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Stewardship: Lay Witness Presentation

Stewardship is commitment to Christ by my life in his Church. It is a grateful response in to the gifts God has given us. In gratitude we share our gifts generously with our neighbors. We share our gift of time. We share the gifts of our talents. We share our material wealth. Stewardship is not giving what we have leftover, at the end of a long day or week or at the end of the month. Stewardship is giving our best to our parish, God, to our world.

As a child, I did not have a permanent home parish. I attended a private Catholic elementary school that was not affiliated with a parish Church. The school was administered by a lovely order of French sisters. I loved my grade school; it was my social and spiritual home. While my family attended Sunday Mass regularly, we floated between different Churches. One week it was Guardian Angels, another we celebrated at Our Lady of Counsel, or Sacred Heart. It was not until our family moved houses and I changed schools that I realized that we didn't have a parish home. My family enrolled me in a local SW pod school and registered in the parish.

At my new grade school, everyone welcomed and accepted me joyfully. Yet, I always had the feeling of being an outsider. The students in the school all seemed to have grown up together since kindergarten or before. I didn't know or understand parish the lingo and traditions. It was at this time in my life that I understood that our Catholic faith meant family. Coming of age in the parish was a great support: I was

Confirmed in the faith at our parish; my husband and I married in the parish; and my first child was baptized in the same parish. It seemed that we had set on a Catholic faith community for life.

God had a different plan for our family. When Matt and I were ready to buy our first house, we searched all though out the Brookside and Waldo neighborhoods. Finally, we found the one and it I believe in my heart that God prepared this house for us, in the heart of St. Elizabeth Catholic Church boundaries.

When Jack, our oldest child, became school age we deliberated on where to send him to school. We asked our selves, “Should we send him to the parish Church where my sister and I graduated from grade school, where Matt and I were married, where Jack was baptized.” I was reminded of a desire for parish home. My former parish was much farther away; Jack wouldn’t be able to ride his bike to a friend’s house or walk to school. Going back would make it more difficult to plant roots and commit to a parish family. We chose St. Elizabeth as our place of belonging, not for ourselves, but for our children. St. Elizabeth is the greatest decision we have ever made for our family. The gifts you, St. Elizabeth, have shared with our family are immeasurable: friendship, support in suffering, joy, prayers, and sharing in the Sacraments. Thank you for all you have given to me and my family.

Our family’s stewardship is our response to your love. It is our commitment to you. It means that we promise to love you; to serve you; to lift you up in your suffering; to celebrate your joys; to eat the same bread and drink from the same cup at this sacrifice and live out our lives in Christ together.

