

## [Hebrews 13:16](#)

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

I'll admit that when Emily first talked to me about speaking with you, I was a little wary. You really want me to get up there and start talking?! Ever heard of the phrase "Be careful what you wish for"?

No, honestly, I wasn't sure that my story is any different from anyone else's here. But the more she and I talked about this, the more I realized that what I have to say might just be helpful to someone. What we call "Stewardship" is really a part of my upbringing. I have been volunteering for as long as I can remember. My dad was a life member of the Lion's Club – 48 years perfect attendance. Even when we were on vacation, he found a club somewhere so he could attend. Rick was President of the Glenside Kiwanis for a couple of years. He and I raised our daughter, Karen, to always think of others and by the time she graduated from Abington HS, she had accumulated well over 1000 hours and was awarded the President's Student Service Award in recognition of outstanding service and commitment to strengthening America. but her reaction was a shrug. No big deal.

That sort of award didn't exist when I was in High School, but volunteering and helping non-profits have been a part of the very fabric of my life. I found myself a member of a singing organization (the Sweet Adelines) where for over 10 years I sang, and eventually found myself becoming a Section Leader. We performed at Nursing Homes, in malls, in the Thanksgiving Parade a few times, and we did it for the love of music and the joy of seeing the smiles our songs and performances brought to our audience. I even had a part in writing the 12 minute "Package", weaving songs together in a story that my chorus performed at an International Women's Barbershop competition. I had a solo speaking role to drive the story, and after our 12 minutes on the International Stage we ended up ranked #1 in the **World** of Mid-Size Choruses...and I have the Gold medal to prove it!

But that's just the tip of the Iceberg. As I suspect many of you already know, I was raised in a Jewish home, and for many years I was a member of a local Synagogue. I served on the Board of that Synagogue for 3 years. It wasn't a big deal to me, I just saw a need and I filled it. A drop in the bucket.

Now I am proud to say that I work for a non-profit company that helps the medical industry with keeping hospitals and nursing homes safe. We put together lists of equipment to help the decision makers choose specifically what they need and at the best possible price. We track incidents in a huge national database (jointly founded by my company and the Federal Government) to help others avoid those mistakes and, if there IS a mistake, help them determine what went wrong so that it doesn't happen again. It's not a big deal, I just fix

people's computers so that they can keep doing this important work. Another drop in the bucket.

After our daughter, Karen, was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer (yes, thank G\*d, she has been cancer-free for over 12 years) she and I both joined the local chapter of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, helping raise awareness. Before too long we ended up on the governing Board of the Delaware Valley Chapter. Meanwhile, Rick was helping out The Sunshine Foundation with their donation boxes and other things. We both have ended up helping them with their annual Walk/Bark/Run for Dreams every June for quite a few years now. One more drop into that bucket. On a whim, we went into the SPCA. Just to look! We ended up adopting a cat. And another. Over the years, we have had many cats who needed homes end up taking over our hearts. Without us, they would have had nowhere to go. More drops.

Oh! How could I leave this out? I tried out for a musical on a lark. That led me to a decade-long affiliation with a non-profit theater group that provides an annual scholarship to a local student going on to study in the Theater Arts. After one year as a member I was invited to join the Executive Board. And then I became the Recording Secretary for most of my 10 years with them. Why? Because it needed to be done. Just taking notes and sending them around, no big deal. But those drops just keep on adding up.

I ended up here at St Peter's because of my singing. I went to a Taize service and happened to sit near someone from the Choir (I cannot tell a lie, it was Carol Lorenz-Burnett). It was fun, I didn't know any of the chants but I harmonized with the voices I heard. Carol came up to me afterwards and said that she couldn't help overhearing me sing, and that I had a lovely Alto voice. I thanked her and said that I was actually a Tenor. "Oh!" she said, "We need Tenors!" After discussing this with Rick – who would end up losing his sanctuary, the \*one\* place he could go where I wouldn't! – and finding out that he was more than supportive of the idea of my singing in the Choir, I dipped my toe into the waters of St. Peter's Church. It was just a little different for me. OK, very different. I'd never sung any of these songs in my life, but I was a quick learner and had some very good folks to sing along side of me. Before I knew it, it was spring. Polly said "Debbie, you should join us at the Women's Retreat!" "Oh, I couldn't, I'm not really a member." I said. But there I went, suitcase in tow, and found myself embraced by the most loving, welcoming bunch of women I had ever dreamed of. I was so warmly welcomed, I felt so comfortable, I couldn't believe it. I ended up helping with a little bit of the Sunday morning service here, a bit of Matzoh Crack there, some jokes for our evening entertainment.... well, before I knew it I was in it up to my eyeballs. It sure didn't seem like it was all that much for me to do, but it really seemed to make a difference to a lot of people. Just a drop here and a drop there.

Fast forward to 3 years ago. Emily called the house trying to get Rick to join the vestry. He joked, "You really should be talking to my wife!". And the seed was planted. Emily thought and prayed about it for some time. After all, what a break from tradition it would be! It's not unusual for a Jewish person to sing in a choir, but Vestry? She looked at my giving spirit and

took her thoughts to Bishop Gutierrez. He agreed with her, and I was welcomed by the Bishop to be part of the leadership of the Church.

Me? Are you kidding me? I was not so sure what I'd gotten myself into. But from day 1, I found that there was nothing so intimidating about the process of actually serving on the Vestry, or this group of people, my fellow vestry members. There are things that need to be done, things to keep the wheels in motion so the train of the faithful can keep itself on the rails and continue moving ahead. I am not sure I can say exactly what it was I did, nothing was all that difficult or intimidating. I had the support of the other members of the Vestry, my Vestry Buddy(s) and my own chutzpah. That means guts, essentially.

All my life, I have felt that there was something lacking in me. That I needed to try harder just to keep up. I felt alone even when I was in a crowd of people, but most of those dark thoughts have faded since I started my stewardship here. It's not just the Choir, the Women's Group, the Vestry. I like bringing food in to put into our Food Cupboard. Some weeks I don't have much to share, others I can bring in more. It doesn't matter how much, it's that I care to give of what I have.

Giving back is like a drop of water. By itself, it seems to be practically insignificant. But when you keep at it, one drop at a time, it begins to make a difference! My own story isn't all that special or amazing, and every one of you has a story. It may not seem special or amazing to you, but each of you is special and amazing in G\*d's eyes. And your gifts are needed here. There's no red cape emblazoned with the "S" for Super powers! We have quiet heroes. Working in the courtyard to keep the flowers blooming beautifully so that mourners can stand quietly under the dogwood tree and embrace the memories of their loved ones. Keeping the pews clean after every service, because it only takes a few minutes to pick up papers and put things to rights again. Stepping up to hold the hand of an elderly congregant as they are heading over to the Parish Hall. Drop by drop, our cups are filled. We fill them with our love. And that love begins to overflow. First a gesture turns to a wave. Then a wave turns to a conversation. And soon, a friendship blossoms. That's how Stewardship works. It's not a tidal wave of 'doing things'. It's nurturing the garden of G\*d's love, one drop at a time. It will yield much more than you ever dreamed. But it only happens if you resolve to share your drop of water. When two people share that drop, then three, or more, there is suddenly a teaspoonful, a cupful, a deluge! Bring your caring spirit forward and find that spot where your drop of water will produce an abundance of blossoms. It all starts with one drop. And with you.