

## Stewardship Testimonial 2019

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I have been a member of St. Johns since 1995, was married here the following year, had our three children baptized here and have participated in nearly every ministry from adult ed, hospitality, vestry, outreach, children's programming and small groups. That is the resume version of what St. Johns is to me.

As I reflect on the last 25 years of worship here, I don't think about resume lists, I think about the solid ground I am standing on. These days the ground around us is constantly shifting and only last year we had to shore up the cornerstone of our foundation, our beloved bell tower. When the ground is constantly shifting, we all want to feel steady and ready. Ready for what life hands us. Ready to see the direction in which we must move, the route forward. I need the weekly worship in this community to feel full again and to provide a road map for my spiritual life.

When I was a kid, we took cross-country car trips and never left home without a AAA TripTik. Do you remember these? It is a personalized map AAA makes by highlighting the route from your home to your destination on a full sized map. Then, the map is cut into small manageable pieces and spiral bound in a brochure size booklet. You flip to the first page and there is your home address with a highlighted route down the roads you have chosen. Unlike the Google maps app that starts with your exact location, the TripTik doesn't focus on you. You have to find yourself on the map. Finding yourself isn't always easy.

There is about 100 miles per TripTik page and when you reach the bottom of the page, you flip to the next to see where you are going. An added feature is that each page can also be opened like a book and inside, are the landmarks, places you might want to discover more in depth in the community. Like the inside of a TripTik page, St. Johns has lots of ways to

search for yourself and in depth relationships like community groups, wed night music ministry, social justice and a home for our youth in whatever level of angst they are in at the moment. I am grateful for those who give their time and talent in these ministries to enrich my life.

St. John's worship theme this year is "The Way of Love." I see the Jesus-centered practices as a way to take stock in my life. I am particularly interested in the idea of "turning," it's like turning a page in a TripTik. What I see in the world fills my week with distractions of tragedy, trepidation, trespass, turmoil, toiling in the trenches, too little time, too much time and tirades.

What I find here is a place to set my needle straight again. A weekly turning, a reorientation toward hope, justice, freedom and away from fear. Solid ground.

Turning happens in community, which is comprised of a complex set of relationships I don't always notice, but can't live without. The Wednesday spiritual group is a place where turning is possible and where there is always food for the journey.

This week, we lost one of our members, Pam McAllister. Pam was relatively new to St. Johns. I knew her as a writer, teacher, and homeopathic medicine expert who appeared to be ahead of her time in the art of healing. I think most women in the Wednesday group knew her as a critical thinker and someone who felt comfortable speaking her truth in that space. We all are. You see, you are transformed by the things that happen to you, with you and around you, none of which is possible without the witness of community. For me, that community is the individual of Pam, the Wednesday spiritual group and all of you.

Worship here, like using a TripTik, makes it seem impossible to get lost on the journey.

Flipping TripTik pages really makes you feel like you are getting somewhere without having to see time the sometimes overwhelming distance of the whole route.

Every week sends us on a new path with lots of uncertainty, but this community moves us

forward, turning pages of our lives at a pace we can handle. It's like "driving a car at night," says E. L. Doctorow, "You never see further than your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way."

If moving along life's journeys were only as easy as flipping pages in a TripTik. Thankfully, St. Johns keeps my needle true north, my steps moving forward, all the while offering me lots of ways to be fed for the journey. I hope you will join me in pledging your continued support of this nourishing community we call church.