



UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Rooted. Giving. Growing.

2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

*"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."  
~ Colossians 2:6-7*

Stewardship Moment - Mike and Mary Ellen Olson  
September 27, 2015

Good Morning!

When we were asked to speak – and we had seen the stewardship theme of “rooted, giving and growing” – the rooted part was easy. Mike and I both grew up in “church families”. My family “belonged” to the Central Avenue United Methodist church in Batesville, Arkansas. I have memories still of playing Red Rover, London Bridge, and four square on the church lawn and playground. I remember how cool and dark it was downstairs – with its thick limestone walls, even in summer. I remember gluing macaroni on cigar boxes painted gold and filled with Vacation Bible school treasures. I remember Easter egg hunts on the lawn and at Christmas – angel wings – made somehow out of coat hangers and gauzy fabric and glitter – lots of glitter.

Thank you for giving those same memories to our children here at UPC. Thank you for teaching preschool and Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and being youth advisors. Thank you for the financial support for our wonderful program staff and art supplies and musicals and mission trips. You have made those same memories possible for them to carry throughout their lives.

Mike:

....and I am what is referred to here at UPC as a “cradle Presbyterian”, baptized and raised at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Rockford Illinois. Even though my surname is Swedish, my mother was of Scots-Irish descent with several Presbyterian clergymen in my family’s

history. In addition to the types of memories Mary Ellen mentioned – I also was aware of how involved my parents were in so many aspects of church life. They served as elders and deacons, on committees and boards, cooked meals for youth groups and spent time whenever needed on tasks like preparing Sunday worship bulletins and maintaining the church building and grounds.

We stepped away from the church as young adults sometimes do – caught up in school and moving around the country – but when that first real job arrived and we felt in place, we were back – initially at First Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan – and twenty-one years ago this fall arriving here in Chapel Hill at UPC. We are now “rooted” in this congregation.

Rooted – and now giving:

When we re-joined the church as adults, we intended to become active members in this community, giving our support, both financially and physically, volunteering in different capacities. And in that spirit, we’ve taught Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, ushered and greeted, served on committees and boards, and participated in the Appalachia Service Project mission trips.

Rooted, giving – and growing:

With each new thing we tried, we were challenged to grow. And thanks to your examples, patience and leadership – we have grown. With every experience here at UPC, we know we have received much more than we have given. Along the way, our faith has been nourished and has grown into a more mature awareness of Christian life and our experiences here have deepened our awareness of God’s presence.

Mary Ellen:

My faith has been nurtured by you in many ways over the past 20 years, through bible studies and discussions, women’s retreats, circle meetings and hugs. I’m currently working on not doing all the talking in prayer, but learning to listen for God – a work always in progress. In this Church I find support for this type of growth.

Originally we participated because that's what you do..... that's what our parents had done after all. Our participation now is much more a response in gratitude for all we have received. Thank you again for being here with us and for us all these years.

In the midst of this stewardship season, we hope you will join us in taking the time to remember your roots– were there angel wings and glitter?

How did you come to be here – maybe you are just starting a faith journey?

We hope you will find blessings to be thankful for – and time to pray – and time to listen for God's response.

The Stewardship theme this year of Rooted, Giving and Growing is taken from Paul's letter to the Colossians. In the NRSV Daily Bible, this prayer is included by the commentator and seems fitting to us:

“Lord, you have placed before me spiritual mentors and examples of your grace working in many lives. Thank you for these living gifts of encouragement.” Amen!