

Ginny Balser, Stewardship - November 9, 2025

Never in my life have I been such a regular church-goer as I have been here at St. Paul's. Sitting in the pews in this gorgeous space, with fellow worshippers, fellow imperfect human beings trying to live a good life, fellow Norwalk area residents who appreciate this diverse, striving community, I feel like I am among my people - this is where I belong. The surroundings awe and uplift me, the music takes my breath away, and the words of the liturgy, of the Bible and of our gifted priest Daniel (and of Paul) give me inspired and clear guidance on how to live my life and my Christian values.

After I retired from teaching in 2018, I began to get involved in more and more church activities, including serving as clerk of the vestry and now as co-warden. I have loved working with the wonderful people of St. Paul's for the good of both the church community and the broader community of Norwalk. The love, energy, enthusiasm and constancy of people in this parish have always impressed me and sustained me. While my husband Steve was a Quaker and attended the meeting house in Wilton, he greatly enjoyed the people of St. Paul's and rarely missed a chance to be with them at a reception or a Sunday Social. My elderly aunt, when she visits, is amazed at the music in the services and in special events. My twin grandchildren have found a warm welcome as well and when they are here for their monthly weekend with Grandma they never object to getting their hair done and getting cleaned up to come to St. Paul's. This church has become my family church.

In my darkest times, last fall right after my beloved Steve had suddenly collapsed and died, I needed St. Paul's more than ever. I came here four days after that terrible day of loss, with my two stepchildren, and they felt as embraced as I did. They felt what Wally Frey spoke of a few weeks ago as "Hope, healing and hospitality." Each time in church during the fourteen months since that terrible day has meant a forward movement in my grieving process. Now, with the small group of parishioners who gather monthly to share our sadness and support each other, we are helping each other immeasurably to walk this difficult road of loss - a walk is always better with friends.

So what does all this have to do with Stewardship, with what we put in the offering, with what we send regularly from our banks? When I get really practical, I realize that all of the ways I am sustained by St. Paul's cost some dollars somewhere along the line. Josh, Marsha, Daniel and Ferbian need to be paid good wages to do what they do so beautifully and generously. This gorgeous (and 100 year old) building needs endless care and repairs, and the paper for our bulletins and our narrative budget costs money. We contribute to the Diocese, which in turn gives back to us, and we pay talented musicians to uplift us. I could go on and on but you know all of this. When we think about it, we realize that the church is our church, the budget is our budget, the funds needed are our funds - or are they? I love thinking of the financial aspects of St. Paul's the way Daniel put it recently, that God gives so much to each of us and we are just passing it on to support his work. So let's do that; let's increase our pledges - or begin to pledge, let's write a gift to St. Paul's into our will, let's commit to ensuring that we feel as sure about St. Paul's future as we feel about the present in this extraordinary spiritual home. Thank you.