

Spiritual Journey through Giving – Karen Werner

My name is Karen Werner, and I've been attending St. Bart's for the last 4 1/2 years. Shortly after joining St. Bart's I became involved in the refugee resettlement ministry and have been coordinating that effort for the last three years. I organize setting up apartments for our arriving families and help find others who are interested in working with our families as tutors, mentors, supportive friends.

But my greatest joy is getting to know the families personally and spending time with them on a regular basis, introducing them to American concepts like birthday parties, and American food, like pizza and ice cream cake! Helping them puzzle through the maze of our public education system, helping them find the resources they need. As an "army brat", my family moved frequently, and I was often the stranger and the outsider. As the mother of a profoundly mentally disabled daughter, I understand first-hand what it's like to be different, to not fit in.

And I believe that God has steadily pushed me into work with others who feel different, disenfranchised, alone. Working with refugees has been an incredible gift for me. They teach me so much about patience, about needs versus wants, about acceptance and happiness for what is, about gratitude. This ministry has offered me the opportunity to "welcome the stranger" to our country, and as Bishop Curry says, "to love like Jesus!"



- When you have been especially aware of God's blessings in your life, how have you responded?
- Can you think of ways you have expressed your gratitude?
- Are there gratitude stories in your story?
- Have you shared them with family and friends?
- Have you shared them here? Would you?

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Spiritual Journey through Giving John, Emily, and Alma Wehby

We have been attending St. Bart's since January 2014 and began pledging after Alma was baptized on Pentecost 2014. We began pledging as we realized that we wanted to stay at St. Bart's and find a place for our family in this welcoming community. St. Bart's culture of inclusion and outreach has helped us feel embraced and supported as we have become involved in different ministries, particularly Children's Ministries and Refugee Resettlement.

Our financial pledge, in addition to offering our time, has been one avenue for us to explore the intersection of faith and responsibility and has strengthened our feeling of connection to the community. We have come to feel a deep sense of gratitude for and pride in the ministries, outreach, and services that the parish offers and are happy to have the ability to help support those in a small way.

We have been fortunate to be able to increase our pledge by a small amount each year and hope that we will continue to have the privilege of being active in the community and continuing our own life and spiritual journeys in parallel with the journey of St. Bart's. We treasure the relationships we have found here and look forward to many new beginnings in the coming years. The financial aspect of our commitment to the community gives us concrete ways to express our gratitude for the care you continue to give us and others.



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