

Time	Prayers
Talent	Gifts

**Stewardship stories by
Faith members and friends
January 2008 through June 2008**

Several months ago, Faith members and friends were asked to share personal stewardship stories about why they give time, talent, prayer and financial support to our church. The Stewardship committee made this request to help people realize that stewardship is a very necessary part of worship and important in our growth as a congregation and as Christians.

The stories shared have been inspirational. By printing these stories in Faith In Action, we hope that people not present in worship will hear these personal testimonials of faith and know that stewardship is not difficult or costly, but very rewarding and an important part of our relationship with God. The stories are listed in the order that they were told.

Lynn Bonkowske's stewardship story

I don't have a cabin or second home that needs my attention. I consider Faith UMC to be my second home. It helps me through the turbulence of the prior week and gets me ready for the next (and I can save on gas and not have a long drive).

I have been in the choir for more than 10 years. This is a great group. We have fun and are always looking for more talent. I have been a trustee for a couple of years and have recently been added to the nominations committee.

Don't be surprised if I try to hit you up to help in some way.

I have volunteered to make and sell baskets, worked at the car shows, garage sales and Breakfast with Santa. I have also made hot dishes, salads and baked bars for different functions. I have contributed to Neighbors through the good work of our church. It makes me feel good knowing that some little person will have mittens or something to eat. With all of this said, I feel very blessed to have you as part of my family and Faith Church as my second home.

Jenna Schwendinger's stewardship story

The first time my family and I walked in the door of Faith, I felt very welcomed. We walked into the sanctuary and I felt very comfortable. Then when the music started playing -- the hymns, the sound of the organ, the doxology — I was overwhelmed. This was the music from my childhood, the songs I'd been singing since I was a little girl – the same music that I want my little girl to know and love and pass down to her children someday.

Another thing that made me feel very comfortable at Faith is that we share our walls with Nueva Esperanza. I love sitting in the fellowship hall after the service and hearing them sing and praise God in Spanish. (It also reminds me of my younger days, as my church's youth took several mission trips to Mexico.)

So, to give back to a church that made me feel so welcome, I joined the very talented choir. I don't know that I do them justice, but I enjoy being part of that group and I hope that in some small way my voice can help us all feel closer to God.

My family also participates in many of the functions of the congregation. We have painted the trim and the gutters, we've done some yard work and we help with many of the fundraising activities. We also put a weekly amount into the offering plate, because a church can't function on talent alone.

I feel that my family walked through these doors for a reason, and I hope to continue serving God by using my abilities through this church and with this congregation.

Darryl Geist's stewardship story

Marie and I moved up from Iowa in 1994. We went to a couple of churches before coming to Faith. Marie has a tendency of not driving straight from point A to point B, and in doing so, we found Faith church. The first time we came here, we knew it was the church we wanted to join.

I got involved in being a greeter and usher, as well as a member of the Staff Parish and sharing the bread committees. Marie and I became counters and are still counters today. I have volunteered to help out on Saturday workdays and in the kitchen for the Soup & Salad Luncheon. I am now involved with the Welcome Center, Trustee Committee and still usher when needed. It is a great joy to be a member of Faith Church.

Bill Short's stewardship story

Twelve and a half years ago, Susanne, the boys and I visited this church without knowing a soul. From the outside, this church looked like it would be "just right" - large enough, but not too large. When we first walked in, we were pleased to be able to drop the boys off in the staffed nursery. We also thought that we might be able to enjoy the service and then quietly leave without "sticking out" too much ---- wrong! As we left the sanctuary after the service and walked through the crowded lobby area, a big guy (Jeff Boelter) who was standing with a bunch of other men, pointed at me and loudly said: "Hey, that guy looks like he can play softball!" I decided then, that I liked this church. We returned a few more times, received a visit from the Pastor and joined.

That first impression has been reinforced throughout the years. We've found the people of our church to be open, thoughtful, inviting and gregarious. We've also seen lots of people sharing in the stewardship and life of the church. When the day came that I was invited to "join in," it felt very comfortable. Since then, I've had the opportunity to serve our church in many ways, on various committees: Finance, Ad Council, Revisioning, 5-Church/River Bend, Youth Council; and with "other opportunities": offering counter, outdoor and indoor clean-ups, nursery, communion stewards, coffee and donuts, Lenten dinners, fundraisers, Car Show, Breakfast with Santa, Soup and Salad, Fare-For-All food program, and Chaperone for three JUMY's and one UMY's weekend youth retreats. I also enjoy and occasionally provide back-up leadership for the Men's Breakfast.

I do these things for several reasons: 1) I enjoy them, 2) everyone seems to appreciate the help, 3) I feel a deeper sense of being a part of our church family, 4) I feel a sense of accomplishment and 5) How can anyone say NO when asked, by the "doers" of this church, to help out? We've also increased our pledge every year as we've seen our Church's growing need for financial support. I feel that the many good things that our family has received from our church exceed what we've given back.

Bonnie Dick's stewardship story

I hadn't gone to church in a long time and I started missing God in my life. One day I was talking to my friend Marge Hottinger and she asked me to come to church with her. I began coming here to Faith Church with Marge and her daughter Deb, who had spoken so wonderfully about this church. I really enjoy the friendly people here and felt at home right away.

I help by working in the kitchen any chance I can. I also help with the car shows, make baskets and bake bars for funerals, bake sales and the Soup & Salad Luncheon. I enjoy greeting people on Sunday morning, picking up donuts for fellowship after the service and working on the Mission committee with Barb Schroeder.

I am very happy that Marge asked me to come to church with her. I miss her very much and enjoy helping at the church in any way that I can.

Kathy Johnson's stewardship story

I was born and baptized in Faith Church in 1946. My friends were Linda Johnson, Nancy Mens and Peggy Sioris. We sang in the junior choir and were confirmed together. We attended youth fellowship with Helen Pelletier as our leader/teacher. We went on hayrides, bowled, had parties and just had great times together.

I helped my Aunt Lil Helleloid teach Sunday school. I was also a greeter and helped set tables for funerals with my mom and Lucy Reed. My dad, Ralph, drove people to church and did donuts and ushered with Ed Mens. Our little white church on Winifred Street was so beautiful with the pipe organ in front and the choir on the right. My mother, Doris, was on the building committee for our current church in West St. Paul. She was also active in the women's circle and was secretary for eight years in the UMW. My mom and Lucy Reed started the "Garden of Faith" and painting of the Sunday school wing.

I am so grateful I had my faith when I became sick in 2006. I prayed to God to help me through the ordeal of cancer and he did. I am blessed to have such a caring/loving church family and friends who prayed for me and cared so much for me. I learned about faith, hope and love. I am so grateful I belong to Faith Church.

Maryanne Mauer's stewardship story

Becoming a member of Faith Church has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. Attending church on Sunday is the high point of my week.

The first Sunday I came to Faith, I was warmly greeted by Lynn and Bill Bonkowske and Marti Kemp fixed me up with a nametag. When I walked into the sanctuary, I would feel the peace, warmth and love.

My visit was followed up by a phone call from Judy Turk, a letter from the pastor and Ted Gove dropped by my home with literature about the United Methodist Church. All these made me feel that this was the church for me. I joined Faith four weeks after my first visit.

I have contributed to the garage sales, bake sales, basket sales and auctions. I would like to be able to take part in more activities – the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Bless all of you for uplifting my spirit and the warm friendships you have shown me (the hugs are nice too!).

Susanne Short's stewardship story

I figured I better do a stewardship moment since I am on the committee. Unfortunately, my biggest fear is giving a speech in public. I am sharing my story because I feel it is important. Giving and serving the church is a way of giving back to God. Also, without these gifts our church cannot survive.

I joined Faith Church approximately 13 years ago. Thanks to my son Patrick, who was born on Christmas day, Bill and I decided on the way to the hospital that morning that this was a sign. We needed to find a church and give back to God for all the blessings we have received.

Since joining Faith Church, I volunteered and coordinated the nursery, taught Sunday school, created and still maintain the church web site, helped with dinners and auctions, and assisted in confirmation gatherings. I am a confirmation mentor, have counted offerings, served donuts, and helped with a variety of other fundraising activities.

I have made many good friends here and have grown spiritually as well. Thank you to all who serve God, so we can continue the growth of our church family.

Ruth Phipp's stewardship story

Being an active part of a church family was never an option when I was growing up. It was simply part of life taken for granted, as it had been for my parents and their parents before them. So church was never a big deal, it was just part of the living as we knew it. Of course, **now** I realize how fortunate I was to have come into a situation like that, in which to live and learn and love. So much of what we learn is from observing examples set by the adults around us and absorbing it into our own lifestyles. It included also, naturally, things we learned from adults at school and in the larger community, too.

I have been a life-long Methodist, and married another Methodist, so it was a "no brainer": to look at Faith Church when we moved to West St. Paul with our four young children in the 1960s. Now, children have more diverse lifestyles exhibited around the all the time, plus seeing lots on television from all parts of the world. Therefore making lifestyle choices about which behaviors to emulate becomes far more complex. Who is right can be a question. It is well to keep church in the picture because we know the life ways, which Jesus promoted, are of God and good. The Church keeps us in touch with these. Our lives are definitely richer and more meaningful when we enjoy a healthy relationship

Pat Giorgini's stewardship story

I was born into a line of Methodists who were always active in their churches. For me, belonging to the Methodist church and participating in the forms of stewardship is just as natural and normal as breathing. There has never been a time when I was not involved in the church and its programs.

About 30 plus years ago my family found our way to Faith Church after having a home built in West St. Paul. I have worked on many committees in our church, including Council of Ministries, Administrative Board, Staff-Parish, Nomination and Missions.

I have worked in the kitchen for many occasions including wedding receptions and funerals. I have baked innumerable pans of bars for funerals, so much so that when our children were young and would come rushing in after school and smell that wonderful odor of baking, one of them would invariably call out, "Who died?"

There were times when members of the church would come to clean on Saturdays. One Saturday I climbed on a stepladder and washed the insides of all of the sanctuary windows. For many years I also did volunteer work in the church office. Over these years of membership in Faith Church, I have met many dear and wonderful people. There is a lot of hidden talent in this church. The church has its ups and downs, joys and disappointments, and **always** its challenges, but I have been happy to be a part of this congregation.

God calls us to put our faith into action. We must answer His call by being faithful to our church and willingly participate in its many facets of stewardship!

Save the date!

What are you doing on Sunday, November 23? Please save the date for an important Sunday worship service and celebration event immediately following the service. The meal will be pot luck and you are encouraged to bring food using recipes from the new Faith cookbook. Additional details will be sent to your home and communicated in upcoming bulletins and Faith in Action publications. This is something you don't want to miss so mark your calendar and watch for more information.