

Stewardship Sunday by Mary McCarthy

April 29, 2012

During these past few weeks, you have heard the many stories of how Centre Church touched someone's life. It may have been through prayers, a special sermon, or someone's compassionate listening ear. Whichever way this was to be, someone's life has been blessed. I would like to share a story with you. It is a story of listening to one's own heart, and following God's call.

In February of 2011 John Michael McCarthy received a bone marrow transplant. We, as a congregation, prayed and walked with his sister Ann Irving during this uncertain time. When I spoke with Ann in regards to her brother, she told me how grateful she was to be part of this caring church community. How during this difficult time there was always a place she could go and be nurtured and cared for. I think about Ann and the conversation we had, more so, I think about her close friend Judie Potter who listened with her heart, to God's call, to help a friend in need. Through Judie's strong faith and binding love for God, she knew within her heart, this was the place Ann needed to be.

There was a time in my life I wish I had a friend like Judie that could have brought me to a place such as this. I feel for Ann, because my brother, also, had a transplant a few years back. Unfortunately, he did not survive. I think about those days, visiting him in the hospital and clinging onto some hope that a miracle would happen, but it was not meant to be. Those had to have been the darkest days of my life. Watching this happen and being totally helpless to do anything about it was a lot to carry alone. It was as if the world had stopped and my life had stopped with it. Unfortunately, I became entombed and there was no one to pull me out.

There are those times in our lives when we need each other to care and guide us when all seems lost. I have always believed that one of God's greatest gifts is the gift of each other. People we can laugh with, share our joys, sorrows, and even grow old with. Each week as I am singing in the choir, I look out towards the congregation, I see God's gift, and that gift is you. Listening to one's own heart and touching many lives is what we do here at Centre Church. It is with our strong faith and binding connections that make this all possible. By caring for one another, and giving of ourselves, our ministry grows within the church and with each other.

When I think back at those dark days of my life, it is a blessing to know that we all have this place where we can find comfort and peace. A place where there will be someone there to guide us when we have lost our way. As I look out before you today, I see the many faces that have been touched by the ministry here at Centre Church. May we always cherish what God has given us, the true gift of each other. With this gift, anything is possible.