

28 October 2007

Stewardship Presentation at the 10:00 Service

The Stewardship Committee asked Peg and Jim Jarvis to spend a few minutes talking with the congregation about things they value at St. Luke's.

Jim: It's easier if the scripture gives you loaves and fishes, or fishermen by the Sea of Galilee, to talk about abundance. But the essence of stewardship is to find those things you value in your church, and to nourish them with your abundance. Peg is going to talk about some of the things we value at St. Luke's. I'm going to make sure she's not too long-winded!

Peg: Good Morning ... I'm Peg Jarvis, wife of Jim Jarvis, mother of Devon Jarvis and Amelia Jarvis Lutz, and grandmother to Jacob, Sammy, Hayden and Max ... and I've been a member of St. Luke's for 52 years.

So, unaccustomed as I am to public speaking ... here is my personal spin on what St. Luke's means to me ...

Our Stewardship theme is ABUNDANCE ... a **long** word that only BEGINS to touch on "what St. Luke's means to me" and to my family.

I came to St. Luke's at the age of 9. My parents and I had just returned from Thailand after a 2 and ½ year sabbatical from Rutgers. We were thrilled to be back in the US. My parents both cried tears of joy as our ocean liner, the FLANDRE, passed the Statue of Liberty as we approached New York Harbor. I will never forget it.

Since we lived in Metuchen, my parents decided to check out the local church, St. Luke's. Dr. William Hugh Fryer our pastor, was Low Church, celebrated the Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month, and was rather fond of Morning Prayer. You can catch a glimpse of him in his portrait in the Fryer Room. Jim swears that his eyes follow you around the room.

Here's comes the history ... I am a Cradle Episcopalian. My father was an Englishman, a Lancashire Lad, who raised his only daughter, in the Episcopal Church. Several of his ancestors, and cousins were, and are priests, deans, and canons in the Anglican Church in England.

My mother, Eleanor, was a Presbyterian, who I suspect, became an Episcopalian to make life with my father less complicated. She taught grammar school in Metuchen, taught Sunday School, and played the piano on Sunday mornings for the younger children.

During my childhood and adolescence, Irv and Eleanor Kerrison led the Youth Group at St. Luke's for many years. And it was here that John Sharp, Debbie Sharp Loeb, Dianne Brown Lebida, Nancy Kane, and Bob Bilgrav, to name just a few, all met for fellowship. We still chuckle when we reminisce about the time we snuck out of Sunday School by climbing down the fire escape in the old Parish Hall. Unfortunately, we were busted! Dr. Fryer, pretty unhappy with the lot of us, made his extreme displeasure abundantly clear. I still get chills when I think of it.

My mother sang in the adult choir, and I joined the Junior Choir under the tutelage of Francis Lamparter. You can still see pictures of many of us in our

black robes and beanies. She was one tough Choir Director, but we did learn a great deal. I STILL sing in the choir, undaunted by Dave Diehl's wicked sense of humor.

My Dad was a proud LEM, vestry member, warden, and thurifer for MANY years at St. Luke's. I, in my youth, and then our son Devon, and daughter Amelia, took turns functioning as boat persons for the Thurifer. That is, we followed my father around, carrying the incense, as Irv solemnly left a trail of great clouds of smoke and hordes of coughing and wheezing parishioners in his wake, enthusiastically swinging the incense that was reserved for special celebrations.

Walt Zelle was curate at St. Luke's during my junior high school days. All the YPF girls had a huge crush on the handsome young curate. So, when he and Milbrey were called to a parish in Kansas, we were very disappointed. But my father, high-church Anglican that he was, was TOTALLY crushed. He and Walt saw eye-to-eye on many liturgical issues. So, behind the scenes, Irv lobbied hard to bring Walt back to St. Luke's. It was a successful campaign, and Walt and Mibs returned, and remained here for 28 years.

In 1969, Jim and I were married at St. Michael's Chapel, at Rutgers. Dr. William Hugh Fryer and the Rev. Clarence Lambelet, chaplain at St. Michael's (who was at Christ Church, where I was baptized 60 years ago), performed the ceremony.

However, it wasn't until the arrival of our first child, that Jim and I decided to explore the possibilities at S. Luke's. Two years earlier, Walt Zelle had

baptized Devon, then three months old, AND Jim, at the age of 27, on the same day in January of 1971. Turns out that Jim, proud owner of perfect attendance pins the local Methodist Church in Keansburg, **had never been baptized**, even though his collection of pins nearly touched the floor. Walt took great pleasure in baptizing our son Devon, AND Jim, who was cradling our firstborn in his arms. There was not a dry eye in the church that Sunday.

Actually, Walt and curate Dick Bower, had been busily plotting to get me to volunteer to teach Sunday school. So, when our son Devon was two years old, Zel, resplendent in clerical collar and black suit, made the pastoral call. The doorbell rang. **Unfortunately**, Devon got to the door first. He opened the door, took a long hard look at Walt and said, “You’re no good”, and slammed the door in his face. Imagine my embarrassment, when I finally decided that I could NOT get away with lying down on the floor and pretending I wasn’t home.

You see, I HAD to answer the door, and Walt, as he walked through the door, muttered, “You owe me!” Of course, you can be sure that before he left, I was committed to teaching Sunday School for the rest of my life.

Shortly after Amelia arrived in 1974, she was baptized outdoors, in the side garden, by Rick Townley, who was curate at that time. Back then, we often held the summer service outside in the early morning. Devon’s comment, as he watched Rick bounding from Parish Hall - to garden in preparation for the outdoor baptism; “Was that God?”

For many years, my father and I were the only father/daughter team of

LEMs in the diocese. Today, Katherine and Dick Young are proudly carrying on the tradition.

Jim and I have raised each other, AND our two children here at St. Luke's. Both Devon and Amelia were baptized here, attended Sunday School, joined the Youth Group, participated in Theater at St. Luke's, many, many Christmas pageants, Christmas Bazaars, Rummage Sales, and Amy even sang in the choir for a year in High School.

Two of our grandsons, Devon and Jean's Jacob and Sammy, were baptized here, and hopefully the two who have just arrived, Amy's son Hayden, and Devon and Jean's newest, Max – yes, we are 4 for 4 – will also be baptized into the St. Luke's community.

When Jim and I were transferred to Vermont in 1995, Walt found us a parish in Essex Junction. Jim and I were active parishioners at St. James for 8 years, where we directed Stewardship Campaigns, were choir members, vestry members, and Jim was called to be Senior Warden just before we moved to Maryland.

Both of my parents, who entered the larger life while we were living in Vermont, rest just outside these walls in the Memorial Garden, as will Jim and I when it's time. We can come and chat with them whenever we like, and we frequently visit and just sit in the peace and quiet of the garden ...

Molly Comeau, our priest in Vermont, found us our church in Maryland. Her son was married to the daughter of the secretary at a large parish in Severna

Park. So, at St. Martin's-in-the-Field in Maryland, we also were active on Vestry, Choir, Rummage Sales, Christmas Bazaars, and Jim was Junior Warden of the parish and the K-6 Day School.

We've had lots of experiences in lots of places ... BUT, WE'RE BAACCCKKK.

St. Luke's is home. You all ARE our extended family. As only children, Jim and I have been lucky enough to have the pleasure of CHOOSING our brothers and sisters. At St. Luke's we love and feel loved. We are blessed ...

Life is Abundant, and Life is Good.

Please JOIN us in celebrating the work God has given us to do. It is more than appropriate to attend church regularly, contribute your time and energy, share your ideas, and pledge whatever monetary offerings are possible, to CELEBRATE and SHARE God's ABUNDANCE in YOUR lives here at St. Luke's.

Yours in Christ, Peg and Jim +