine days in El Salvador along with a dozen others from Shalom Mission Communities, including my seven-teen-year-old granddaughter, Jaden Janzen. This delegation will be the twenty-fifth since our first visit in January of 1992, when we arrived on the day that peace accords were signed ending a brutal decades-long civil war. We have been visiting our sister community, Valle Nuevo, every year since, accompanying them through many community development challenges.



I'll include a few photos but not tell all the stories. (I can send you a CD of the whole slide show and text if you're interested.) Instead I will close with a poem that summarizes the nurturing communities work I've been privileged to join in between South and North for three decades now.

Yours in His Service, David J.





Through Thin and Thick

I recall an African proverb,
“When Elephants fight
the grass gets trampled.”

In recent days I’ve turned my thoughts
to gathering up a slide show of
a twenty-five year relationship
between a village of repatriated refugees
from a Cold War turned brutally hot in El Salvador,
and a few Gringos a few thousand miles north,
in a few communities likewise touched
by Jesus crucified,
yet still alive.

Our relationship is thin in that
we live far apart
and only see each other a few times
in a good year.

But it has growth thick with faithful visits
and deeply shared pain that,
when we sit and listen to each others’ stories to the end,
are once more surprised by His love
that turns trampled grass green and tall because
its life is in the roots.