

Clif Higdon Witness Talk
“Stewardship in My Life”
January 2015

Good morning.

My name is Clif Higdon. Micki, my wife, and I have been members of St. Daniel’s parish since autumn of 1986, when we first moved to Clarkston from Walled Lake with our four children, Meredith, Skip, Stephanie, and Katie.

This morning, I would like to take just a few minutes to share with you my stewardship experience.

So, just what is stewardship?

Merriam – Webster tells us that stewardship is the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

As Christians, we are taught that stewardship is a response we make in gratitude to God for what He has given to us. It is a deliberate, conscious decision to commit to the fundamentals of Christian stewardship: prayers, family life, sharing skills and talents, and giving financially to our parish.

We all Serve a Loving God.

Each of us is given certain gifts and talents and one of our responsibilities in life is to discover what those gifts and talents are, develop them, and use them to benefit others. Christ’s example shows us that we need to spend time being with and helping others less fortunate.

To whom more is given, more is expected.

My early awareness of Christian stewardship took place as I was growing up in a very blue-collar area on Detroit’s southwest side. My participation in the neighborhood Presbyterian Church Sunday school offered me many opportunities to perform acts of kindness for some of the elder folks in the area. I was encouraged by my parents to be helpful and did such things as shovel snow and cut lawns. Being told by my parents not to accept money for these tasks did not, of course, sit well with me, but the thanks of my neighbors for jobs well done was good to hear.

While prayer was not a usual occurrence in my family, as part of the Sunday school classes, I was taught the value of prayer by my teachers. I was a member of the youth group at the church and took part in prayers when I attended meetings and events.

In my early teens, summers at the farm of my aunt and uncle, meant little jobs for their neighbors. Helping with harvest, tending gardens, and cleaning stables provided me with some spending money, a portion of which I gave on Sundays at a Presbyterian church I attended with an elderly couple who lived a couple farms down the road. I often worked for Mr. Vincent when my uncle did not need my help, and it was he and his wife who would take me to church with them.

I learned early that serving others and making donations to my church and other charities is important; however, I really did not become fully aware of what stewardship is until I converted to Roman Catholicism prior to my marriage to Micki. We attended Mass at different churches during the couple of years we lived in apartments in Wayne and Plymouth, but it was not until we moved into our house in Walled Lake, in 1970, that we became active parish members at St. Williams.

Our children were born in 1973, 1975, 1977, and 1978, and were baptized in the parish. As they grew, so grew our commitment to St. William's. We got involved in faith formation, taking part in giving of our time, talent, and treasure in a number of ways. We taught the children the practice of family mealtime prayers. Every night following the reading of a favorite book there was a blessing, that today, our children with children, continue to say before saying good night.

We were both teachers and took part in teaching catechism classes. We joined in adult faith sharing sessions that were offered. We also gave regularly at Sunday Mass.

Moving to Clarkston and registering at St. Dan's was a milestone. As new-comers, we quickly began taking part in church and community activities. Micki taught catechism as did our oldest daughter, Meredith. Meredith and Skip worked a couple summers at SCAMP and we took an active role in the SCAMP home tours. I served as lector and joined the Men's Club. I continue to attend Men's Club meetings and take part in the pancake breakfasts as well as other activities at which the Men's Club serves.

We consistently give a portion of our income to the parish. We have enrolled in Online Giving to take advantage of the security the program offers. We also make a regular commitment to Catholic Services Appeal as well as donating to Changing Lives Together.

When the Christ Renews His Parish program came to St. Dan's, Micki and I attended as participants. I followed up by joining Team 2 and can gladly affirm that both experiences were most moving and fulfilling. The giving back by joining the team was especially uplifting and rewarding.

I most heartily encourage us all to experience giving back so that we all share in the grateful feeling of doing what Christ asks us to do.

We know that it is in giving that we receive.

Each of us has his or her own role to play in carrying out the mission of the Church: as parents we nurture our children in the light of faith; as parishioners, we work in concrete ways to make our parish a true community of faith and a source of service to the surrounding community; as Catholics, we give generous support — prayers, time, money, and personal service according to our circumstances — to parish and archdiocesan programs and to the universal Church.

If you are looking for ways in which you can practice stewardship at St. Dan's, consider the following:

- **Worshiping:** Daily Mass, Evening Prayer, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Minister, Lector, Usher,
- **Faith Sharing:** Children's Liturgy of the Word, Religious Education, Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP), Scripture Study, Family Cluster & Home Catechesis
- **Serving:** Coffee & Donuts, Tree Trimming, Pancake Breakfast, Mardi Gras,
- **Donating:** Intentional, Planned, Proportionate Giving; Online Giving; Catholic Services Appeal; Changing Lives Together

Finally, I urge us all to commit to living each day as Christian Stewards by:

- Praying with grateful hearts,
- Nurturing our family with time and love,
- Sharing our God-given gifts with the parish community, and
- Giving back to God the first fruits of our labors

Thank you.