

Dan Beck: Spiritual Journey of Giving and Ministry

As a child, I heard bible stories and had Sunday School in a formal setting with rows of desks and a chalkboard (we were German Lutheran after all)! Despite the formality of the lessons, I was fortunate to have 2 pastors who encouraged questions and wondering about the stories we heard. Godly play has been a wonderful and meaningful way for me to reach deeper spiritually and to foster the deep spirituality and wondering in our children.

Did you know...There was once someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people just had to follow him. As they followed him, they wondered who he was. One time when they asked him who he was, he said "I am the Light". Another time when they asked him, he said "I am the Good Shepherd".

May our Good Shepherd who is our Light be with you as you prayerfully consider pledging financially to support the many important ministries of St. Bartholomew's.



"Differing voices join to sound sweet music; so do the different orders in our life render sweet harmony among these spheres." (Dante, Paradiso, Canto 6) I discovered these lines a few years back when I was invited to teach at St. Bart's about Dante's Divine Comedy. Dante wrote about his realization that the paths toward God included avenues he didn't fully understand. His wise and gentle guide, Beatrice, the secret love of his life, explained everything. We all bring something out of our varied passions to serve God, and we all bring something unique to our gifts. Yet in giving gifts great or small, simple or involved, occasional or permanent, we givers don't shrink back from the gift we have to offer. That is what paradise looks like.

Mine is but one voice in the "sweet harmony" of St. Bart's parish life. My voice is heard in the choir and in the library and sometimes in an adult education class. This "sweet harmony" also includes giving of my personal treasure, which I am happy to share for the work of the parish.

I invite everyone in the parish to think symphonically. St. Bart's is making grand music, both in praise of God and in service to a deeply troubled Creation. Ideally, each of us would be joining the symphony, adding an instrumental or vocal part according to our skill. Sometimes, like classical music, we follow the score. But other times, like jazz ensembles, we improvise. In either case, we would participate.

Participation is key to the "sweet music" of St. Bart's. Be bold to share what you have to offer. Freely offer what you can afford. And don't shrink back from any imagined lack. As the Hymnal (#541) says: "No arm so weak but may do service here."



Painting of Dante from the Cathedral in Florence

Mary White: Spiritual Journey of Giving and Ministry



I first came to St. Bart's in 2003 with my partner Meg. I was a lifelong Lutheran prior to visiting St. Bartholomew's. My father was on church council taking care of property while my mother was on altar guild and a member of the Lutheran church women. My tenant farmer grandmother sewed together scraps to make quilts for the Lutheran church ministries. Financial pledging and participation in the ministries of the church were integral to our family life as a child and teen. I continued as an adult to serve in the Lutheran church on church council and altar guild.

Meg and I were welcomed warmly on our first visit to St. Bartholomew's by Bev and many of the members at the time. It seemed a natural transition to join here and become members. Meg and I first started as Altar Guild members and began to form friendships and connections there. I have also been on green guild, helped with children's church and am a substitute Eucharistic minister. We have pledged financially each year here to support all of the ministries at St. Bart's. In 2010, I completed the 4 year education for ministry (EfM) course. When our daughter Katie was born in 2009, a natural progression spiritually for me after completing EfM was to enter into teaching Godly Play to our children.