

Stewardship Reflections
Sunday, October 25, 2009

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Good morning. My name is John Anderson, and I've been asked to share some of my personal reflections on the meaning of stewardship.

Our family joined this church nearly 22 years ago when we first moved to Lake Forest. This place and this church community have been – and continue to be – at the very center of our lives. It has been our home, our refuge, our support... and has become our broader family.

Our 2 children grew up here, immersed in everything from Sunday School to Confirmation... from choirs to Christmas pageants... and from Sunday evening Youth Group meetings to High School work trips. They learned the importance of both being served and serving others right here. And, we are confident that what they do and who they are today as adults is in no small way the result of the strong formation, care and support that they received from this church community.

Throughout our 22 years here, Megan and I found that what we needed was right here at this church. Our closest friends are right here. Some of the most important events in our family – happy and sad – have occurred right here.

And, somewhat surprisingly, we found that the church and this community actually needed us as well – in a wide variety of ways. We've found meaning, purpose, inspiration and even a greater "calling" in this church community beyond what we expected. And this church has been steadfast in its commitment to us... through good times and not so good times.

Just as this church has sustained us – and continues to sustain us – we've also learned the importance, and even the challenge, of making a sustained commitment back to the church.

Megan and I have often said that our parents were wonderful role models for us in so many ways: How they taught us to get involved and not sit on the sidelines. How they put their church first among their financial and time commitments... giving of their income and volunteering their time. So, we have tried to carry out that example. We believe our financial pledge here needs to be meaningful (not just symbolic), and needs to be sustained and lasting, and needs to reflect at least in some small measure the many privileges and gifts in our lives that we've received from God and this church.

As we see it, this stewardship season is our annual time for renewing and reviewing the continued strength of that commitment and our giving. Frankly, it's not about assessing whether we're going to give or not... instead it's whether or not our giving is sufficiently adequate.

So again at this time of year, we will affirm our stewardship commitment – first and foremost to this our church community, and then also to a few selected organizations that we actively support and where we've been personally involved, most of which are in some very direct ways tied to this church... including the Boys & Girls Club of Lake County, the Lake County Community Foundation, and McCormick Theological Seminary. And, by the way, each of these organizations have such a critical purpose and mission (just like our church), but all are facing some really huge financial challenges currently and truly are dependent on our sustained commitment to them too.

Our family truly has been blessed. And, even in these uncertain and troubling economic times, our blessings and advantages are far beyond what we could ever list. But we do know that, now more than ever, this place and this community needs us and is counting on us and our sustained commitment. We really want to do our part... it is our shared responsibility: being served and serving others.

I hope you will consider this also for yourselves and your families. Thanks for listening!