

Bo Simons
Pledge talk 11/19/2023

In a different life, with a different wife, I was somewhat happy in our Episcopal church in Healdsburg. Then one night when the kids were in their teens, I was helping them with their homework, and my then wife returned from a Vestry meeting and said, "You can stay with that church if you want. I am going elsewhere." It was 2003 and our rector had just packed the Vestry and they voted to go to the Southern Cone Conservative anti-gay wing of the Anglican communion.

We landed at Incarnation and enjoyed the impulsive and witty sermons of Matt Lawrence. We stayed at Incarnation for three years, and then went back to that other church in 2007 when that rector retired, and church members called us back. A few years passed and a friend asked me to check out the EfM class at Incarnation. Here was a four-year course that met my snooty requirements of intellectual vigor but also taught theological reflection.

During the next few years I retired, divorced, finished my four years of EfM, fell in love with Becky and married in 2018. I had found the spiritual and intellectual and social home here at Incarnation. Becky and I started being regulars here at Advent of that same year, shortly after our honeymoon. Father Stephen was new here and so were we. I have become an usher, a reader, a eucharistic visitor, helped with the history celebrating Incarnation's 150 years. Becky and I have been blessed to serve at Open Table and attend the stimulating and warm formation classes. We enjoyed this church's vibrant LGBTQ component it has provided into that rich vivacious community in Sonoma County. All of these aspects of the church are reverberating blessings.

A big thing this church did was about year and a half ago, when I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, biotype B, at Stage Four. That's big C cancer with a pull date. Your prayers cured me.

Why do we need you to pledge? It has nothing to do with anything I just said. No, wait! It has everything to do with what I just said. In addition to being Christ's body on Earth, and all those blessings I touched upon, a church is also this building and that campus and an institution, a dues-paying member of a Diocese, and a non-profit organization that has bills to pay, a payroll to meet, loans and investments to manage and it needs to plan. Your pledge is part of that planning. Fill out the card. Call Alison, our administrator.