

Christian Stewardship is...

...an act of faith!

...an act of obedience.

*A **tithe** of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord,; it is holy to the Lord.*

Leviticus 27:30

...to grasp the essence of life's meaning.

*...giving of your time,
talent, gifts and service.*

Legacies of Love

Bethany has been blessed with many dedicated stewards whose gifts continue to touch us and connect us. Each week during our 2009 Stewardship Campaign, we will bring you a story of a special gift that has had a profound impact on the life of our church. Initiated with a hopeful spirit and carried out with teamwork and camaraderie, each gift reminds us of the power of love at work, linking us to the past and inspiring us to create new ways to make a difference through giving.



*Yours, O Lord,
is the greatness and the power and the glory
and the majesty and the splendor,
for everything in heaven and earth
is yours.*

*Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.*

1 Chronicles 29:11



The Friendship Garden

In Bethany's Sanctuary you may notice that more people sit on the left side than the right. It's not an accident. They love to gaze out at the garden. As you sit in the quiet, reflective time before the worship service, take a moment to look out and behold our garden – the Friendship Garden - a gift to all our members over the years from the founding members of Bethany, forty-nine years ago. Notice how the light strikes the

leaves, how the sculptures add grace to the design, and in looking, you might even be lucky enough to glimpse a little bird shaking off the water from the birdbath. It is a welcoming and peaceful extension of our Sanctuary.

In 1958, when plans for the Sanctuary were being drawn up, the first minister of Bethany, Reverend Bill Harris, came up with the idea to include a garden alongside it. His vision was to create “a beautiful place of nature bespeaking the wondrous creation of God.” Architect Edward Reichert happily agreed, as the design for the space did not include traditional stained glass. He hoped the garden would “beautify the Sanctuary and contribute as a source of light.” Reverend Harris recounts that it was named the Friendship Garden because of its proximity to the Friendship Aisle where he planned for the congregation to meet and mingle over coffee after the service and then spill out into the garden through the double doors.

It was the first Garden Club of Bethany that actually brought the garden to life. More than twenty women, brimming with dedication and enthusiasm came together to plan, design, dig and plant the crepe myrtles, Indian Hawthorne, the tulip tree at the far end and the different flowers and shrubs along the path. Reverend Harris

remembers it as an exciting time when everyone pitched in and it was “all fresh and brand new.” Van VanOsdall recalls that it took more than a year, but the women continued to “come and work and pray about it” as they gave their time and energy. One family, the Sturdevants, contributed the irrigation system - a gift to nurture the newly planted growth for years to come.



Over time the garden has been used as a gathering place for birthdays, weddings and funerals; a bridge before and after services during the happiest and saddest of times. Trula Meglasson shared how much the garden meant to her when her husband, George, passed away. She sought to help her grandchildren, who worshipped their “Granddaddy,” to understand and heal. After the funeral, they all entered the garden where a covey of doves was waiting. Gently they opened the doors and the doves rose to the sky, circling once and then heading home. Trula explained to the children that their Grandfather was also going home - that when they released the doves it was

“to illustrate his soul going to God.” For Trula, the inspiration came from the garden.

Ten to fifteen years ago, Freddy Gibson decided to make a lasting contribution to the garden. A renowned sculptor, she wanted to create a work of art that would reflect the Methodist Flame of the United Methodist Church. Reverend Harris recalls her excitement as she just “jumped in with both feet,” freely offering her time and exceptional talent to work metal into art, calling her sculpture “The Trinity.” Betty Lunsford remembers how thrilled she was during the dedication. Today her gift takes on even more significance. Freddy passed away just days ago on October 14th. To all those who loved her, “The Trinity” stands tall embodying Freddy’s “gift of faith in the Heavenly Father.” Pastor Dan Jones shared with us that she “recognized beauty and created it” and that “her life was a gift of grace to us all.”



The Trinity by Freddy Gibson

It is especially fitting that it is Freddy's daughter, Lynn Pauwels, who keeps this "Legacy of Love" alive. She has tended to the garden in her spare time for several years following her parents' example. In the garden she feels "free and very peaceful." And Lynn has a vision for the future – a new irrigation system and more colorful flowers to attract butterflies.

Perhaps the greatest value of our garden lies in just being there for all of us... at any time. For Trula, it brings "beauty, love and reassurance." For others it "gives spirit and faith when you think of all the people who loved it and worked it." For Van, it infuses her with "the light of God. One can't help but think how wonderful this world is through God."

When you have a chance, carve out a moment to visit the garden; to sense the soft breeze and pick up the sound of children laughing beyond the wall, and just receive with joy the timeless offering of many members who came before who "hoped to create a gift that will last as long as the church is still here."

Meg Lauck
October 26, 2008





The Sun Dial

Placed in the Friendship Garden in memory of Alice Rowland
by her husband Melvin Rowland.



*Give thanks for the past,
For those who had vision,
Who planted and watered
So dreams could come true.*

From *What Gift Can We Bring*,
Words & Music: Jane Marshall, 1980