

## Jane Gilgun's Stewardship Talk

St. John's Episcopal Church, Linden Hills

September 29, 2019 8 am and 11 am Service

Good Morning. I'm Jane Gilgun. I first walked through the red doors of St. John's on a Sunday morning almost nine years ago, on the fourth Sunday of Advent. That week, I had been teaching social work ethics at the University of Minnesota. It took all I had not to talk about Jesus as someone to model our own lives on. I could not do that at a secular university. My almost overwhelming desire to talk about Jesus made me realize it was time to look for a community where I could immerse myself in the spirit of his love.

I followed a couple with two school age children into the pews and saw a woman in white robes at the altar. A woman at the altar. Finally, a church where this is usual practice. During that service, I thought I may have found a community whose traditions and rituals I understood and who shared my values of dignity, worth, and welcome to all without distinction.

St. John's has been my spiritual home since. I did more than 100 oral histories of other members of St. John's starting in 2013 and found that St. John's is a spiritual home for them, too--and a place where they make life-long friendships, where parents find help in raising their children in a loving community that welcomes all without distinction, where people find a source of support and love during hard times, and a place to celebrate and commemorate life events. We share the values of love, social justice, dignity, and respect.

St. John's also is a place where we recognize that we are flawed human beings, and we forgive ourselves, forgive others, and know we are loved even as we pursue to love of God so we can do better.

If anyone ever wonders why people go to church, they would find out by spending time at St. John's.

I have done many kinds of things here, including painting those red doors several times, cooking for children's choir, and, most of all, experiencing the love and affirmation of Sunday Eucharist. This time in church reminds me of the beauty of creation and gives me courage, as a

social worker, to seek to make things better for those who suffer from the effects of short-sighted social policies, beliefs, and practices.

I give quite a bit of money to St. John's, and I am happy to do so. In this time when so many people are spiritually hungry and have no place to go with their desires for a spiritual home, we have St. John's.

I hope you give as generously as you can to support and sustain this wonderful community that we create together.