



Having been a member of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Austell for forty years, I was quite devastated to learn that the English-Speaking congregation was being closed. Our congregation was losing members, and the Spanish-Speaking congregation was growing by leaps and bounds, so we had to go. With so few people, a big percentage of our lives was spent at church trying to cover all the jobs that needed to be done. So when it finally became real to us that we were closing, we had to face what we would do and where we would go. I had visions of visiting lots of churches with no responsibility. Then Frank Meadows suggested that we all visit St. Benedict's that first "free" Sunday. A group of us visited that day and about ten of us still remain, and the vision of no responsibility vanished.

From that very first day in the spring of 2011, I knew that I had found my new church home. The congregation was warm and welcoming. I have gained so many close friendships at St. Benedict's, and there are many opportunities for outreach and learning and fun.

Growing up in the Baptist Church, I always knew that the Bible says to give tenth of your earnings to the church. I know it can seem that after the bills are paid, there's no money left for the church. My experience has been that if you pay the church first, everything else will work out. And there's also the fact that the church needs money to operate, just like our own household, in order to keep the doors open. So if we want to have this beautiful church to worship in and this beautiful congregation to worship with, we have to give our fair share.

We also should tithe with our time and talents. St. Benedict's offers a big variety of opportunities to be of service in the community and in our church. If you check these out, I'm sure you will find something that fits in with your personality and your interests.

The First Church gives us a beautiful example of sharing among believers in the Book of Acts: "And the congregations of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them."

Carolyn Elsner