

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

DECEMBER 2016

Ministry Moment...

I don't recall exactly when it happened, but around 1976 my dad began the process of leaving our family and divorcing my mother. It was at that time that my mom left the church that I had always called Church and moved us to the new place we began to call Church. I was quite young and I don't remember the process much.

A few years ago I was invited to a dinner to celebrate the 50th year of that church's formation. It was a nice event with most of the current members as well as many of the old members who were still alive. I remember the key note speaker was a man who was one of the older teens when I was a kid; he is now a pastor of a church in North Dakota. He shared a bit about the church in his day, but he shared one thing in particular that still sticks with me.

He spoke of the pastor who helped to form the church--Pastor Steger, it was. He shared that one day he came to the church to talk to the pastor about something and couldn't find him. He checked the office, the utility room, the garage, and finally the parsonage, but he was nowhere to be found. Then he thought to check one final place, the Upper Room. The church had a small hideaway they called the Upper Room that they used for individual or small group prayer, and the young man checked up there. Sure enough, he found the pastor, literally on his knees, praying. What he learned was that Pastor Steger was on his knees praying for the people of the church.

I don't have much memory of Pastor Steger myself, but I now cannot shake the image of a pastor who literally prayed for the individuals he ministered to and with. As a minister myself, I am personally encouraged by this memory. I am challenged to be faithful by calling on the name of Jesus on behalf of the individual residents and the Prayer Partners who have joined me in this ministry. I think to myself, 'who else prays for the people in my life?' and so I am encouraged to follow in Pastor Steger's example. I like to think that I have taken his torch and am now running with it in my own life and ministry.

Thank you, Lord, for using a pastor from my past to pray for me, even when I didn't know he was.

~John

**Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.
Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.**

(Acts 20:28)

Prayer Letter...

Dear Prayer Partner,

Well, the shoebox season is officially completed for us. We have delivered 50 shoeboxes, and now they begin the great journey to the children in other countries. Please pray for each box, and the many hands and eyes that are needed to get the boxes to their intended destinations. Pray for the volunteers who inspect the boxes, the people who load them on the planes, the pilots who fly them to their destinations, for the customs agents who make determination for access into their countries, and the many other people who transport and deliver them to the individual churches, orphanages, and other communities where the children will receive these gifts. Thank you to everyone who is reading these words, for your generous contributions as this journey began right here with us helping a few people in the care facilities to pack a few shoeboxes. Without you the journey would not have begun. And this just in – *My wife did a matched-funds fundraiser on Facebook and just about raised all the funds for the 2017 Shoebox program!!! I sure love her.*

Again Christmas is here. It is that time of year when we will reflect and consider the Christ-child. This year I am considering how the Child brought hope to all of us in our hopelessness. How in the beginning there was darkness but now there was light, how death was the reality but now there is life. How hopelessness was the only life option, but when the Word became flesh, hope sprang anew to each of us like the blade of green grass in the dry hot desert. How the babe in the manger is the reason I am a new creation and have the hope of life eternal. And I hope that you too have the confidence of faith in the Child who is born to us on Christmas Day.

And to end 2016, I ask you to pray for me and my family, that all of us will recognize the gift and grace of Christ in our lives so that we may share it with those whom we serve, and the world around us. Pray that we don't lose heart or forget the calling of God upon our lives. Thank you for standing with us for another year of ministry to the residents in the nursing care community. Your prayers and support make it possible for us to do what we do, and I am so very grateful that you have joined us in this ministry.

Have a very Merry Christmas!



John

***“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for
revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”***

Luke 2:29-32

PS. If you would like to receive our mid-month email informing you of our current prayer needs during the month, please contact me and I will get you on this list. Call or email me.