

Stewardship Sunday #1 – October 11th

Billy and I are honoured to have been asked to head up St. Catherine's Stewardship Campaign for 2010. It has been 20 years this fall since we joined this parish and we have truly come to think of this community as our family.

Two weekends ago our son Chris had the opportunity to participate in a weekend retreat with his school which was called "Encounter". One of the goals of this retreat was to connect each participant with the community of family and friends who have played a role in their lives over the years, and to acknowledge the importance of those relationships. At some point in the weekend, each participant was surprised with a bundle of letters written to them from family members and friends, each reflecting on the relationship they have shared.

It was in the process of writing my letter to Chris (and with the stewardship campaign kind of perking along in the back of my mind), that I was struck by the parallel of our role and desires as parents, and what we know that God desires of all of us. There is a piece of artwork that hangs in our kitchen which reads "There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children: one is roots, the other is wings". As parents we want our children to feel the strength that roots in family and faith can provide, and learn the importance of service in their community and the world before they leave us to pursue their dreams. As a parish family, as children of God, we all need a place to be nurtured and grow in our faith so that we can most effectively spread our wings, our gifts, and God's message in the wider world.

St. Catherine's has been all of this to us....this place, this community has given us "roots and wings".

When we first came here in the fall of 1989, Billy was an articling student and our children Jack and Kelly were 4 and 1. We remember the aura of warmth and acceptance we felt right away. We were asked to help out with the Sunday school, which we did, and our relationships with other parishioners began to grow. We remember the smiles, greetings, an invitation to join the McMordies at the Teddy Bear Swim, bonding for life with Lori and Michael Burns as co-coordinators of the Sunday school. When our son Chris was born with difficulty breathing and we were not sure that he would be ours to take home, William Pike visited us in the hospital assuring us that the prayers and support of the parish were with us. Christian came home 9 days later and was baptized here at St. Catherine's. Chris went on to play the baby Jesus in the Christmas pageant that year, has since grown up to a whopping 6'2" and been an enthusiastic server and youth grouper, as were Kelly and Jack. We are particularly grateful for Siiri's outstanding music ministry which has been an outlet for the musical passion of our son Jack at many stages of his life.

For almost 20 years we have been working with the youth of our parish, tending to the roots and attaching “wings” along the way. Our experience as teachers in the Church School and as leaders of the Youth Group has enriched our own lives with new friendships and knowledge gained from the wisdom of youth. There’s nothing like coaching a crowd of inquisitive and intelligent young people through a weekly bible study in Church School to keep you on your toes!

As a family and individually, St. Catherine’s has nurtured our faith, strengthened us as Christians, blessed us with fellowship and opportunities to serve our community, and most of all it has expanded our family circle to include all of you.

Why are we telling you this? Because as co-chairs of the stewardship campaign, we began our work by reflecting on what the stewardship of this community by others has meant to us, both as individuals and as a family. Now we are asking each of you to reflect on what St Catherine’s has meant to you, and to consider how you can be a part of giving roots and wings to your community.