

I'd like to take a moment to tell you a little bit about myself to you.

My family and I started attending St. Clement's in 1997, when we moved here from Colorado. I currently serve on the vestry overseeing Stewardship (third time on the vestry). After a career in the corporate world, I made a switch in 2011; I now run a non-profit in Santa Ana called 2-1-1 Orange County, which connects people to resources that they need.

I grew up in an incredibly faith filled home, which as an adult I came to recognize as both unusual and a blessing. I was leaning towards being a social worker, and this led me to working in 1971 at the Jane Adams Hull House in Chicago the summer before my senior year in high school. It broke my heart to see these little children eat little so they could take more back to their families. I didn't have the emotional maturity to pursue this field of study.

So my life took many twists and turns, with bumps in the road and some incredible opportunities. Which was a blessing to me, as the world seemingly had become more materialistic, with messages about all of us needing THINGS.

And then in 1991, still in Little Rock, I went through an incredibly tough time both personally and workwise. I couldn't sleep at night for many days, and one night as I was lying in bed, I prayed: Please Lord, please take this burden off of my shoulders for just one night so that I might have some sleep. And a miracle happened. The stress was lifted off, and I realized that I was not alone and the power of prayer.

Since I seem to need a 2 x 4 against my head to learn, the bumps and twists continued on. Then 11 years ago, searching for a way not to live in fear and to find peace in my heart, I made a list of all the people that I have been fortunate to know who have joy and peace in their lives. And the one common thing was that they are all faith filled. And then about 5 years ago, while journaling, I took a look at what my life would have been like if at age 17 had I not been afraid to become a social worker. Fast forward 40 years, and it was conceivable that I would be doing what I am doing today. Then I charted out my life again from the age of 17, with all the bumps and bruises and learnings and faith, and I came to the same spot.

Which took my breath away. You see, I believe that God always had this plan for me. It just took me 40 years to find it.

Miracles have always abounded in my life. My relationship is closer to the Lord. I am surrounded by faith filled people in my daily endeavors, and I have finally let go of fear.

LIVING GENEROUSLY – The theme of this year's Stewardship Campaign

The world seemingly had become more materialistic, wouldn't you agree, with messages about all of us needing THINGS.

Fr. Brad Karelius preached in August about fear and possessions: “The safety of peoples’ own possessions is more important than the well-being of another person.” *And the “well-being of another person”* is the work that is done at St. Clement’s – our souls...and also bodies and minds.

You know, we can either have faith in fear, or faith in love; faith in the power of the world or faith in the power of God. I put my faith in love and the power of God.

When you think about pledging and tithing, I ask you to consider this: God is using all of us as vehicles to spread his wealth and word. **There is always enough; He always provides.** I have seen this over and over again in my life, from my time as a child, when we didn’t have a lot materially; we always had enough, and (this is important) **enough to share.** Someone suggested at the Annual meeting in January that we all increase our pledges by 10%, which would be wonderful, but perhaps not feasible for everyone. But if every pledge family gave just an additional \$5 per week in their pledge, we’d raise enough money to have a full time office administrator with some left over for basic needs of the church – administrative, outreach, music, etc.

I pray that as you ponder on the amount you pledge this year, adding \$5 or \$10 to your weekly pledge, you will come from a deep abiding sense of gratitude for the gift of this community and the gift we have in Jesus, the one who does not leave our side.

In ending, I humbly suggest that we let go of material thinking and give our lives, as Jesus asked – your daily life, not just on Sundays – to do His work, both directly and through the support of St. Clements and its ministries. Get involved in something: Sunday reading, gardening, working in the office, Vestry, committees, something. The gift returned to you is much larger than you can ever image.

Thank you for being part of my faith family. I would not be at this part of my journey without all of you: your love, your prayers, and your guidance. Thank you.