

Mary Kennaugh

Pledge talk, October 19, 2023

I came to The Church of the Incarnation in the fall of 2014. When I first came here, I had been a Catholic for 57 years, and had been worshipping and singing in the choir at St Eugene's for @ 25 years. I came here with my choir director, just to sing with the Alleluia Choir, as he was going to be the interim director for a year, and he thought that I would enjoy this church more than the church I was going to, as it had become very oppressive. But, I didn't leave the Catholic Church right away. I would come here, stay for the service up until we finished the anthem, then I would slip out the back, and race back to my church for another mass every Sunday. I did this until Christmas Eve of 2016, when I officially left the Catholic Church to become an Episcopalian.

Why did I leave? Well.... The Church of the Incarnation had opened my eyes to worship in a way I never knew was possible. Even though the service is a lot like what I was used to, it was different. The homilies were so uplifting and inspirational, the priest was awesome, and the people here were just so warm and welcoming. It was clear to me that all were welcome here, gay, straight, black, white, homeless, even non-Episcopalians. There were even female priests!!! Wow!! And, I could sing spirituals again, which had been banned in my old church. I remember one Sunday where we sang "I am the Bread of Life" and people stood up and raised their hands up and just praised God. What an awesome sight. It made my heart swell. I soon found myself talking to everyone I knew about this awesome new church that I was going to. I was inviting all of my friends to come to experience the love and joy that I feel here.

In the early part of 2017, I was asked to be the director of the Alleluia Choir, which I did, but I never really felt like an employee, I felt like a parishioner who was directing the choir. So, even though I was an employee, this was my church of worship and I felt the want and desire to support it both spiritually and financially. And that was the start of my pledging. I was actually told by Jim Richardson "Mary, you don't have to pledge, you are an employee." But I was compelled to do so, as I saw all of the really good work being done here. Things like, The Living Room, feeding the homeless every Sunday, and supporting the sick and sheltered. These beautiful works need to be supported by us, the parishioners. Supporting by showing up and helping, and really importantly, by giving financially. I pledge in the hope of helping this church help others.

I am also teaching my grandkids who come each week to church, to give. They love when the basket is passed, and they love putting in their few dollars each week. It warms my heart to see how much they love it and to see the next generation of pledgers. So, please join me and my grandkids in pledging what you can, or even a little more, to support this awesome church.

And lastly, I want you to remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.