

Billy Gregg Stewardship Testimony
October 16, 2011

Hello everybody, my name is Billy Gregg and I am a senior at Lake Forest High School. Today, I want to tell all of you a little bit about myself and the amazing experience that I have had as a member of this church community.

I have been with First Pres. since the very beginning, when I was baptized here as a baby. I attended Sunday school from time to time, but I wasn't as involved until after I went through Confirmation. Throughout the Confirmation process, I was driven to examine my faith in ways that I had never before considered, and the things that I learned about myself drove me to strengthen my ties to this church. This is thanks, in a large part, to the talent and commitment of Kristie Finley and volunteers from the congregation such as Mr. Holdsworth, who shepherded us through the process with patience and friendship.

I built off of my experience with Confirmation by jumping into many of the amazing opportunities available here at First Pres. I joined the Senior High Youth Group Freshman year, and am incredibly grateful to Kristie Finley, Erik Daley, Nick Redmond, and every else who has helped create such a positive environment. Youth Group emphasizes faith formation, yet it also serves as an opportunity to de-stress and blow off steam with friends on Sunday nights. One aspect of Youth Group that I cannot emphasize enough is the way in which it brings people together. Work Trip, in particular, creates strong bonds between people who wouldn't necessarily otherwise know each-other; I guess a couple of 7-hour van rides can do that to you, not to mention the week in-between. Work Trip is a wonderful experience in other ways, as well. It is incredibly satisfying to do God's work by helping improve the lives of others, and I am

thankful that the opportunity to do something so special has been available to me for the last 3 years.

Youth Group is full of opportunities, but it is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is available for the youth of this congregation. One group in particular that I have enjoyed my time with is Eggs Benediction. Music has long been a huge passion of mine, so I jumped at the opportunity to play Bass Clarinet with the group at the beginning of my sophomore year. Similarly to in Youth Group, there is a great sense of camaraderie among all of the members of Eggs that makes everybody feel comfortable. Lesley Byers always does a great job of getting good music out of us, no matter how bizarre our instrumentation is. I would encourage any high school student with any musical talent whatsoever to consider giving Eggs a try.

Another place in which you can see how much this church cares for its youth is its government. I am a Youth Elder on Session as a member of the Finance Committee, and I am joined by three other seniors in church government, two of whom are Youth Deacons. My time with Session so far, although short, has been incredibly formative. I am sure that the things I have learned, and will continue to learn, about management and decision-making will prove invaluable.

Throughout my time as a member of this congregation, especially in recent years, I have been fortunate enough to experience some of the best of what this amazing church community has to offer. Without the selfless contributions and commitments made by so many members of this congregation, none of this would be possible. So now, as Stewardship is being kicked into high gear, I want to thank each and every one of you for what you have done for me, and for the rest of the youth of this church.