

Sharing What We Have: It Starts at Home

A Series on Giving

Good morning. My name is Ted Burkhalter. My wife Susan, our children, and I joined St. Andrew's three years ago, after returning from many years overseas.

I wanted to talk to you this morning about service and how it has helped our family's faith and our sense of fellowship.

Service was an important part of Susan's life and mine growing up. She was in the Peace Corps, I worked at an Easter Seals camp. She taught English to immigrants, I helped resettle refugees. And so on. I tell you this, because once Susan and I started raising a family and once I started on my career, we let service slip by the wayside. Life was crazy, we were busy, always moving from one place to another and never quite translating Sunday sermons into everyday Christian charity. We felt a gaping hole, and we talked about it a lot. Then we came here.

St. Andrew's embraced Susan and me, and the attraction was mutual. From the day we arrived, we saw it was a place dedicated to service. Susan is a musician, and she found a home right away. Although she's not a vocalist, the choir made a place for her, and soon she had a fellowship community. Before long, she was also helping at the annual hypothermia week, and she received encouragement to start what others called her "haircut ministry." It's just that: She gives homeless men and women haircuts. It's simple but powerful.

St. Andrew's invited us in. Our girls signed up as acolytes and participated in the St. Andrew's summer Workcamp, where they experienced the satisfaction of helping needy families repair their homes. Our daughter Alyssa took that service ethos with her to college and volunteers teaching music to underserved high school students. And our younger daughter, Rachel, seeing how much fun Alyssa was having, also volunteered and now teaches six students of her own.

Susan and I serve in different ways: She gets intensely involved. I tend to look for opportunities with smaller time commitments or finite timeframes. For me, it's been a shift or two at hypothermia week, plus coffee service, the acolyte ministry, a vocational discernment committee, and the stewardship committee. These all provide the fellowship I am looking for, as well as a way to give back to the church. The most substantial has been the acolyte program: Working with your kids and watching them grow as individuals and as a group has been a joy.

My goal for the next year is to get more involved in an outreach ministry, helping those in need in our community. I can't imagine where I'll find the time, but I know that "one-together" means more than staying inside the four walls of our church. And I try to remember the lesson that service always seems to teach: In giving, we receive; in loving, we are loved; and in finding one another, we are found by God.

Ted Burkhalter
Stewardship Committee Member

