

STEWARDSHIP

2012



An Opportunity
for Stewardship

By Matt
Trentham and
Catie Bayne

An Opportunity for Stewardship By Matt Trentham

Remember the song that says the church is not the building, it is not the steeple and it is not other things? It says the church is the people. I disagree, at least for a few minutes.

This building, this church building, this Presbyterian Church Building, this approximately 150 year old Presbyterian church building, is church...to me.

When I pass by, some days several times a day, the building is a visual, physical reminder of so many things. On any given drive by I think about:

Standing outside in the summer, after a worship service, as people spill out the doors and say their quick hellos and goodbyes.

Light bulbs that need changing, screws that need to be tightened and leaves that need to be blown, some sort of heating or air conditioning issue, and snow shovels.

The Sunday after 9/11 when Katherine and I were greeters. This place was packed. We stood for the entire service next to the door. We sang "My Country 'tis of Thee" as a closing hymn.

A quick flashing sequence of weddings, meetings, funerals, sitting in the library, choir rehearsals, picnics, youth group, early Easter mornings and, of course, the progressive dinner in December.

So many familiar faces, and keepers of what is Anchorage Presbyterian to me. Some have moved on to other communities; John Ames, John Wall, Andrew Miller. And some have moved on to the best community; Peggy Jo Lorenz, Dr. Wagner, Bill Aiken, Ed Burger, Bill Shipley.

And then, my thoughts turn to those who are part of my current church family. So many people have supported me, and Katherine, and Annie, and Edward, as our lives have taken the normal, and not so normal, twists and turns. They have helped smooth the road, brought joy, peace and comfort to our lives.

Finally, as church, the building, becomes a blur in the corner of my eye I wonder where I am with "my religion." I'm more certain than I used to be, but, I still have questions, things to work out. Am I living my life as a good Christian, did I yesterday? What can I do still today before it's over?

This jumble of thought runs through my head most times I pass this building, the church. The structure is a reminder of my faith journey and the families who are on the journey with me and the memories along the way.

What does this have to do with pledging and financial contributions?

Back to the building. It is where the memories were created, faith was grown and it has been a base camp for good works outside its walls. During its existence, dozens of men and women have taken their turn at caring for it. The church has been used, fixed, expanded, used, expanded and fixed some more.

Because individuals and families many, many years ago made a financial contribution to this church, my family benefits. Your family benefits. Our community benefits.

I'll never know who they were. At the time they filled out their pledge cards, or showed up for maintenance and cleaning day, they didn't know the future impact of their contributions. When I think about pledging and contributing to Anchorage Presbyterian, I think about our building and what it represents. It represents stewardship. Years and years of good stewardship. Giving of time, talent and treasure.

We are the current stewards of this building. We are the current stewards of our church. We are the current stewards of our community. And, we are the current stewards of our faith.

I started by saying the church is the building. Then, the building reminds me of good stewardship.

We know the stewards are the people. Therefore, the church is the people, just like the songs says.

One hundred and fifty years from now, someone else will be changing light bulbs and my name will be forgotten. I am ok with that. But hopefully the effects of my stewardship, of our stewardship, of our good stewardship, will live on.

An Opportunity for Stewardship

By Catie Bayne

I have been a member of Anchorage Presbyterian Church since I was baptized as an infant and this church has been a part of my family for a few generations now.

My husband Nathan and I hope that our commitment to stewardship helps ensure that it will remain for more generations to come.

Sharing is something we are working on at home with our 2-year old son Harrison. We are trying to teach the importance of giving to God off the top, not the bottom.

The first few years we pledged, we had it backwards. We were trying to figure out at the end of the month how we were going to fulfill our commitment to the church. Like many people our age, we were putting our needs and wants first, but by doing it like that there never seemed to be enough left over to share with others. It took a while for us to figure out that we needed to give first. Over time it became easy, and more importantly, a pleasure.

We now make a point of actually writing our check to the church FIRST each month. By doing so, we feel like it sets the groundwork for the rest of our lives and decisions. Our priorities are set, financially and spiritually.

This is Harrison's first year in Sunday School and I gain a new level of appreciation for the church each week as I hear him ask on any given weekday morning if today is the day we get to go to church. We look forward to watching him grow in his own understanding, commitment, and enjoyment of Stewardship.