

Time	Prayers
Talent	Gifts

## Stewardship stories by Faith members and friends

June 2006 through December 2007

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 publishing these stories on our web site, 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.

If you have not yet told your story and would like to share it, please contact Roseanne Larsen or complete a stewardship story form and place it in the offering plate. Forms are inserted in Sunday bulletins or available from the church office. The stories are listed in the order that they were told.

### **Clayton Short's stewardship story**

I just completed confirmation and each year we are required to do 10 hours of community service work. Some of the service projects I have helped with include:

- The Easter breakfast where we come in the day before and make caramel rolls
- Communion (setting everything up)
- A 30-hour famine to raise money for starving children
- Lenten suppers
- Soup and salad luncheons

I enjoyed doing these because I like helping others and I felt really good afterwards. I plan to continue helping with service projects and I think everyone should be involved in these great things.

### **Sharon Yekaldo's stewardship story**

I believe stewardship is a mission of service to God. We are to care for and improve the usefulness of his resources (such as Faith Church) for generations to come.

Much of my stewardship takes place behind the scenes, small tasks that don't take much time, but enhance our worship. I'm also a member of the choir and feel God's presence in our music. The church is part of my life and I'm happy to do my small part in being a steward of Faith Church.

### **MariAnne Young's stewardship story**

God bestows on each of us many different talents and mine is the ability to sing. My parents taught me to harmonize and music has always been a very large part of my church life. By singing in the choir, I feel I can share a talent that God gave me. Through our music, we can inspire others who hear our musical message.

Besides giving our financial support, each of us has at least one talent that we can share to support our church. If you can sing, we could use your voice to share God's message in song. God has been so generous in sharing with us; giving back to God is part of our stewardship.

### **Joan Ryan's stewardship story**

There's no doubt in my mind that I have to address God in order to get "in touch" with the One who is my Lord and Savior. He's my lifeline, the One who carries me through. Prayer quiets me down and helps me focus on what's really important, which is talking with my God. It's amazing how things fall in place when I trust God and let him into my life through prayer.

It's also very important to lift others up in prayer. God does hear and respond, according to his will. I have had personal experience with the power of prayer on my behalf and was awestruck how my pain became more manageable.

I believe that prayer is one of the main reasons Faith Church has come through so many challenges. The prayers of many have been heard and answered - we have worked through many obstacles. Prayer does work, keep it up!

### **Mary Butler's stewardship story**

I am pleased to be a United Methodist woman. I've been involved in the United Methodist Women (UMW) for 60 years, holding leadership positions in local and district areas. My stewardship with this group has given me strength, support and education. I believe in the UMW mission, which is to promote God's love and to uplift women's positions in the community. I encourage Faith women to join in UMW fellowship and attend programs.

### **Esther Craine's stewardship story**

I have been helped many times in unexpected ways, so I **know** there is power in prayer. Years ago, an elderly member shared her prayer stewardship. She couldn't attend church often, but every day she prayed for different people in the church directory. In the course of a month, she prayed for the entire congregation. If her unknown prayers helped me, then perhaps yours and mine can help others.

Individual prayers and prayer chains are a great way to perform a meaningful stewardship. Prayers can be offered at any time, in any place and as often as we wish. God hears our words and knows what's in our thoughts and hearts. FUMC currently have nine prayer chains. When there is a special need, 45 people can be linked together in prayer within a few hours. I cherish this connection with God and our congregation because I know there is power in prayer.

### **Marsha Spatafore's stewardship story**

Faith Church has met my needs for all the major events in my family's life - baptism, Sunday school, confirmation, marriage and death. The church provides us with a comfortable place to worship and gives us the richness of worship in Scripture lessons, prayers and fellowship by our pastor. This church building, along with the fellowship and support of this congregation is one of the reasons I support the church financially and through service. But beyond what the church has done for my family and I, Christ calls each of us to use our financial resources, time and talent to provide for others outside these walls whom are in need.

### **Linda Cox's stewardship story**

As a member of Faith Church, I've contributed my time as a Sunday school teacher, Trustee committee member, usher, coffee-time coordinator, prayer chain member and garage sale lead.

I've also volunteered and donated items for events such as the car show, auctions, Breakfast with Santa, basket sale and food collections. The reason I do these things is because this is my church home and I want to support it any way I can. Money isn't always possible, so volunteering is another way I give support to the church. Faith church is a place where I feel I belong; it helps me feel good when my life is troubled.

#### **Anne Beardshear's stewardship story**

There are a few times in my life when I felt that I truly belonged. The most recent was when during choir rehearsal we sang a song called "River in Judea." I had never heard this song before, but I understand it in a special way. It talks of a singing, ringing river. It gives me great joy to feel the words of this song and know that I am not alone. That someone else has heard the river sing. The verse "Be still and know that I am God" has always been a special verse for me, for I know that it is only in the stillness of the mind and soul that I can listen to the river sing for joy the praises of my Lord. I have never been to Judea, but the song reminded me that it's been too long since I have gone down to the river and let me soul join in with her songs of praise. I know I need to be still and know that the Lord is God, but it's exciting to know that others now join the river and I, singing praises to our Lord.

#### **Ben Pressnall's stewardship story**

Stewardship is to act as a steward of, and in this case, we're stewards of the church. My stewardship currently is being the church treasurer, a Finance committee member and Administrative Council member. I work once a month at the Welcome Desk and is a member of the Men's Club, which works at various activities. My stewardship is also contributing financial support to help maintain the church and aid in its mission. I do this because of this is how I was brought up and I enjoy doing many things with the people in our church. Stewardship can not be done by just a few; every member must partake and contribute.

#### **Bill Bonkowske's stewardship story**

My stewardship involves giving of my time and financial support. I volunteer for and participate in many things: the Men's Breakfast, Serendipity Bible study, Welcome Center, coffee and donuts, clean-up at car show and Soup & Salad Luncheon, hanging of the greens, painting, several committees, plays, lay leadership, usher and back-up sound guy. I do this because of four main reasons; 1) I get to work with great people and get to know them better, 2) it's good to learn/try new things, 3) it feels good, and most importantly 4) it honors God.

#### **Laurel Venhuizen's stewardship story**

I have been a member of Faith Church for the past 10 years. Church and the UMW have always been an important part of my life. The people here are so dear to me and have become inspirations in my life. The projects taken on by the UMW women are beneficial to the church and to many organizations where there is need. The UMW serves lunches after funerals, a service that provides families with needed fellowship and comfort following the services of a loved one. It's rewarding to have family members thank us for our efforts and tell us how much they appreciate the food provided. I'm also part of the Craft group. We work diligently all year, stitching, painting and getting items ready for sale at the Soup & Salad Luncheon. One of benefits of this group is the fellowship we have each week as we craft our items. All together, it's wonderful to be part of Faith Church and to receive a "faith lift" as we work together.

#### **Judy Turk's stewardship story**

I am a steward for Jesus Christ. He is a very good friend to me and we help each other. He's always there and I want to give back to him. Last year when I did a stewardship moment, I said I'd try to be a good steward for the children. My children had the right and privilege to learn

about Jesus in a church as they were growing up. I want to help ensure that future generations have that same opportunity. I feel that children are one of my main reasons for stewardship, but I also do it for me.

I like using the talents that I've been given. Right now I'm helping make theme baskets for the basket sale. It's fun and the end result is the basket team has created something beautiful together and selling the baskets will help the church budget. Each of us on the team contributes different talents. I love to organize, so the room we work in is laid out with the baskets all in one spot and the gift items are organized together. Other team members are good at putting the appropriate items together in a basket and arranging things in just the right way. Others place the baskets in clear bags and put the finishing decorations on top.

I also give my gift of money to the church to help ensure I have a place to come, learn and grow in Christ, and to make sure that we are here for the children.

### **Carol Schuldt's stewardship story**

On Sunday mornings when our children were young, our family would pile into our car and head for Faith Church. There, our children would scramble out, bibles under their arms and rush for the door. Ellen, age seven, was fighting Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis and had to painfully ease out using her crutches. We would linger, Warren and I, he walking slowly around the car, checking the tires and I rearranging my pile of books, both of us tempted to pick her up with ease and carry her into church. But we held back, not wanting to shatter her confidence. Inside the church door, her Sunday school teacher, Helen Pelletier was often waiting, with a smile. Friends were happy to see us. And soon Ellen would swing confidently down the hall on her crutches to Sunday school laughing with her friends.

I have taught the Adult Forum Sunday school class for several years. I often feel inadequate and certainly very aware of my own limitations. But the class members regularly express their appreciation and approval in compliments and hugs. This is what I love about our church. We are accepted; we are cared about and our talents and treasures are valued. So many people here have stepped up to teach, to sing solos, to participate on committees, to plan events, to give testimonials, often with apprehension but confident that we matter. I believe the acceptance we receive through our faith, our church and from each other gives us this ability and confidence. At Christmas we make lists, check catalogs and look for the best gift to charge on a credit card. And here is our Church, open and accepting. What a precious gift for ourselves and for our children.

### **Sheri Lukas' stewardship story**

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. I can't even begin to count the number of times I've sang that song since I began teaching Sunday school in 1991. My son, Drew, was in Dianne Mens' kindergarten Sunday school class. Diane taught the class for many years and was ready to pass on the experience. My good friend Dawn Wiebusch and I thought it would be great fun to do it together. My first thought was, "Where can we get a wax birthday cake with the pretty pink flowers like my Sunday school teacher Lillian Helleloid had?" It was one of my many happy Sunday school memories.

We were very excited and had lots and lots of new ideas, one of which was to spray paint the old wooden chairs in bright primary colors. We laid down newspaper in the Sunday school room, lined up the chairs and sprayed away. What were we thinking? A greenish-gray film covered the floor on the entire hallway of the education wing. I won't even tell you what our Sunday school room looked like. The air was like a fog. At first we panicked, then we laughed

hysterically. Finally, we wiped up the floor, hoping that Pastor Johnson was nowhere to be found!

Our first day of Sunday school, there were 19 children and I was so anxious to share the blessings God gave me with them. Teaching has helped me to grow spiritually, stay connected, build new relationships and praise God while having fun and experiencing great satisfaction. The door is always open for anyone who would like to help teach – even if only for a Sunday.

#### **Dianne Mens' stewardship story**

In the 41 years that I have been a member of Faith Church, my stewardship involves giving of my time, talent and gifts. I was a Trustee for 15 years and taught Sunday school for 18 years. I help with funerals, Soup & Salad Luncheons and donate food. The last 26 years, I have been the church coordinator for Mobile Meals (sometimes called Meals on Wheels).

I feel doing all of this has made me a better Christian and makes me very proud of my church.

#### **Jim Wards' stewardship story**

To me stewardship means being active as much as I can in the church. My wife and I are greeters and ushers, I cut the grass, I like to help out in the kitchen for different events and play the "fat guy" from the "North" once a year. We try to come to all the events such as the car show, garage sale, silent auction, and pick a name off the Christmas tree to help make somebody's Christmas a little bit happier.

Why do I do this? Because I am very selfish! It makes me feel good to know I am helping the church save money and make money. I like meeting people and sharing jokes and stories and being with God. All this makes me feel good way down deep inside.

Would I encourage others to make stewardship a part of their lives? Only if you want to meet other people and feel good about helping the church and yourself into a better style of life. Remember the church is only a building and that YOU are the church!

#### **George Brown's stewardship story**

To me, stewardship means giving of myself to the church. When I first joined Faith Church, I volunteered for the Finance and Stewardship committee because I had been on the Stewardship committee in my previous church. I have served on this committee ever since and find that my talents are useful there. I have also served as an usher since soon after I joined the church. Since my wife and children belong to a different church, I find that ushering is the best way for me to participate in the church community.

Over the years, I have come to realize that stewardship also means supporting your church financially. Despite my time on the finance committee, this was not an easy decision for me. Like many others, I gave only nominally for many years. However, two years ago my wife and I decided that if we were really part of our churches and supported what they are doing, we should also tithe to our respective churches. This has not been necessarily easy but has been very rewarding. Faith is a very necessary part of all of our lives and I feel blessed by what Faith church has done for me.

#### **Colleen Spadaccini's stewardship story**

The first church I remember was the Methodist Church in Grand Forks, ND. We would dress up, my sisters and I, wearing matching homemade dresses. I think we sang Jesus Loves Me every Sunday. Later we moved to Elk River, where I was confirmed. When I married, I went to church

with my husband, but never joined. After he died, I thought I would be more comfortable in a Methodist Church when I had to attend alone.

I came to Faith in 1982, on the first Sunday in Lent. Isabelle Mens gave me a hug when I came in, but I was still a stranger until we sang one of the old familiar hymns. At that point, I felt much like you do when you walk into a home and smell a turkey dinner in the oven. I was at home here. I was asked to come to the United Methodist Women's group and working with these dedicated women gave me a feeling of warmth and belonging.

I tithe because I want to give back to God what I can for all that I have received and I want to be sure this church is here long into the future. I am still active in the UMW and all their mission projects. I have served on the Pastor/Parish committee, the Administrative Council and am presently on the Trustees. I have done two Bible studies with two pastors, the Adult Forum on Sunday and the book club. I also help with funeral lunches. Time has gone by so fast and I have enjoyed it all and wish I could do more.

### **Liz Chun's stewardship story**

When my mom, Florence Marzolf, moved to Inver Grove Heights to be closer to my family, a real adventure started. We went looking for a church home and we found it here in Faith United Methodist Church. My children were in elementary school when we joined Faith. The wonderful people that ran the Sunday school and confirmation programs taught them about faith and letting God lead the way in their lives. For this I am grateful.

When I joined the church choir, my life really began to hum along. Music has always been at my core. The music we practiced would stick with me all week making me a happier person. It would just spill out into my classroom or home and rub off on others. Sometimes when we are singing on Sunday mornings I get swept away by the words and phrases of our song and feel a real closeness with God. For this I am grateful.

Mom and I feel especially blessed by our friends in the Forum Adult Sunday school. We laugh a lot and shed some tears. Mostly the wisdom, strength and caring of those beautiful people help us feel ready to go out and do our best for another week in the world. For this I am grateful.

I'm grateful for all the fun we have had being part of the garage sales, fundraisers, special dinners, and other events. Most of all I am grateful for each and every one of you for your skills and sharing with your church family. One straw alone is easily bent but many straws together in a bundle are strong and not easily bent. Thank you for your strength.

### **Bruce Opp's stewardship story**

I've been a member of Faith Church for 25 years or more. Shortly after I joined, I was asked to join the choir. I declined, since singing is not one of my talents and I did not want to short-change Faith's great choir group. Over the years I've been involved in the Trustee's committee and, more recently, in Staff/Parish committee where I hope to put my abilities to good use.

A year or so ago Fred Mens approached me and asked if I would be willing to serve as an usher. If not, Fred indicated he'd make certain that I'd be seated in the front pew. That was all the incentive I needed to become an usher and it's something I've enjoyed doing.

As we've been hearing over time and, most likely, will continue to hear as we work through the process of becoming a "larger parish," we, as individuals, consist of many parts to make one body, each with our own skills and talents. As we continue our progression in Faith Church as

well as the larger parish, it is important that we each fit into a role that is rewarding to us as individuals and a congregation to allow for continued spiritual growth. I encourage each of you to consider your individual talents and seek a role where you may fit to assist in the growth of Faith Church and the larger parish. We all have something to offer.

### **Marti Kemp's stewardship story**

I belong to the United Methodist Women, the Monday morning craft group, the book club, the choir and the Sunday Adult Forum. I help out in the kitchen for different things and am one of the people who encourage you to wear your nametags.

The church is a very important part of my life, as you can tell. When John and I were looking for a church home

25 years ago, we visited Faith Church one Sunday. We met many people who have become wonderful friends, like the Mens, Larsens, Martins, Roots and others who make it a very welcoming place to attend.

I only hope that I can give a smile or say a friendly word or two in passing to people to help make Faith a warm and welcoming place for them as well, because Faith is a great church and so are the people in it.

### **Bonnie Wood's stewardship story**

Willard and I were married on May 14, 1960 at Faith Church. We became members of Faith on March 13, 1966 and both our children were baptized and confirmed here. Although I'm currently not involved with anything specific, through the years I have made a variety of contributions to the church and have enjoyed being involved and building relationships along the way.

I've helped in the nursery, taught Sunday school, served on committees, was a member of the Lydia Circle and active in the prayer chain, served dinners, cleaned and painted. I've also donated food, clothes, furniture and memories, and supported the church financially.

In my walk with God, the church and its people have supported me in all of my happy times as well as my sad times. I see the face of God in this church and all the people of Faith.

### **Jenifer Stehr's stewardship story**

There are a few different reasons why I give my time, money, and talents to Faith Church. The first reason is because Faith has given me so many wonderful memories. I love it when I walk in and see the choir lined up and the many faces of the people that I have known my whole life. When I walk into the nursery, I remember being there when my mom painted the animals on the wall, watching in amazement at how talented she is and knowing that everyone will be able to see it. The fireside room is where my sisters and I dressed for our weddings and where we dressed our children for their baptisms. It is these memories, and many others, that continue to inspire and motivate me to help in any way I can so that my children will be able to have the same experiences.

The second reason why it's important for me to give back is because Faith Church, and all the wonderful people here, have given my husband (Andy) and I many opportunities to teach our children how to be giving, caring and loving little people! We have enjoyed taking Olivia and Tori shopping to buy gifts for the angel tree at Christmas, which was quite a lesson. "You mean I'm going to buy toys for other kids, not me?" Along with the angel tree, we have donated items for many meals and bake sales. I have also just recently joined the education committee. I'm hoping to be able to contribute using my teaching experience. My family and I have been

recipients of so much kindness here at Faith Church and I'm hoping to be able to give back to others by helping in any way I can.

### **Gil Kinnunen's stewardship story**

I should be Lutheran. My father and grandparents were born in Finland and came to America in the early 1900s. My parents were not affiliated with a church but thought that I should go to Sunday school. When I started school, my mother gave me a choice — Lutheran or Methodist. I chose Methodist because my best friend Steve went to the Methodist Church in my hometown of Cromwell in northern Minnesota. That simple decision was a major turning point that has shaped the way I view and live my life. I was baptized and confirmed a Methodist and actively involved in the Methodist Youth Fellowship as a teenager. In college, I was an active member of Wesley Foundation, the United Methodist student organization at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. After college I moved to the Twin Cities and joined a United Methodist congregation in southwest Minneapolis, twenty miles from my house, because I knew the pastor there.

When I moved to West St. Paul, I deliberately chose the United Methodist congregation closest to my house —this congregation — only a mile away. Although I am not a member, I have been connected with Faith Church for more than fifteen years. Most of my involvement is with the Men's Breakfast group, bread baking for silent auctions, and adult Sunday school, as a student, a teacher and group facilitator.

Geography may have shaped my decision to come here, but I remain here because of the kind, caring, and wise people in this place — and the opportunity to deal with theology meeting everyday life in our changing world. The banner on the door says, "Open hearts, open minds, open doors," I've experienced that here.

### **Dawn Kinnunen's stewardship story**

I'm a member of First Covenant Church on St. Paul's East Side. I became a Covenanter for the same reason that Gil became a Methodist. When my family moved to the East Side, my sister and I were in junior high. We had many school friends who went to First Covenant, so our family decided to go there and I've been a member for 32 years.

When Gil and I married eleven years ago, we decided to maintain our connections with both churches. I should point out that moving from a Covenant to a United Methodist congregation was much less disruptive than moving across the river from the East Side. Like Gil, I've been involved with adult Sunday school, church auctions, clean-up days and various other projects. But I haven't been invited to the men's breakfast group.

At Faith Church, Gil and I have experienced the kindness and compassion of this congregation at significant turning points in our lives. When I had a stroke nine years ago, you were there to provide the support that I needed on my road to recovery. When Gil injured both knees in a fall last fall and spent seven weeks in hospital, rehab facility, and nursing home, you were there again to provide what we both needed. We are grateful for your prayers and your gifts of encouragement, listening, hospitality, and good humor during the transitions of our lives.

"Open hearts, open minds, open doors." That is why we choose to stay here and share our time, talent and money to support the ministry of Faith United Methodist Church.

**JoAnne Loutsch's stewardship story**

I have been a member of Faith Church for five years. My first experience at Faith was helping my sister, Judy Turk, prepare for the hanging of the greens. From then on, every time Judy was involved in a function, I helped. I enjoyed the time giving and from there I started attending services. Over the years I have been a member of other churches, but I was never very active. I liked Faith Church from the very beginning. It reminded me of the church I attended when I was growing up.

Since I joined Faith, I have been active in various fundraisers. I enjoy the time spent with others and all the joy and laughter we have while preparing for the activity. I organize "Greeters" for the Sunday services. I would like to thank everyone who has helped greet over the years.

Faith Church is an important part of my life. My granddaughters were baptized here and attended Sunday School here until they moved to Elko, Minnesota. I want our church to be successful and I will do what I can to help us succeed.

**Fred Mens' stewardship story**

I have been a member of Faith Church since I was born and baptized in 1948. I was confirmed in 1962 along with Linda Cox and Joan Ryan. We are the only three around from that class. There have been many people here who have made a difference in my life. My Grandmother Dorothea Javner, I thought she was a very religious person. My Aunt Isabel Mens, who got me involved in the church. My Uncle Ed Mens who made me want to be an usher. Thor Nielsen, one of my favorite Sunday school teachers, and many more. But three people really stand out.

First is my Mother, Bernice Mens. She made me go to church every Sunday. She showed me how important it is to have a place to worship. Second is Helen Pelletier, who taught me so much about the Bible. And third is Joan Ryan, my life-long friend whom I admire and respect. Seeing her here each Sunday always makes me feel like I'm in the right place.

Here at Faith I've done repairs, help paint, worked in the kitchen, been a Trustee, part of the Pastor/staff committee and Head Usher. I was also a Sunday school teacher. I love this place and I love the people even more. My wife Lynn has also been very active in this church. She used to attend Sunday services here with the Hottinger's even before we met.

Get involved in this church and I guarantee you will see what a wonderful second family you will have.

**Mike Schwendinger's stewardship story**

My family has been a member of Faith Church for almost two years. In this church we found an extended family and have made many new friends in this congregation as well as in Pastor Ed's congregation. Both congregations have been very open and really define what a congregation should be built upon.

My stewardship at Faith includes many things. I show up for almost all of the fund-raising events the church holds, such as the car show and breakfast with Santa. I serve as the board of trustees co-chair and have helped to organize many of the updates, including the new parking lot, new handicapped restroom and others to come. I also give my money to the church on a

regular basis, which I feel is essential for all of us to do. This allows Faith Church to keep doing the type of work within the community that we do.

My stewardship does not stop there, however. We all know that being a Christian doesn't stop with a few sunburns from working a car show, or giving money to a church, or even showing up every Sunday to worship. I am working to be a better person and Christian every day by some of the other things that I do with my "personal life." Things like coaching youth sports and giving to the United Way and Hurricane Katrina relief fund.

I do all of this not because someone else thinks I should or because it is what the church wants, or even what I want. I do this because I think it is important for our community and because I want to continue to be a better person and Christian. And I encourage all of you to continue to encourage new members, to welcome people into the congregation and to strive to be better people and better Christians.

### **Karen Cohoes' stewardship story**

At the age of 10, I came to Faith Church because I wasn't happy where I was going and had told my mother I wasn't going to go to church anymore. She asked me if I wanted to go where my grandmother Elsie Schintz went. I said yes, I'd try it. I liked it and I've been here ever since. My best memories were youth fellowship with Helen and Art Peltier.

Another thing that made me comfortable at Faith Church was the support I received being a single parent. Both of my girls were confirmed and married here. Three of my four grandchildren were baptized here. My daughter, Sunni, came back to this church also.

I've helped with funerals and Lenten lunches. I also help Marsha in the church office, and Cheryl at the car shows, basket sales and other projects, and coffees with the craft ladies.

I think one of the best times that I will always remember is helping with Sonlight Club on Wednesday nights. We'd have between 30 to 35 kids and what we called our mile long sundaes.

Faith Church has been good to me and my family. I have Ward Mens and Jim Ward from my confirmation class with me. That's pretty good for all these years.

### **Gloria Gurtin's stewardship story**

My family started coming to Faith Church over 90 years ago, when my Grandparents joined. I have been coming to Faith Church all of my life and became a member 42 years ago.

Church has always been a big part of my life. When I was growing up, I went to The Good News Club on Mondays after school, religious instructions on Wednesdays during school, choir practice on Wednesday nights, youth fellowship on Friday nights, Sunday school and church on Sundays and Bible School in the summer. I was the very first girl candle lighter, (they only had boys light them before I asked if I could.) My confirmation class was the very first to be confirmed in this church. I took care of the nursery every Sunday when I was in my teens.

When I grew up I was in charge of getting candle lighters every Sunday, I sang in the choir for many years, helped teach Sunday school and Bible school, was on the Worship committee, was a Lay Reader, helped with a lot of the garage sales, been in church plays, sang solos, was a greeter and have ushered at times.

The thing I remember most about coming to church is sitting next to my Aunt Isabel. Even though there were only two sides of her, there was always an open one for me to sit by. Even now when I sit in church and start to move my leg a little, I can feel her gentle hand on my knee to stop. I have very good memories here at church and plan on being a member for the rest of my life.

### **Barb Schroeder's stewardship story**

This is my Father's house. I come to this house to worship with you, my family in Christ. When I worship in His house, I love to sing his praises. I love to be in prayer with Him and I love the fellowship we share as His children.

I take part in many of the activities here at Faith that help to keep our Father's doors open to all who follow Him and to all who are seeking Him. It was here I heard His call to go to Mississippi to help His people rebuild their homes and lives after Hurricane Katrina. That experience helped me grow in my walk with Him.

I've been striving to give back a tithe of the monetary wealth He has given me. This coming year I'm going to accomplish that goal. He has given me so much. He has always been there for me, even when I had turned away from Him. He welcomed me back with open arms.

I receive much more from Him than I give. I receive much more through my relationship with you, my church family, than I give. I am truly blessed.

### **Taffy Stork's stewardship story**

Stewardship. I once believed stewardship meant being on a committee or involved in all possible church activities, or having a moment of epiphany. How wrong I was. What I've learned is that stewardship is when you truly open your heart and connect to the church and its members.

For me this connection is extra wonderful since I've always had a need to belong to many types of families. In this case, a family of those who follow Christ in a loving manner. For me, being able to participate in some way is important. Making new pals is my favorite hobby. So acting as a greeter for the church is the most optimum way for me to help, especially when I get to meet such wonderful folk!

### **Abbie Losinski's stewardship story**

Jesus is my Savior. Because He has saved me, I want to serve Him. I am grateful for all the gifts and talents He has given me. He has given me all the resources I need to serve others. He gives me seven days each week. He gives me the freedom to choose how I want to spend each minute of every day. All He asks is for an hour or so each Sunday, to praise and worship Him.

As I grow in my faith, I want to give back more and more to show my gratitude to the Lord. This is why I teach Sunday school and why I want my family to be a part of this church. I see how excited my first, second and third graders are about learning how to praise and please God. I used to read scripture a lot to the congregation as I was growing up and I loved it! God has given me the talent of being comfortable to get up in front of others and to do "public speaking."

I really enjoyed the chance to serve the people of Reynosa Mexico when we went on the mission trip to the orphanage there. I also enjoyed the Appalachian service project I did as a member of our youth group many years ago. I am grateful, that is why I choose to serve my faith family. God receives glory when you help to build His church.

### **Lynn Mens' stewardship story**

The first time I came to this church was with Debbie (Hottinger) Krech back in the 60's. We would ride the church bus. I remember one of our stops was picking up a lady and her daughter. They sat on the right side of the church and we sat on the left side of the church. Little did I know they would become my mother-in-law and sister-in-law, Bernice Mens and Gloria Gurtin.

I became a member when I married Fred 37 years ago. Our daughters Carrie and Laurie were baptized, confirmed and married in this church. In the 37 years as a member, I taught Sunday school, served on the board of trustees, pastor staff and finance committee. I was church treasurer for five years and even was the custodian. I've coordinated the kids' Halloween carnival, chaperoned youth activities and helped with many other church events.

The reason I have done all this is because this church has always been there for my family and I, through good times and sad times.

### **Sunni Cohoes' stewardship story**

When I think of Faith Church, I think of how much this church has given to me and how I'm proud to be part of this church family. This family has given me the ability to be comfortable getting up in front of crowds. As a youth I was encouraged to speak, be in a play or sing at church. As an adult, I'm not shy about speaking in front of crowds and I'm blessed to be able to encourage today's youth that it's okay to get in front of this congregation, even in the Christmas Pageant, which I directed last year and will be doing again this year.

This family has showed me the meaning of giving. I watched my grandmother and my mom giving back to this church. My grandmother could always be found in the kitchen with her cute little apron on; I just assumed that she went everywhere wearing her apron because I always saw her in it. She helped with weddings, funerals and other church functions; and my mom has now taken her place. My grandmother and mom built a legacy of helping others. So growing up it was second nature to give back to the church. Now as an adult, I am able to help others by donating clothes to neighbors, sponsoring a family at Christmas time, helping with the Easter Breakfast, and chaperoning my oldest son Luke's first Confirmation lock in.

This family also showed me different ways to worship. I was not only in the youth choir, but I was an acolyte, in youth plays and read scriptures. I still enjoy singing in the choir; music has always been one of my biggest passions. What an awesome way to worship God, just with a song. He gave me a talent, so I use it. He doesn't mind if you can sing good or bad, just sing.

This family has always been there for me in good times, like the Breast Cancer 3 day. It's an awesome experience. I knew after the first day that I could get through it because I knew I had all of you praying for me. This family has even been there during the hard times praying me through. Even when I was not going to this church, this family was here. Thank you for being part of my family and letting me be a part of yours.

### **Steve Larsen's stewardship story**

Can you hear me? Can you hear me now! Good sound system people are so hard to find. Rose and I joined Faith UMC in 1978. Wow that is about 30 years. Time has gone by so fast. During this time our kids (Katie and Stephen) were baptized and confirmed, Katie and Ramon were married and our grand kids were baptized - all here at Faith. I have been thrown out of two church softball games, helped with Sonlight Club, drove the church bus, produced two melodramas, been on several committees, chaired the building improvement team, participated in many fund raiser events, church clean-ups and hanging of the greens (I am so glad we do not

have a family with the last name of Green) and am currently the church financial secretary and member of the admin council. And as mentioned earlier, I have operated the sound system since it was installed in 1993.

Faith Church is a family extension. The people here are very friendly and caring. This is one of the reasons I am here. I give to Faith Church both in time and financially because this is a fantastic facility and the community needs it. All of us can take an hour or two a week and give it to Faith Church.

After many years of increasing our giving, Rose and I reached our goal, to tithe to Faith Church. When we started this journey to give 10 percent of our income to Faith it was scary. We were raising two kids and maintaining a home. With a little discipline and planning, along with a prayer or two, we completed our journey. By taking one step at a time this journey can be completed by anyone.

Please consider increasing your giving of time, talents and gifts so Faith Church can continue to minister to us and the community. Thank you.

### **Bernice Mens' stewardship moment**

Bernice started coming to Sunday school in 1925 and has been coming here ever since. Her Sunday school room was in the kitchen of the old church, where the children sat by the stove to keep warm. When she was younger, her father used to tell her that she could stay up as late as she wanted to on Saturday night, but she would still have to go to church in the morning.

Bernice was confirmed with a class of 27 children and became a member at Faith over 71 years ago. On Aug. 31, 1940 she married my father, Fred Mens. She taught Sunday school to the kindergarten class for 27 years with Muriel Frandson. I still remember singing all the songs with her at home, like A Sunbeam, Someone has a birthday, and of course ones that we all know, like Jesus Loves Me.

She joined the circle at church when she was only 19 years old and has been an active member ever since. As an UMW member, she has helped with luncheons, funerals, soup and salad events, and does embroidery work on the dish towels the UMW sells. She has helped with many garage sales and is still a greeter, when needed.

When we moved to this church, there used to be a bus to pick up members that could not get to the new church any other way. My Grandmother Bernice and I used to take the church bus every Sunday with Jerry the bus driver. When Bernice's children were growing up we also had the rule of going to church every Sunday no matter how late we stayed up the night before.

Three out of four of her children were baptized in Faith church, nine out of 10 grandchildren and so far, 11 out of 18 great-grandchildren have been baptized here. There are many good memories of Bernice coming to church and I'm very proud and thankful that I have been able to share in them with her.

### **John Kemp's stewardship story**

I was raised in a small village in upstate New York. I don't remember a time when we didn't attend the old Methodist Church a few blocks away. From a very early age my brothers and I offered our services to the church – or they were offered on our behalf. We sang in the choir, rang the church bell for service, mowed the lawn, shoveled snow, made sure the church furnace was lit in the winter and delivered hams to the cooks for the annual church ham dinner. It wasn't

just my brothers and I, it was our dad too. He chaired the Ad Council for about 40 years and he served as the lay leader for more than 30. He ushered every Sunday and he served as Church Treasurer for more than 30 years. Stewardship was as normal to us boys as breathing.

I believe everyone is born with multiple talents. Some of us spend a lifetime and never discover what they are. Others discover a talent early in life and have the privilege of using that talent all their lives. Some may have a gift for music, and thank God we have several of those in this church, many of them sitting in the front three rows and over at the organ. Others may have a talent for speaking and we see them up here from time to time. But equally important are people who have less visible talents. Talents for organization, leading groups and committees, bookkeeping or accurately recording meetings. There are those with talents for listening, hospitality, cooking and sewing, building and knowing how to make things work.

Think of a talent and someone in this church has that talent. And this church needs that talent, and needs that person, or those people, to use that talent here at Faith. Just as I believe we all have talents, I also believe we have an obligation to use those talents in the service of our Lord, through His church.

I also believe we have an obligation to give back of portion of what we have and what we earn to the work of the church. Giving our service is important, but it's not enough. That's something else I suppose I learned from my dad in that old Methodist Church in that little village in upstate New York many years ago.