



FOREWORD

Injected into the old-familiar Wednesday morning Bible Study was a shot of adrenaline. We were studying "Miracles", and were asked by Pastor David to share miracles that we might have experienced. That was the catalyst, which unleashed a volume of testimonies to the wonderful works of God.

One person said, "It's a book." Another said, "It's a Centennial Book." Another said, "Call it 'FAITH STORIES'." That's how this book came to be. To us it is very precious, a testament to the faithfulness of our God, through good times and bad times. Every story is different, but you may detect a golden thread running through many of them: "I learned to trust in God."

Some of the writers said it would take a book to chronicle God's tender dealings with them. True. We offer this book to you as encouragement for the journey ahead, as well as recollections of our past life together. Many who read this book share much of the journey with those of us who still delight to be Parkminster.

Rich blessings upon you as you read, and perchance weep over these pages.

Beverly Evans

May, 1999

Parkminster Presbyterian Church

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To the members of Parkminster Church, past and present, who gave us their most valuable gift, their memories. They are precious stories of your experience. They are the greatest truth that a person can possess with their mind, the truth they have experienced about God.

To Almighty God, who has shown us His Word, His Strength, His Mercy, His Healing Power, His Love, His Saving Grace and has allowed us to experience His Presence.

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Selah"

Ps 46:10-11 (NIV)

Julie M. Kuyt

Faith Story

How did the Votaw's get to Parkminster Church?

Early on in California, God was making a way for us to come to Parkminster Church in Rochester, New York. He revealed to us several clear signs that opened the doors of our hearts to the church. If you have ever been close to a pastor when the search process for another call is being sought, you know it is not an easy time for the pastor or the family. In past years churches could plan on receiving several hundred resumes of pastors seeking a new call. Pastors looking for a new church might spend two years or more in the process.

We had a sense that we were released from our California congregation. By the summer of 1995, we had served there eight years, mostly seeking renewal with a high level of frustration. I viewed a series of upcoming evangelistic meetings as a watershed time for the church and our family. When the results produced minor results, we were free to leave. During the fall of 1995, we started the search process by getting my resume distributed to churches.

The search process is emotional and grueling. Before we had been too involved in the search process, on a September afternoon Cheryl looked at me in our living room and boldly proclaimed, "the Lord is in charge of your next call. A church from a long way off will call us. We are not to be worried or concerned, because the church that wants us will seek us out. We don't have to search or be fearful about the process." I heard something special in Cheryl's tone of voice... it had the sound of prophecy. I had experienced her prophetic words in the past and I felt that the Spirit was confirming these words in my heart. So I tucked those words of great hope away in my memory and proceeded with the sending out of resumes.

Faith Story

At the end of November 1995, from out of the blue, I received some correspondence from Parkminster Church. I was listed with Presbyterians for Renewal and the elders of Parkminster found me there and wrote concerning the possibility of being the Stated Supply Pastor. I read the letter and information about Parkminster. I knew that Rochester was a city on a Great Lake but I wasn't sure which one. When I looked on the map my heart was strangely warmed. The Spirit was moving ever so gently. I was not looking for a Stated Supply position but I felt compelled to respond to the elders.

The doors of the future continued to open as our family's needs for blended contemporary and traditional worship, a strong youth program, and a deep spiritual maturity in the congregation were abundantly met here at Parkminster. After our conversations and my visit to Rochester in February of 1996, the Lord confirmed in our hearts that this was where we were heading.

All the pieces of the puzzle became clear. God had indeed called us to a church a long way off and that church sought us out. The Lord did this for the mutual benefit and joy of congregation and pastor's family. God's word of prophecy to me through Cheryl in September, 1995 was confirmed and a special church named Parkminster Presbyterian called me to serve starting May 15, 1996. Praise God for His wisdom and kindness to us all.

David Votaw

My faith story began many years ago at my father's knee. Being a man of great focus and perseverance, he was determined that I should memorize lengthy passages of scripture. We did it together, every morning before school for 20 minutes, alternating between him and me. We each had our 3 x 5 notebook where each reference was recorded numerically. And so we proceeded from Genesis to Revelation. He believed that to retain this memory work, each verse must be reviewed every two weeks. And so they were.

I really didn't have a clue as to the meaning of these verses, nor did I for many years to come. But the foundation was being laid; the Word was being written in my heart.

Time passed. I became enmeshed in a religious cult. Not knowing that salvation was a gift from God, we worked, pressed, endured, sweat blood and tears to become perfect. Did you ever try it? It doesn't work. Our best efforts fall far short of God's standard of holiness.

The day came when I was so physically and emotionally stressed out that I thought I was about to die. The Word of God came to the fore, as I prayed in the language of Jesus, "Not my will but Thine be done." God heard and answered by coming to me in a brilliant light beside my bed, and then wave upon wave of healing current surged through my body for many hours. In the morning I arose to announce that I was healed.

Now I knew that God answered prayer, so my friend and I went to the blooming wisteria gardens at Highland Park and prayed again. We asked God to send us the Holy Spirit (little knowing what that meant). In just three short months, the whole group of us had embraced Christianity.

Here is how it happened. Frances and I were at the Lake Ontario waterfront to study for our first meeting. We were assigned to study what Jesus said in the Gospel of John about His being lifted up On the cross; specifically, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life". (John 3:14) In an hour of time I knew for the first time in my life why the cross is on the church steeples all over Christendom; I knew that Jesus had died for my sins. I knew that I was forgiven and accepted by Him. It was an ecstatic experience.

**O what a wonderful, wonderful day—Day I will never forget;
After I'd wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Saviour I met.
O what a tender, compassionate friend—He met the need of my
heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling,
He made all the darkness depart!**

**Heaven came down and glory filled my soul,
When at the cross the Savior made me whole;
My sins were washed away
And my night was turned to day—
Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!**

**It was like the scattered pieces of a 1,000-piece puzzle coming into
place. The scriptures memorized in my childhood were
illuminated and plain to me.**

**I left the Meziddo Mission and lived with my friend until George & I
married within the year. We came to Parkminster at the
invitation of Domenic Mancini. We served in various and sundry
ways, George as an elder for 17 years.**

**One particular event stands out as I muse over my Faith Story. I
went to a Missions Conference where Ralph Winter was one of the
speakers. He said, and the words are still ringing in my ears,
"Nothing that you do not do daily will ever dominate your life." I
left that conference resolved to read God's Word every single day.**

**Now I'm down to the last chapter of life. George is gone, and I am
alone, yet not alone, because God continues to speak to me
through His Word, that Word which grows more precious to me
daily, that Word which was introduced over six decades ago at my
father's knee.**

Beverly Evans

**Marian Carson
The Little Lady with the Big Heart**

She has been among us for 32 years, together with her beloved husband Fred until he slipped away 17 years ago. At 92, we call her Saint Marian, because she is always serving our church family in many ways. The prayer vigil is her book of order and she refers to the many needs of our congregation lifting us all in prayer every morning.

Upon hearing of someone's illness or need, small or large, she makes a bee line to her kitchen and there she prepares a casserole, muffins, pie or her great pickles. She adds to each recipe an ample supply of love and prayer. Then she is off to the person's side bringing faith, nourishment and love. Her great garden is planted every year with the church family in mind. She brings each year during harvest time baskets of vegetables from her bountiful garden.

If you sit across from her at her kitchen table for a cup of tea, your faith will be strengthened as she recounts numerous instances of God's faithfulness to her through her long life.

God has gifted Parkminster by her presence among us. She is a great listener and encourager. After all, this woman has seen history being made almost the length of our church's existence. If you ever need a Mom or Grandma, invite Marian to your home for dinner and be amazed by her tenderness. If you want a better description of her, read Proverbs 31 because by knowing her it gives evidence that this is how she built her life.

"Her children rise up and call her blessed", not her natural children, for she has had none. We are all her children as she hugs us and listens to us each week. Praise God that He has allowed her to touch our lives.

.....Beverly Evans, admirer.

MY FAITH STORY

Thirty years ago we left Schenectady, New York, our home for fifteen years, where five of our children were born, where we actively attended a loving church and had made close Christian friends.

Because it had taken us years to develop committed Christian friends, people we could be open and share our lives with, we knew this would be the hardest part of leaving and saying our good-byes. Wondering how long before we would find Christian friends like these.

Shortly before our departure, Ed and I attended a retreat. We shared we were moving to Rochester. A couple came up to us and gave us the name of a Christian couple in Rochester that we should contact. We tucked it away planning to look them up when we got settled.

We moved into our home on a sunny July morning. The next morning we did our banking, called to have our phone connected and on the way home drove by Parkminster Church. We wondered how long before we found our new church family. One half a mile from our home I noticed the name 'Mancini' on a mail box. Isn't that the same name of the couple we were given to look up in Rochester?

When I got home I found the Mancini's name and address. IT WAS THE SAME ADDRESS!!!! With boxes all over the house to be unpacked I took a break and with my daughter Debra we rode our bikes to the Mancini's. In less than 24 hours of our arrival in Rochester, here we were drinking lemonade and praising the Lord together. Their daughter, Ellen took my older children biking around the community and school.

We visited the Mancini's church (Parkminster, of course) and decided this would be our new church home. Before school even started the children had made friends in the youth groups. What had taken us fifteen years to find and develop close Christian friends, took us less than a couple of months.

God had heard our prayers and had gone ahead of us to prepare the way. Our FAITH and TRUST in our Heavenly Father had grown.

NELLIE MORSE

"Emmanuel –God with us"(Matthew 1:23). I can say that his presence has been with me all my life even when I put other gods before me pushing Him aside as I went about my own way. There was always a small voice inside me which kept pulling me back even though I still thought my way was right – was what I wanted.

Then one day God woke me up with a jolt when my husband came home and announced that he wanted to leave and live a different life. The focus of my existence was gone along with my security – my cocoon of marriage. I felt so betrayed, unworthy, tossed aside which left me with little self-esteem. In spite of it all, in my anger and hurt I had the strength to say - "You can take away everything but you can't take away my faith!"

Faith is what sustained me especially during the first few years alone. I knew Jesus loved me unconditionally and I had a caring Father. My eyes and heart were opened to a closer relationship with Him by dramatically "getting my attention with a divorce, bringing me to my knees in despair, and lifting me up as a new person. I became a person who could rely on the Holy Spirit to be with me at all times and in all things.

A few months ago I was faced with urgent open-heart surgery that happened in just a few hours. In my anxiety and disbelief I kept reassuring myself that "God is in control" as the praise song says. With him there was a sense of peace throughout surgery and recovery. Anxiety was lessened often through prayer giving an irregularly beating heart over to him. In his mercy God took care of each small detail.

As the Psalmist says in Psalm 19: 2 "This I declare, that he alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God and I am trusting Him."

Doris Barrows

My Faith Story

Throughout my life one of the lessons that God has taught me is to depend on him and not other people. However, he has always provided people to help me when I really needed them.

I was raised in a Christian home. At a very young age, I learned that Jesus loved me. By the time I reached high school, my faith had become a central part of my life. I was an active member in the youth group at my church. I'm thankful for the youth director, ministers, and Sunday school teachers that taught me the lessons that have been a foundation for my faith. My youth director encouraged me to attend a college outside my own secure circle so that my faith would be challenged and strengthened. The University of Rochester was far enough from Pittsburgh, PA, yet close enough to family in Buffalo to meet the criteria. After graduating from college, I got married and spent about a year living in California before moving back to Rochester.

Less than a year after I moved back, God led me to Parkminster. I had been visiting Presbyterian Churches in Rochester. Parkminster felt like the Presbyterian Church that I grew up in, from the red brick building to the friendly people. Not too long after I began attending, I unexpectedly became a single parent. When the one person that I had depended on left, God provided several people to help me. At the time, my brother was living down the street from me. It was blessing to have him around to help me take care of my two young sons. It was also the only time that I can remember when Parkminster had a small group specifically for single parents. The people in that group helped me grow as a Christian and supported me through one of the toughest times in my life.

A few years later, I moved out of the city to the house that I live in now. God provided just the right neighbors in a neighborhood close to Parkminster. Some of us don't have relatives that live in town. Because of that we have become like family and celebrate holidays and birthdays together. As well as the good times, they are usually around when I need help. But not always. And that is okay. Otherwise I could get too dependent on them rather than putting my faith in God.

There are lots of other examples that I could share. Many times it has been people from Parkminster who were there to help or teach me things that have helped me to live my life as a Christian and a single parent. I am thankful for each one of them and thankful to God for sending the right person at the right time.

As I write this, God is reminding me of the lesson again. The division of Kodak that I work for is going through changes. Through the years I have worked for people who have understood my situation as a single parent and allowed me the flexibility that I needed to take care of my children. However, I can't depend on a company or manager to always provide a job for me. I have to put my trust in God and live the way he wants me to. My favorite verse for times like this is 1 Peter 5:6,7. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." As I look back, I can see that God cares, has lifted me up, and Jesus does love me. I believe that He always will care and continue to provide the right things and people to help when I am in need in the future.

Margie Gartner

Faith Story

Greg Harp

Parkminster Presbyterian Church has been a part of my life ever since I can remember. Our family moved to Rochester when I was three years old and we started attending Parkminster not long after that. My early memories include going to Sunday school, Church and the Wednesday evening Youth Club followed by Junior Choir. I continued to be involved with other kids in the church and when the chance to join the communicants class arose, I jumped at the chance. Since I had not been previously baptized, I agreed to get baptized on the same Sunday that I joined the church, 1978. My family grew more and more involved in the church, so in 1980 we moved to Hallock road, less than a mile away.

1980 was a difficult year for me, a new school system, new friends and the fact that I was a freshman all contributed to a rocky start for me personally. The one thing that remained constant was my attendance in youth group. All of my closest friends attended. The leaders and my friends helped me to negotiate my way through my freshman year. I transferred to a private Christian school for my sophomore and junior year. My involvement in youth group continued and by the time I was a senior, I was thinking about what it would mean to be in full time ministry. I transferred back to Gates-Chili for my senior year and this time my experience was much better. I was able to see how to pray for my friends, the importance of fellowship and I was encouraged to see what God was saying to me about my life. I graduated high school thinking that I was going to college to get an aviation/business administration degree so that I could be a mission aviator. What I discovered in college was how to drink.

I no longer had the support of friends or my church on a weekly basis being six hours away now. Sadly enough, the first people that really reached out to me and accepted me for who I was were the people who liked to drink. I quickly lost sight of my goals and switched majors. After two years of college, I finally quit so that I could devote more time to drinking. I got a job in food service and discovered a new hobby and passion. I started training with a chef and soon became involved in private caterings. I moved on with a new food service company and trained under another chef. He taught me the art of garnishing and how to manage people. Soon he had me as a chef/manager of a cafeteria in East Rochester. While all this was going on, I was also in the prime of my drinking career. My life consisted of work during the day and drinking almost every night. After many friends and family tried to point out my drinking problem to me I finally got a glimpse of how bad my life had gotten. I agreed to attend a weekend seminar about alcoholism with my parents and a couple months later I had my last drink.

I went through an outpatient rehabilitation clinic for alcoholism and started attending A.A. It was after one of the meetings that I learned about what it truly means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. A.A. teaches how to get in touch with a higher power and that we should grow in our knowledge of that higher power. It was easy to recognize that there was only one higher power and that was God. It was also easy to see that I needed to devote every day to following Him. The twelve steps of A.A. helped me to take everything else out of the center of my life and put God there. I also needed to grow in my relationship with God so I looked to someone my family had grown to love, Jack Cleveland.

Jack and I began a friendship that I still have to this day. After a period of discipleship, I agreed to volunteer with Young Life at Gates-Chili and to start attending Parkminster again. It was while I was a part of the Young Life team that I met the woman that would become my wife.

We were volunteering on a Young Life Ski Weekend together and when we returned home, the ice storm of 1991 was in full swing. Tracy was living in an apartment by herself and when her power went out, she decided to call the only person that she really knew in Rochester; me. My family, being avid campers, were all prepared with propane stoves, lanterns and hot food, not to mention a wood burning stove that kept everything toasty warm. Tracy ended up staying with my family for the entire six day power outage, and I discovered a new good friend. Our friendship grew until we got engaged and on May 7, 1994, I married my best friend. We continued to volunteer with Young Life, but took a couple years off so that I could attend school to finish my bachelor's degree. During my course work at Roberts Wesleyan, I was again faced with the possibility of being involved in full-time ministry. I sent out several resumes both in the food service fields and in the direct ministry field. I chose to take my wife and two month old son and move to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For two years I trained with Young Life as a Young Life Church Partner. We enjoyed our time in south Florida, but our hearts were still up north. We heard that Jack was leaving but did not really pursue the possibility of coming back home. I guess we did not want to get our hopes up. Several old friends started calling us asking that we submit our name for consideration. After several phone interviews and much prayer, we decided to move our two year old and new three month old back home.

It has been a long road for me, and I feel privileged to be a part of what God continues to be doing at Parkminster. Seeing how God has used so many people in my life has made me realize the importance a body of believers can have on an individual. My life verse is Romans 8:28 which says that God is able to use all things for the good of those who love Him. My drinking almost killed me, but I have seen God take something that was used to try to destroy me and use it for His purpose and glory. I love being in Youth ministry and look forward to seeing who God uses to influence others in order to bring about His perfect plan.

FAITH STORY

There have been a few times in my life where I have actually heard God speaking. I don't mean that you hear His Word through another person, or that you have a feeling, I mean a clear voice. Maybe you know what I mean. One of those times was about when I first came to Rochester.

My first view of the area was from an airplane window in March, 1981. Kodak had interviewed people on campus at Texas A & M, but I was the only person "stupid enough" to consider moving so far north. Kodak wanted me to come to Rochester for a plant interview. So, on St. Patrick's Day, 1981, at 5:30 p.m., the plane descended through the clouds, and I saw Rochester for the first time. The area was covered with a few inches of new snow, and the plane kept making bank turns, with me on the downward-facing side, as if giving me a personal tour. It was then that I heard this voice inside my head, clear as a bell, saying, "See this beautiful place I have prepared for you? This is your new home!"

WHAT?? *Who said that? The pilot just said the temperature is eleven degrees – can people live in weather that cold?*

I survived the trip. The waitress at dinner that night refused to serve me good old Southern iced tea, bringing me hot chocolate instead. At the end of my interview, my escort gave me a tour of the area around Elmgrove Plant before we went back to the airport. During the tour, we passed some big brick Presbyterian Church about a hundred times.

In August, about a month before my start date, I returned for a week to find an apartment. For some reason, I felt I had to look in the Chili area. Having been active in a local church at college, I knew it was important to find a church home in my new place. For some reason, I felt that Parkminster should be the center of focus. My final choice of which apartment to rent was decided by which was closest to Parkminster.

After moving up a month later, I attended Parkminster for the first time. Upon entering, I was quickly greeted by Nellie Morse. She explained that Debbie, her daughter, was visiting a new church in her new location of Newark for the first time. Since Nellie wanted her daughter to feel welcomed, she was making a special effort to do the same to somebody new at Parkminster.

Over the years, I have grown much at Parkminster, and I have been richly blessed. It was there that I found Helen, my wife. Over the years, God had brought us three wonderful adopted children. And all these things happened because I heard that voice and heeded those words so many years ago.

Peter Bonney

FAITH STORY

God has been with me for as long as I can remember. Even though I have closed my eyes to numerous things, I believe now that God had His hand protecting me and guiding me.

When I was fourteen, I had no idea who God was, but He picked me out of all the children in Canada and had me adopted by a minister and his wife with a huge family. This brought me to Parkminster Church.

Though I had my ups and downs as a teenager and was fighting with everyone, God put His gracious hands over me and led me to a nursing career. God has taught me that a person can do anything with God. God has blessed me with a wonderful family before I got married and continued even after. When I found out that I couldn't have children, God blessed me with three beautiful children, two from South Dakota and one from Rochester. God's hand was guiding me during the adoption of my two older children all the way down to my son's name, which is the name, my husband and I picked out in our dreams.

Over the years, my faith in God has been up and down, but always God has prevailed and shown me that He is with us in all of our endeavors. From finding a permanent home, to a great marriage, to a family, to love, I owe it all to a great and merciful God!

Helen Showalter Bonney

FAITH STORY

When Bev Evans asked me to write a Faith Story, I had to pause to think about my faith and how much has evolved in the life and times of Parkminster over the years. I am a second generation "Parkminster-ite", having been baptized in the old sanctuary by then Pastor Dr. King in 1955 and attending ever since. I can remember many church picnics, Sunday school trips and Christmas Pageants, times of great sadness and great joy.

My faith has taken me on a journey that has never been far from Parkminster; indeed I feel a long and warm legacy of Christian love, teaching and fellowship. Over the years my wife and I have been very blessed by Parkminster. We became acquainted through the Senior High Youth Group and eventually were married at Parkminster. I can remember one night almost twenty years ago standing in the Emergency Room praying with twenty or so brothers and sisters for my five week old son who had a skull fracture. It was a turning point for me to witness such an outpouring of love and care from my church. I was there to see the beginning of Summers Best Two Weeks as we struggled to have the faith to keep a borrowed bus running, never daring to dream that the program would someday become the great outreach it has become. And I have witnessed my own healing and growth through the fellowship and teaching of the leaders in Parkminster; most recently finally taking God at his promise and tithing our income, which has been a blessing many times over. I have been a parent long enough to witness Christian values present in my three children (without my prodding!); a direct result of the influence of Parkminster and God's blessing.

As we celebrate this time of Blessing and Remembrance, believe the best is yet to come for Parkminster. Our rich Christian Heritage has most certainly not happened by chance!

Scott McClurg
2/28/99

ONLY ASK – GOD CARES

It was the year of 1978. My husband and I were with my sister on a month's vacation touring the western states and seeing some of the wonders of nature and visiting relatives and friends. On our trip back, my husband was experiencing chest pains and difficulty in breathing, so we rushed him to a hospital in Brainerd, Minnesota where he was admitted to the intensive care unit with a heart attack. We were there three weeks before he was well enough to fly home.

We had many problems and decisions to make such as: a place for me to stay and get meals – my sister had to leave for New York State so I was without a car – I had to have emergency dental work done – the airlines were on strike in the area – we were 25 miles from the nearest airport – should we fly him home by air ambulance? – the area was all new to us.

I had my prayers answered so many times and in many ways. I found many people of different faiths ready to lend a hand to help us in our hours of need.

The Lord does answer prayers; one only has to keep the faith. All things are possible with our gracious God.

Josephine B. Little

My Faith

I recall as a young child, the stories from the bible that my mother read to me. She planted the seed in me that grew stronger as I got older and understood about how to serve the Lord.

My husband was sick for eleven years before he passed away. My trust in the Lord gave me strength, patience and courage. I knew I had to be strong and be there for him day and night. Together we shared deep feelings for the Lord. We did a lot of praying and reading from the Bible.

When my husband died, I turned my life over to God and asked Him to take care of me. I prayed to God to help me not be afraid to be alone. God answered that prayer and I felt complete peace of mind. His Holy Spirit guides me from day to day and I feel God's presence as we walk together. I give thanks to God for everything and now I live by Isaiah 12:2.

Behold God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my Song and he is also become my Salvation.

**Love in Christ,
Virginia Whiteman**

In answer to "Do I have faith?" I could fill a book as to why I do.

Instead, I will just state the fact that remaining a faithful member of the same church for nearly forty-five years should indicate that I believe the Lord is my savior. He has carried me through many crises in my life and I believe he will continue to do so until He takes me to join my loved ones in Heaven.

Irene Bly

In 1979 my ex-husband wanted a divorce and I was forced with having to move with 5 of my 6 children (my oldest daughter was on her own).

During the worst week of my life I was praying about where to go. One night I told the Lord I'd go anywhere He wanted, but I knew I'd need spiritual help as I had 4 more daughters, all in their teens and my son, then age 10 to care for alone.

The next morning the word Rochester kept going through my mind. I wondered why as I didn't really know anyone here. But then I realized I'd heard Bill Showalter on the radio in Syracuse for a couple of years and I agreed with his teaching. Also I had met several of the Parkminster women a few months earlier at a women's retreat. Young Life was strong here, which proved to be Godsend for my children. And I also had a license as a R.N. in New York State, so better stay within the state, I felt.

At the time my parents wondered why I'd go to Rochester, but have since remarked how well cared for I was here.

So I feel grateful to God for working through this body of believers to meet my need as a single parent through all these years.

My children are all now married - 2 of them with their families still at Parkminster - and I have 12 precious grand children.

Shirley (Merz) Schipper

It was a Saturday afternoon in May of 1961. Lori, the youngest of our five children, was 15 months old. She had been running a fever, for which I had given her baby aspirin. I had made an appointment with Dr. Goss who lived about 5 minutes away on Chili Avenue. He had told me to stop the aspirin since it would mask the symptoms, and he would check her. Lori had her usual afternoon nap, came with me to watch as I peeled potatoes for potato salad for our supper. She asked for a piece of the cold, cooked potatoes. I gave her a small piece and she walked over to the refrigerator to watch her reflection in a chrome strip - a favorite past time of hers. I happened to look over at her and noticed she was weaving back and forth, just about to fall. I quickly grabbed her, picked her up, and noticed that her lips were blue and she was losing consciousness. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was just beginning to be used. I laid her down on the counter in the kitchen and started to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation as best as I could, not really knowing the correct way to do this. I somehow managed to carry her to the dining room and dialed Dr. Goss's number. He responded within minutes. He came running into the house, saw me trying to breathe into Lori's mouth and asked, "What in the world are you doing?" After explaining, he said, "Quick, go get my portable oxygen tank in my car." I ran as fast as I could, grabbed it, started back into the house, then upon seeing my neighbor across the street, yelled to her to come over quickly. Dr. Goss started the oxygen, then called for an ambulance.

My neighbor rode to Strong Memorial Hospital with me in the ambulance, helping to console me as much as she could. The Doctors went into action.

They gave her a shot of adrenaline, and explained they would do a spinal tap. After waiting what seemed like hours, the doctor returned to tell us that it was either spinal meningitis or polio. As far as I was concerned, one was as bad as the other. My neighbor and I went into the room where Lori and another little girl with pneumonia, were in cribs. Lori was sitting up, staring blankly, and not recognizing me at all. I picked her up, hugged her close to me, expecting her to hug me in return, but she didn't respond at all.

When we returned home, I called Dr. King immediately, requesting prayer for Lori. The next day at the worship service Dr. King prayed for Lori fervently during the pastoral prayer. The next day, Lori had a rash, which I discovered when I visited her. I told the doctors about it and they examined her, and said nothing as to what it might be. She was discharged from the hospital. Dr. Goss checked her and immediately recognized the rash and other symptoms as roseola. We were so happy and relieved that God had answered our prayers for her saving from paralysis and possible death.

Needless to say, we gave thanks to God for his healing touch and continue to praise him and thank him for many other times when he has brought our family through similar difficulties. Parkminster has always been there for us. We pray God's blessings on Parkminster and all those who worship there.

Jack and Margaret Horn

MY FAITH STORY

by
Mary Jane Preston

I've been a Presbyterian almost all my life. I went to church and Sunday school with my whole family, and we always went to a Presbyterian church. When John (from Rochester) and I (from Delaware) were married in 1964 we were both from church going families. As far as we knew we were "religious people" and "church goers". Wasn't that what we were supposed to be?

After moving to a little house near Gates-Chili High School upon returning from our honeymoon, we soon began visiting churches. I was pulling for Presbyterian of course. From my point of view, it worked out perfectly that Jane Wilson from Parkminster church came to call on us. She had been John's father's secretary at Kodak, and she had heard about our wedding, so she came to invite us to try Parkminster. Were we praying about this? Were we seeking God's leading? No, sorry to say we didn't really have that kind of relationship with God. But it did seem to be what we were looking for- a suburban church, moderate size, and Presbyterian.

Now, I have mentioned that I grew up in a Presbyterian church, but I also need to say that my parents were so heavily involved in church commitments, that I had told myself and also John that I would never get that involved in a church. I had other things to do. I had my teaching and all my homework. I didn't want all my time taken up doing things women did in churches!

Well, that might have worked, but another part of my character drove me in a different direction. I always liked to be involved in everything- never left out! I was in my high school's first graduating class, and there I had been on practically every committee, staff, and sports team. (O.K. I never made the cheerleading squad!) Before we had been at Parkminster very long we realized that the junior high and senior high fellowship programs had died out, and so we volunteered to start a junior high group. Some of the "kids" we worked with are still around: Scott McClurg, Sandra Jones- Minchen, Ken Avery's brother Bob. During the time we were leading the group- doing all kinds of neat activities- one of the girls had a "religious experience" and was "saved". It drove me crazy the way she talked about "Jesus"! I just wanted her to talk about God the way 'normal' Presbyterians did. I thought that all her talk about Jesus was ruining the group. I got used to her after a while, but as you can tell, I just "didn't get it!"

Luckily God was leading me to himself. I just didn't know it, and wasn't even looking for it. The assistant minister Bob Barcus who took over when Reverend King died started a small group. I wasn't really dying to spend every other Sunday night in a Bible study type group, but as usual, I didn't want to be left out either. John and I joined the group-

another step in the changing of our lives. When Reverend Bill Showalter was called to lead the congregation, our small group was eventually split up to start other small groups- so our intimate experience with the lives of people around us went on and went deeper.

In 1971 when Kirk was a baby, John was elected to the Board of Elders. I was thrilled for this "special position" for him and had no idea of where it would lead us. John went off to a weekend Elder's retreat. Great! That sounded like a good thing to do, and he said it was a very positive experience. Later that week a group of women were at my house. Since we were in a new and larger home and I had no living room furniture, we were using the floor of the room to lay out and make a twenty foot long banner for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church which was being held for the whole country at the War Memorial that spring. Jean Leyland was one of the sewers, and as we worked she was talking about how wonderful the elder's retreat had been that past weekend. She must have been the first female elder! Then she started talking about John and how moving it had been to see him cry. Inside I was going crazy! John had cried? I had only seen him cry when we had to have our cat put to sleep! John had cried and not told me about it! I was furious and jealous! Of course, I acted nice and didn't say a thing to Jean.

When John got home, it was another matter of course, I don't remember what happened, but I do know that I felt alone and deserted and insecure. Where was John going without me? Why had he been unable to share it with me? Was I going to be left behind- in life? -in death? I was scared!

Around this same time the first 3D Group- Diet, Discipline, and Discipleship- had begun, and naturally because of my abiding weight problem I was not left out of it. In our weekly meetings with prayer and sharing I was beginning to get the idea that there was such a need in my life as a personal relationship with Jesus. I could see what it did for others, but I wasn't ready to take the leap of faith that was needed. The meeting that took place that week after the banner sewing was my time and my place. The group met in the old chapel which is where the main floor ladies' room is now. I don't remember how it all happened, but I do remember crying and crying and getting down on my knees during the closing prayer circle. The group members prayed for me, as did the ministers' wives. I finally knew what it meant to have a personal relationship with Jesus!

When I was introduced into the Parkminster congregation in 1996, my walk with Christ got tremendously stronger. During my freshman year at Gates-Chili, David Kuyt invited me to campaigners. That Sunday night in the middle of September marked the beginning of many strong friendships that I will always hold close to my heart. I was accepted by that group with open arms, as I learned more and more about Our Savior. Jack Cleveland became a mentor for me as we started a discipleship to keep each other accountable in our spiritual lives. The Young Life club housed by Parkminster was also the place where I was reacquainted with Mark Paliani. Mark soon became my best friend, and remains a strong brother in Christ to me. God must have known that I needed some friends and fellowship when He brought me into this group, for that is exactly what I received. I became close with others, who like myself, desired to follow God's will and learn more about His Son, Jesus.

My faith story, like many, has only begun. Parkminster has equipped me with many necessary tools which will help me as I eventually grow up into the world. Thank you to my family at Parkminster. You have taken me under your wing, and have nurtured me into becoming a man of God.

Scott Ickes

January 1999

Faith Story

The year, 1972 was a very devastating year for me. I lost both my mother and father within two months of each other. They both had that dreaded disease, cancer. When my two sisters and I found out that they were terminal, we decided to take care of them for the rest of their lives rather than put them in a nursing home. I had the day trick and my two sisters took turns on the night shift. When they passed away, I thought my world had ended.

I was shopping at the Star Market at Westgate Plaza one day, and I ran into Josephine Mancini. She told me how sad I looked and I told her about my situation and she advised me that I should turn to Jesus for comfort and consoling. At the time, I wasn't attending church and I kind of turned away from praying because I guess I blamed the Lord for my parents suffering and I just couldn't understand why he made such good people suffer so. I was mourning my parents very deeply and as hard as I tried, I couldn't snap out of my depression.

The New Year of 1973 was approaching and I prayed to the Lord to lead me back to church and to Him. What better day than to start the New Year right?

I went to church the first Sunday of the New Year, but I still was very down. After church, Josephine Mancini and Beverly Evans came over to greet me and asked me how I was doing. I started to cry and they both put their hands on my shoulder and prayed for me. I felt as though this was a start to my being healed. I put my hand on the Bible and renewed my life to the Lord. From that day forward, I have been attending church regularly.

I still had a lot of healing to do, though, so I started going to Rev. William Showalter, who was the pastor at that time, for counseling. I will never forget the day I went to him. I was crying my heart out and he put his hand on my head and prayed for me and it had to be the Holy Spirit that went through my body like a warm feeling from my head to my feet. I could not shed another tear and my eyes dried up. I repeated that I have released my mother and dad to the Lord and from that day on I have never cried over them again. Hallelujah, I was healed!

Gloria Mattice

My Faith Story

If I were to record my faith story to its entirety, it would go on forever. I believe that each day of my life adds a new page of experiences that have challenged and strengthened my faith. The Lord blessed me with two loving Christian parents who brought me up under Christ's teachings. They taught me of his love at an early age, and they continue to encourage me to abide in Him every day. I remember a Sunday, back in first or second grade, when the lesson was about asking Jesus to come into your heart. The teacher explained it as if you were inviting Him in for dinner, and then allowing Him to live there. I remember sitting in prayer, and asking Jesus to come into my heart; right there in our own Parkminster Sunday school room.

Since that day, my faith has taken many dips and dives. A definite highlight in my walk was my trip to Circle C Ranch. I was just beginning middle school, and I decided to recommit my life to Christ. Although from then on I spent much time worrying about the future and God's judgement, when I reached high school, I learned about God's tender mercy and love.

The trials that I have endured have strengthened my faith. Growing up with a mentally retarded brother has blessed my life in tremendous ways. It has taught me more about myself and more about my relationships with others. Throughout high school, the relationships that I have held with friends, boyfriends, teachers, and relatives have also been difficult, yet they are beginning to become more purposeful each day. "The ways of the Lord are without fault..." It is merely up to us to wait patiently to find out what God's will is.

My Faith Story would not be complete without this verse which is truly dear to me..."Trust in the Lord, with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

Libby Doughty

I was blessed to grow up in an intact family who valued their Christian commitment and tried to live it out while in service to the church. Throughout the 1940's and 1950's in Buffalo, NY, my father packed the family in the trusty Kaiser and later, the Nash, and drove across town – there were no expressways in those days – to a small Baptist church where we learned the Scripture verses, sat under serious preaching during Sunday morning church and evening evangelistic services, and – upon confession of belief in Jesus – received full immersion Baptism in the church's in-house baptistery. For me, it was in December 1959 when I, with pounding heart, "went forward" to express my faith in Christ.

The 1960's, however, were difficult years for young Christians. The decade was full of protests and upheavals and drugs and raucous music and war and the media-fed God is Dead movement. Though I never fully abandoned my faith, it went dormant for a number of years as the world pushed inward and took my attention. I went about building my own construct of life, which in due time, came crashing down around me. Having things my own way left me lonely and broke, and with a dim and uncertain future.

I came to Rochester in 1974 to work at WHAM radio. On a lark one day, after buying a book in a Christian bookstore, I asked the clerk to name five good churches. She thought hard and slowly recited five names that I copied, one by one, on the bag of my purchase. The fifth one was Parkminster. I decided to call each church and speak to the senior pastor, asking "Why should a person like me attend your church?" In each case except one, I spoke with the senior pastor and received a warm invitation along with good reasons to attend his church. The exception was Parkminster. The then-secretary, Jane Wilson, explained that the pastor was unavailable but that I could meet both he and his assistant at a Thursday evening Bible study. Jane's voice was kind and warm, and as she spoke, I pictured her smiling. Figuring a Thursday Bible study would allow me an easy, if not distant, evaluation of the church, I chose to give it a try.

Bill Showalter and Bill Thompson, the ministers at the time, were teaching from the book of Hebrews. Never in my adult life had I heard such compelling instruction from intelligent, committed men.

Using a team-teaching style, they deftly handled Scripture, prayed passionately, and cared for the sizable group that gathered in the East Hall. I knew this was a special church. As time went on, I counseled with Bill Showalter who helped me to uncover and deal with serious flaws in my relationship with God and with other people, and who led me through much confession. And with that, life began to change.

In not too many months, I met Sandra Jones, whom I married in September of 1975- with Bill and Bill officiating and urging – in no uncertain terms – obedience to God's call. Flawed though I was (and understanding that now more than ever), I prayed and tried. And God's mercy was evident. Employment improvements soon followed with a job of growing responsibility at Xerox, making it possible to own a home nearby. The ties to the church only strengthened when a pregnancy complication led to the loss of our twin boys, and Carol Showalter ministering to our untold pain as no other person could quite do.

Then came the birth of our three sons (one at a time), each one joyously baptized here at Parkminster, which was also the solid home we turned to when memorializing Sandra's father, Harold, as he went to be with "my Lord," as he used to say.

Such solid footing is very difficult to establish anywhere - even a church. It takes a holy place with dedicated Christians who are open enough to allow God to work with them, creating servants as He wants them to be. Not many people, in my experience, choose to actively listen to God to hear their shortcomings, receive forgiveness and move closer to Jesus. But Parkminster has been such a place. And because of it, hundreds of people over the years have deepened their faith and come to clearly understand and answer their calls.

To me, my faith was enlarged, enlivened and enriched through the unique ministry of this hallowed place. Without it, I have no idea what would have become of a once lost man named Dan. Quite honestly, I choose not to think what another path might have meant.

Daniel C. Minchen

My faith story begins with Parkminster. My parents, committed Christians and Charter members of Parkminster, faithfully brought my brother and me to church each week. Some of my earliest memories include Vacation Bible School with Edna Thorp as one of my teachers. I remember Bev Evans (Mrs. Evans) telling the Easter story with her flannel board and cutout pictures, and Sixth grade Sunday school class taught by Dom Mancini. I eagerly looked forward to each week.

As a high school student, I sang in the adult choir and attended the Sharing/Prayer group led by Carol Showalter in the library on Tuesdays after school. There were summertime church picnics, Wednesday night Lenten potluck dinners, Christmas caroling door to door for elderly church members, and junior and senior high retreats to Cenacle House and Hillside.

It was here at Parkminster that I met and married my husband. This church celebrated the births and baptisms of our children, and mourned with us the death of my father. Parkminster has been my extended family—always there; people who care about me and love me. My life experience has formed what is a bedrock belief in me: that our church family is just that - a family. These are the people we share our joys and sorrows with. The people that we share a common history with. We walk through life together.

There have been many changes at Parkminster over the years. As a church, we've shared both happiness and pain. We watch the children of our church grow up. Some people have left our church family; others have been added. We've changed, and we grow. We've seen God's faithfulness and blessing both individually and corporately.

Just as we need the support and security of our family, we also need the spiritual support of our church family. God has blessed my family and me in countless ways. So many of our blessings have been through people here—this body of Christ.

I am so grateful to God for His many blessings and especially for the blessing to be part of this Church Family. Truly, my faith story could not be told without it.

Sandra Minchen

I have many vivid recollections of my first involvements with "the Parkminster church at the corner of Chili Avenue and Pixley Road." I can recall Dr. King leading us in the "pledge of allegiance to the bible" during vacation bible school. I can still picture the great patience of Mr. (George) Evans teaching a Sunday school class of us as sixth graders. I remember Conrad Morgan, the leader of Boy Scout Troop #258, who was not only a great scout leader, he also sang in the church choir!

Through these involvements, despite the fact that my parents were not involved in the church at that time, I decided in 1962 to participate in the church's confirmation class. Only now do I realize how significant that decision and its timing was. I cannot recall any details about the classes. They were held in the old social hall. I do remember, and will always treasure the resulting life-long relationship with the instructor, Domenic Mancini. Mr. Mancini clearly taught us from the scriptures and a real personal relationship with Christ.

One weeknight, during our preparation for confirmation, Mr. Mancini visited me and a friend, who was also in the class, at my parents' home on Chestnut Drive. That night Domenic, on his knees with us, led me and my friend through the sinner's prayer to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As a 13-year-old, something new and eternal was begun in my life.

Now, as a 50-year-old, I can look back at that decision and my involvement in the programs at Parkminster and realized the impact that they had and continue to have in my life. My youth group leader, Ron Starkweather, remained my friend until his death last year. Many of my closest friends from that youth group remain my friends and are serving God in many ways across the country. I met my wife at Parkminster. Our first two children were dedicated to Christ at Parkminster.

In 1974 we left Parkminster to follow God's call on our lives to be elsewhere. Now, 25 years later, we have returned, slightly gray and older, with two more children, to Parkminster. Who knows what God has planned for us? We do know, however, that God is faithful. He began showing me his faithfulness when I knelt with Domenic Mancini in 1962.

Tom Haschmann

We are back at Parkminster after a twenty-five year absence; and this church is part of many milestones in my life. My childhood was in the city, and I always remember believing in God and seeking to follow Him. Parkminster came into the picture in my sophomore year of high school, after we moved to Gates and I came into a more intimate personal relationship with the Lord through Young Life in 1968. I met my husband, was married, and had the first half of our family here. As a matter of fact, one of our earliest dates was doubling with Bill and Dorcas Thompson. Many of this church's members in the early seventies were very kind to us. Parkminster was quite a busy place. We housed hippies and orators, fed street people and rock stars...all through Parkminster.

What has brought us back recently, after searching for two and one half years (left our church of twenty-two years in 1996) is how impressed we have been with the LOVE of the leaders and the people for each other. We sense health and balance here, respect for the gifts of all people, humility and authority, and a lovely intertwining of the liturgical, evangelical and charismatic. We look forward to discovering the Parkminster of today.

But, how can I limit a "faith story" to "one incident when God met me at my time of greatest need"? He intervenes every day, every minute! Most recently, though, I have been struck by His great and gentle kindness to me surrounding the death of my father on August 29, 1998. For months before, I had been meaning to write Dad a note, just thanking him for some things and apologizing for others. I had put it off due to busyness, but finally got around to it the week of August 17th. In addition, I had wanted to spend more time with my dad. He was not ill; I just felt the urge to spend some time with him,

and therefore found substitutes for myself for Friday, August 28th, so Dad and I could spend the day together. We had a great time. My daughter, Amy just happened to drop by the place we were, so she got to see Gramps on his last day on earth. The next day he died peacefully napping in a rocker outside under the Magnolia tree, after feeding the birds. On Christmas Eve, Amy found an audiotape with Grandpa's voice on it. On New Year's Eve, a total stranger came up to my husband and me; he looked to be about the same age as my dad. As he stretched out a friendly hand to shake, he said, "Hi, I'm Sam Pilato". That was my father's name! We turned out not to have any relatives in common here, but his Rochester ancestors hailed from the same towns in Sicily as mine had.

Perhaps the above comforts are not earth shaking. But to me, they signify the loving attention to detail that our alert and involved Father employs as he daily rains down his compassion.

Barbara Pilato Haschmann

My Faith Story

As a charter member, I well remember walking over planks to avoid the muddy terrain in order to get into East Hall. Reverend Herman King was our Minister. He was Uncle Herman to most of us.

After being neighbors to the Mancini family for ten years, my husband was transferred to Mexico City for a while. There I witnessed untold poverty like few of us can imagine. Thus I became interested in Missions.

My circle friends helped with projects for Lily Pinneo's work in Nigeria. I was in charge of tearing bed sheets and rolling them into bandages. I have washed hundreds of medicine bottles, prepared enormous amounts of greeting cards by putting Bible verses on them.

God has been good to me for over 90 years and is still guiding me here at the Presbyterian Home. I have plenty of time to recall past pleasant church memories.

I deeply miss the regular visits of Lily Pinneo and Dom Mancini.

Ruth E. McLaud

When I look back at what this church has meant in my life, the first thing that comes to mind is the extreme highs and lows of the events that have occurred over the last ten years. I was born into this church in 1970 and grew up in an incredible environment where I was cared for by so many people that it sometimes felt like my family included a few extra dozen grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Almost all of my best friends were at the church and a large number of my most vivid memories from childhood occurred on the grounds of Parkminster. The church was a family then, just as it is now, and if there was any problems that were growing in the church, I didn't know about them and if I did, I probably wouldn't have been too concerned at my age.

I didn't yet understand the impact that change could have, at least not when it came to the church. The church and everyone in it had always been there for me, and as far as I could see, nothing would ever affect that. The timing of what happened in the early 90's could not have been much worse for me. Being away at college for most of those years, I missed a lot of the day to day happenings in the church and at best, usually got any information second-hand and after the fact. I knew the vote concerning the church's future was coming, but I know that I still believed that somehow this wouldn't change the life I had known for so long.

You can imagine what a shock it was to my system, when not only my parents left the church, but so many of my friends and their families as well. I attended Parkminster for a little while longer, but with all the change that had happened, I just didn't know where I was supposed to fit in. This led to me eventually deciding that I needed a new start and I left the church to attend elsewhere. I can vividly remember what a dry time this was for me. My life still involved many of the people I had grown up around, but now we were scattered to so many different churches.

It was soon after this change of churches that I met Cheryl. We dated long distance for a while after college and eventually she moved to Rochester so that we could decide if marriage was in our future. We attended church together and it didn't take her long to sense how displaced I was feeling. When we decided marriage was definitely in our future, the question presented itself as to where the ceremony would be. The more we talked, the more it became clear that there was only one church in Rochester that had any real meaning for us. Through much prodding, Cheryl finally convinced me that my heart was still at Parkminster where it had always been.

With apprehensive hearts of what the future held, we returned, leaning only on a faith that God knew where he was leading us. The questioning looks that I had expected were not there, only people asking how I had been, and who was this lovely girl with me.

It has been almost five years now since I returned and a lot has happened. We are so happy to be a part of this church family. Cheryl and I have been able to share so many important events in our lives with all of you, from our engagement and wedding, to the births of Elizabeth, Matthew and Jonathan. It has all happened so fast, and it has all been just as God planned it.

I am so glad that we have pursued reconciliation and renewal as a church, and for all of the joy that has been returned to our body because of that. To look down the aisle on Sunday and see my wife, three children, my mother and father and my sister and her family, is not a picture I would have imagined eight years ago when our church went through such tough trials. I think we have realized the importance of what the church body truly means and I am glad for the opportunity to share our hopes for the future with all of you.

Kirk Preston

My Faith Story

It is so strange the things that we remember. I have this picture in my mind, of being a young child – maybe three or four, and walking to church with my family. I still can see the route we followed when I close my eyes. I am the seventh of eight children so we made quite an impressive picture. On this particular day that stands out in my mind, I can distinctly remember thinking about God as we made our way to church. I don't remember exactly what it was about God that I was thinking, just that He was in my wonderings. For some reason, this memory has always been so clear to me. It has stood out as a reminder to me that we are never too young to know the One who created us.

The next memory I have involving anything to do with God occurred three or four years later. It has to do with a decision I had to make that I struggled with. At the church, my family and I went to, two very big events would take place that next year for me. The first being, that I would be old enough to be one of those children allowed to ring the bell before the service. I had been waiting for so long to have this honor. I dreamed of pulling hard on the thick rope connected to the bell in the church's bell tower and being pulled halfway up towards the roof simply from the power of that bell. The other grand event that I longed for was the opportunity to have my oldest sister teach my Sunday school class. I adored my oldest sister, and I was thrilled, proud and excited to think that I would be in her class. With so much to look forward to, the decision to try another church became even more painful. The decision or the need to make a decision came after my other older sister, Chrissy, started attending a different church. It was a non-denominational church down the road and very different from the First Congregational Church we attended. Chrissy loved this new church and she came home telling such neat stories about Jesus. I started becoming curious. She talked about having a relationship with Jesus, about being able to talk to Him anytime we needed to. She said He'd always be there for me. Everything she told me was so different from the things my Sunday school class talked about. Then came the day that she asked me to go to church with her. I went through such agony. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to give up the bell or Sunday

school with my oldest sister and yet, I knew even then, that I wanted something more. I remember making the decision standing outside my old Sunday school classroom. Outside the door, my teacher had posted the lesson plan for the following week, "John the Baptist". Suddenly I knew I didn't want to learn about John the Baptist again. I wanted to learn more about Jesus! That decision as a little seven-year old changed my life. The next summer during Vacation Bible School at my new church, I stayed behind class with my teacher, Nancy Dickinson, and asked Jesus to come and be my Lord and Savior. He has been ever since. Over and over He has proven His faithfulness to me even when I have been so faithless. Even when I doubted, He held my hand and guided me to the best way. He led me to Young Life in high school and surrounded me with friends and leaders who encouraged me to grow. In my Catholic College, he helped me find a small and struggling, Intervarsity group that further challenged me in my walk and eventually helped introduce me to my husband, Kirk. When I moved to Rochester, Jesus proved faithful yet again. He led Kirk and I back to Parkminster Presbyterian Church. When we first started back things felt bleak, there was so much healing to be done, but God has again been so faithful. Almost five years later, we find ourselves a part of a church body that supports and cares and encourages us. The amazing part is that this story can have no ending. God isn't finished with me yet. Looking back at His unfailing love and guidance in my life, I look forward with hope and joy in discovering all He has for me.

Cheryl Preston

Brownies in the Bushes

A Faith Story by Michael Kuyt

"Time-goes-by-so-slowly-and-time-can-do-so-much, -are-you-still-mine?" The Righteous Brothers song "Unchained Melody" was playing on the radio as I drove to the hospital. I began to really wonder, if my young wife who lay unconscious and unresponsive now for days on end was to be called up to be with the Lord or would she still be mine. I thought back to two wonderful Christian men who had received prayers for healing from the entire church, but were not healed. I believed God could heal her, but would He?

Faith, is the hope in things unseen and yet to come, but where does our faith come from? What is it we should hope for? I think sometimes God gives us answers directly, but often it comes through others around us serving as witnesses of God's grace and provision. This is where fellowship in a church body is so important.

Many questions filled my head. How would I cope with her dying, if that were the way things went? How could I hope for a healing, when things looked so bad? What would it be like if she were permanently and severely disabled?

When I arrived at the hospital, Pastor Monty Burnham, was there as he often was. We went in to the ICU where Julie was. She was on a ventilator to assist her breathing. A hole had been drilled in her skull with a tube put in to allow excess blood to drain from the massive cerebral hemorrhage she had experienced in her head. There were so many tubes and wires attached to her that it seemed it would take less stuff to launch the space shuttle. The doctors were not encouraging.

Monty prayed for healing for Julie, and he prayed for my children and for me. He was a great comfort, in a time of great need. He also shared with me on a very personal level about his first wife who died at a young age of cancer. I think it was difficult for him to talk about it, but he wanted to encourage me in a way that the world does not understand. It would be difficult, very difficult, but even in death, God would provide for your deepest needs. An inner joy would remain, knowing that your loved one was with God in heaven and that you are loved too. God's provision goes way beyond our earthly bodies, He is much greater than that. Monty was a great blessing. He was, it seemed, at the hospital every day.

My friend Jim Gibney, was with me one day when things went especially bad. Julie's body temperature was very unstable. In addition to all the other stuff she was hooked up to, they put her on a water mattress with a machine that circulated water through it. When her body temperature went down, the machine made the water warmer and visa versa. Also, that day, the lady two cubicles down, who had a similar problem, died. I passed her husband in the hall. He looked up, but didn't say anything.

The pain I felt inside was beginning to be too much. The not knowing and uncertainty of the situation was wearing on me. Day after day, I was on the edge, not knowing from moment to moment. I was beginning to have trouble maintaining hope for a healing, yet at the same time she did not die. I told Jim I needed to move, I couldn't stay still, so we began to walk.

Jim had crushed his heel in an industrial accident a few months earlier and was still in the process of recovering. I could see his pain with each step we took and I believed he could see mine. We walked and walked a long time. He encouraged me and told me there was always hope. He told me that with all the stuff he'd done in his life he should be dead a bunch of times by now. If it was God's will for Julie to live, she would.

We came to a large mansion on East Ave with a beautiful flowering tree in the front yard. I stopped and told Jim that I needed to do something, to take some action, even if it was by most accounts silly. I couldn't just do nothing anymore. Jim always carried a pocket knife, so I asked for it and walked straight into that big yard and cut a branch off the tree. I remember thinking that I hoped I wouldn't get arrested because then I might not get to Julie in time with the flowers. We walked back to the hospital with that scrawny branch with flowers on it.

The nurse wouldn't let me bring the flowers into where Julie was because they were concerned about bacteria in the ICU. After some discussion with the head nurse, they finally let me bring it in, if it was wrapped in aluminum foil. I think she began to understand that I was on a mission with this stupid branch.

I set the flowers down next to Julie and said a simple prayer. "Dear Lord, I don't know where she is, but tell her I want her back,... please. Amen." I've always exercised a sort of economy of words in my prayers, keeping them short based on a belief that God doesn't need me to be babbling on. With that prayer and action taken, a remarkable renewed sense of hope for a healing came over me. A small step in faith taken with the encouragement of my friend Jim, made a huge difference. From then on, I knew that nothing was for certain, but there was hope for healing.

On another day, I was at home to spend a little time with my children. Mary Jackson, at church, had organized different people to bring meals to my house each day for awhile. I happened to look out the window, when I saw Chris Doughty coming up the driveway. I opened the door and she was coming up the walk with her daughter bringing food. Chris was carrying some brownies on a plate. It's funny, how you remember some details so well. They're not always the things you'd expect to remember.

She looked up at me, her eyes told a big story of their own. She understood very well. Her concern and compassion was so complete, that she apparently lost track of what she was holding and the brownies slipped off the plate and into the bushes. That was one of the nicest things anyone ever did for me.

FATHER GOD...YOU ARE ABLE!

ABLE; Having or possessing sufficient power, skill, or resources to accomplish an objective.

In March of 1994, I was reading these words from Dick Eastman's: A Celebration of Praise when God spoke to me more clearly than I had ever experienced before. It was as if He were sitting right next to me.

First, a little background. Jeff and I are blessed to have three wonderful children, each of whom have many special characteristics and talents. One of them though, is challenged with a variety of developmental disabilities. When Mark was just two years old, we began testing to see why he wasn't meeting typical milestones that other toddlers his age had already surpassed. Over the years we have come to realize that Mark had difficulty with auditory processing, has been tested to have a low IQ, has a tremor in his hands that makes writing and fine motor skills difficult and has ADHD. Basically, what that means to Mark is that just about everything in life is a lot harder for him to accomplish.

From a mother's perspective, at least from this mother's perspective, it is almost like experiencing a death - a death to the hopes you have for your child to be successful in life. Those feelings reemerge every time I hear how lonely it is for him to be different or sit through a school conference telling of his recent evaluation. I am moved to tears just writing this paragraph.

Well, back to what preceded my special encounter. Mark was in Cub Scouts at the time and was participating in his first Pinewood Derby Contest. We had allowed Mark to do most of the work on his racecar. It was shiny green and Mark was very proud of his creation. To me it didn't look nearly as sleek or aerodynamic as the other cars. I secretly had wished we had been a little more involved with the project. But, as we would say, "It's not what is on the outside that counts, but what is in the inside that really matters," and Mark's little green racecar took first place!

The next morning, as I was reading about one of God's attributes... God spoke to me saying, "Yesterday's race victory was for Mark and I am going to take care of him!"

Heavenly Father, I am so overwhelmed by the love that you have for us! To think that the Creator of the universe would help a little boy win a race and address his mother's fears about his future. So I hold on to that promise that God gave to me, knowing that He is ABLE!

Patty Willit

We Have an Amazing God!
by Denise Moore

All of my married life, I have been fearful of staying alone all night in the house. Perhaps it is because I never had to live alone before I was married, but I was terrified to be by myself. Needless to say, whenever Ken had to go out of town on business or on campouts with his Boy Scout troop, it caused great distress in me and sometimes in our marriage. Here is an example of how God met me in my need.

In 1985, Ken was the scoutmaster of a special scouting troop. The parents of these physically and mentally challenged boys were always very supportive. The guys in the troop were drawn to Ken and he to them. Of course, what would boy scouting be without campouts and trips? That year, the committee decided to take an eight day trip to Disneyworld, Florida. We couldn't afford for Brian, age 4, and Aaron, age 1 and myself to go with the troop, so I was to remain home with the children. The closer the date came, the more fearful I became. For some reason I never voiced my concern to Ken. I knew there was nothing he could do about it and it would just make him feel badly about leaving us for eight days.

About this time, I saw an advertisement on the TV about the all new "talk radio." This was a new concept at the time. To get people to listen to the station, they were running a promotion: an all expense paid trip for a family of four to Disneyworld! As I watched that commercial, something inside me said, "Enter that contest. You are going to win a trip." Part of me felt very foolish for doing such a thing. Another part of me was confident of what I heard. I figured I had nothing to lose, so for the next two weeks I listened to talk radio all day long. I wrote down the ten clues, sent in 15 entry post card (5 each of 3 days), and prepared to listen each of five days to see if my name would be picked.

On the first morning, Ken was getting ready to leave for work when they said they would announce the first winner. He decided to humor me and hang around. I figured maybe on Friday they would call my name. However, mine was the first name announced! It was truly hard to believe and confirmation that I had been given a gift from God.

More important than winning, though, was the faith lesson in it for me. I really believe that God was blessing me for not putting a guilt trip on Ken.

My fear was real. I could have easily fallen apart and begged him not to go. This was God's way of saying, "Well done. You can't go with Ken and the troop, and you will have to stay alone for eight days, but I will redeem the time that you've lost together and bless you with a trip to Disneyworld for the family." I wish I could say that I had victory over my fear and I never had a problem with staying alone again, but that isn't true. I still struggle with being alone to some degree. However, each time something went wrong during that week and I wished Ken were home, or when I couldn't get to sleep at night until I collapsed from exhaustion, I knew God was with me and I could anticipate our five day trip to Disneyworld about eight weeks later!

Nothing is impossible for our God. He cares about every detail of our lives, even a young mom afraid to be alone with two children for eight days. Since then, each time I have struggles in my life, I can look back at this event and other times when God has shown His faithfulness, and remember that nothing is too big for God to handle or too insignificant for Him to bother with. We have an amazing God!

I've been given many blessings in my life - loving family and friends and a life filled with more good times than bad. But when my little boy was born I realized the extent of these blessings. Through the miracle of birth, my husband and I were entrusted with the very young life of another. What an awesome responsibility and privilege. And to whom did I owe thanks? Of course to our wonderful and loving God. I wanted to show Him how much I appreciated his kindness and love towards us. I realized that it was not enough to be thankful in private. I needed to be surrounded by people who loved God also. I needed to start a walk towards a closer relationship with Christ. The Bible says: For none of us lives to himself alone. (Romans 14:7) It was time to seek out a place of worship to praise the Lord who had so abundantly blessed my life.

I chose Parkminster Presbyterian Church. At first it was difficult because I did not know anyone, but after a few years I am so thankful that I'm here. My walk with the Lord is still in progress and the many wonderful loving friends I've met here are making it more meaningful. Jesus said, "Love one another as I so loved you." (John 15:12) I love my church family and feel so loved in return.

Becoming a Deacon has accelerated my walk with Christ. I know that I'm not the perfect servant - I'm still working on being generous on every occasion, but helping and loving others and the fellowship with others, is to me a wonderful way to worship the Lord. In my bible reading to help me write this faith story I came across a verse that so clearly sums up all that I have been trying to say. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. (2 Corinthians 9:11,12)

Pat Romanowski

God The Rescuer

Thump Thump Thump. Thump Thump Thump.....

The L-train of Chicago's mass transit system shook the bridge overhead. I was alone. My pockets were empty, my soul was empty and my dreams were failing. I was on my way to meet friends. I would have to be resourceful if I was going to make it to the place where I was to meet up with these friends. The harmless streets I once dreamt of soon unveiled its darker, much more sinister side. The relentless grip of fear had tightened its already firm stronghold upon my heart.

I was exhausted and confused, sleep deprived, traumatized and the effects of the drugs I had taken all contributed to my finding myself walking across a busy intersection during a heavy thunderstorm. Within a few moments I had four police officers wrestling me to the ground. I was transported to a local hospital. My pride and ego continued to collapse as I sat in the hospital unable to think clearly. I believed that I was God.

I was given the choice of going to the Cook County jail, the local jail or remain under care of the psych ward. Fear led me to choose the mental hospital.

Eventually, a nurse called my father. I granted permission because I thought my dad would be unable to impact my situation, my life, and that he would just let me be. Instead, my father flew out the following afternoon. One of the first questions he asked was if I had ever given thought of Jesus. When he asked me, it was so peaceful, like water for a thirsty soul. The broken machine in my head was given a moment's rest. It seemed like years since I had last felt so well.

To God be the glory. Praise the Lord Jesus. Unsearchable are His ways. I am saved!

Seiji Nakatani

We have been members of Parkminster since 1968 with about a 10-year interruption from '77 to '87. Like many others, we had sought a different church where the theology was more in line with our own traditional evangelical values. It was our teenage boys who drew us back mainly through the ski club and Young Life activities. The boys have grown up and left Rochester for other opportunities but Sue and I remain a fixture here.

What has touched me the most lately is the forgiving and renewing power of God as is evidenced by the healed relationships we have experienced over the years and even as recently as this year.

One thing that has frustrated me is the wonderful relationships we have developed only to have them turn out to be short term. So many outstanding people have passed through Parkminster over the years that we have bonded with only to have them move on. The flip side of this is that wherever we go when we meet Christians, we feel an immediate closeness because of the Life that we all share.

Special memories for me include the group of people that decorated my first dental office with me, painting and papering into the night getting ready for my "Grand Opening". They also provided punch and cookies for my open house. These wonderful friends followed through by bringing their kids to me and thus supporting me in starting my practice. What better way to show God's love than to help someone else succeed? Thanks to all of you who helped me.

I personally have experienced both physical and spiritual healing at Parkminster through the power and authority of Jesus Christ, and am happy that we are now emphasizing healing as a way of life. We are all in constant need of a Touch from the Savior and that is being proclaimed and made available to all who will partake.

Charles A. Lowell, DMD

I found Parkminster church in 1968 after being married to Chuck for two years, and having recently moved back to Rochester, my hometown.

I recall a time when Chuck was very ill with a temperature of 104 degrees. I called Pastor Showalter at 2:30 AM. He and Carol immediately came to our apartment and prayed for him. Remarkable healing took place and his temperature dropped to 100 degrees while they were still there.

The Lord blessed us with three sons who were baptized at Parkminster, one during a blizzard when there were just a handful of people in the church but what a blessed time that was! The boys received Sunday school lessons, where they learned of the love of Jesus, which is central to their lives today. Praise the Lord.

During the years that we were attending another church, we had a crisis with one of our children and people from Parkminster heard of it (through my mom and the prayer chain). Old friends from Parkminster came over to pray and be with us throughout that difficult night, even though we were away from the church at that time.

Over the years we have found that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Praise God.

God has made it possible for us to have a cottage on Canandaigua Lake for 21 years now. It has been a blessing to us and we have felt the Lord calling us to use it as a ministry. We have been able to share it with many others, Christian and non-Christian alike, and have been able to serve Him in this way.

Even when I had been lacking in faith during a recent crisis in my family, God was faithful to give me the desire of my heart.

My mother (Edith Williams) was a member of Parkminster and her Christian life and witness were important and key to my family until she went home to be with the Lord in February 1998.

Susan W. Lowell

The Faithfulness of Parkminster's People

Parkminster is and has always been a place where people, by God's grace, walk by faith in Christ. I am one of many people who have been blessed by the faithfulness of many people that have been a part of Parkminster.

This story begins with my parents who faithfully participated in the fellowship of this congregation. They continue to love and serve God today. By living out their faith at home and with this congregation, the lives of my parents pointed me towards God. Some godly examples to me, when I was younger, were youth leaders, pastors, and other church members. These mentors included George and Beverly Evans, Dom and Jo Mancini, Bill and Carol Showalter, Harold and Clarice Blair, Cork and Cindy Rosenberger, and so many others. When I was a teenager, I was challenged with the gospel by the leaders of the Church's youth ministry. They encouraged me to attend Camp LaTourneau on Canandaigua Lake. It was there that I accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, and began my walk of faith in Him. One of the people who had encouraged me to attend LaTourneau has recently visited Parkminster with his family. He is now reunited with this congregation.

Each pastor whom God has called has served a purpose in my life. I have benefited from the ministry of these pastors. At one particular low point in our history, I became so discouraged that I was determined to look elsewhere. We packed the family up and attended another local church that coincidentally had a guest preacher that Sunday. His sermon exhorted us to accept the church leaders God has called to lead us. The preacher hammered away, in that familiar charismatic manner, at those sitting in the congregation whom had fallen into the sin of rebellion. At the conclusion of the sermon - you guessed it - he announced an alter call. At that point, I obviously felt that I had been caught in a serious trespass, and thus trudged forward to seek forgiveness. That was the beginning and end of our church hopping days.

God has recently called Parkminster to hold healing services on a regular basis. We began this during a Session retreat meeting. During that very meeting, I was touched in a special way. I prayed that God would do some healing work in my mind, and that many more of my attitudes and thoughts would conform to Him. When Pastor Votaw made the sign of the cross on my forehead, it was as if the cross of Christ was penetrating into the depths of my mind. I felt that He was beginning to transform me by the renewing of my mind (Rom. 12:1,2). This healing process has continued to bear fruit in me. The very first healing service we conducted in the sanctuary, was held on Pentecost Sunday. The healing service was marked by thunderstorms and high winds that allowed us to experience what the first Pentecost may have been like.

Is it too much to expect that as long as his people are faithful to Him, that He will continue to preserve Parkminster as a place where His faithful people gather to receive His blessings? Certainly not!

by Ken Avery

Three Stories of God's Faithfulness
Letting Go and Letting God Take Care

I have three stories to tell of the faithfulness of God and the awesome power of this congregation's prayer. Parkminster has benefited for as long as I can recall, from the ministry of prayer ... at any time there is a need, there is a willing flock of prayer warriors, ready to lift up your needs and present them before God. I believe this prayer chain ministry has wrought many miracles... three of which concerned the births of our children: Timothy, Jennica, and Matthew Avery.

I'll begin with the birth of our first child, Timothy, on August 1st, 1981. After a tough labor and delivery, Ken & I were delighted as the nurses handed us our beautiful son. It wasn't long before the doctor noticed that he was developing a severe case of jaundice, and his bili-rubin count had skyrocketed to such a high rate that they had to hospitalize him in the Special Care Nursery. For the next 5 days, Tim was placed under double bili-lights, with only a diaper and sunglasses to protect his eyes (bili-lights are high intensity lights that act like the sun's rays to reduce the amount of jaundice to a normal level). After two days, and no sign of improvement, I was discharged from the hospital without Tim... and I was devastated! It was the most difficult thing I've ever had to do - to trust God and let go of this precious bundle of mine. I cried buckets all week as I struggled, watching his bili-counts rise, and doctors' reports that Tim was only getting worse. Ken and I drove back to the hospital as often as I could, to nurse him and pray for him, but I was getting so worn out!! By day five, I was a total wreck, and throw in the normal postpartum blues.... lets just say it wasn't a happy time for me. Ken had been keeping our prayer chain busy with updates of our sad situation, and I was beginning to see that I had to surrender Tim over to God's protection, and trust Him for the outcome. At 11:00 PM on the evening of the 5th day, we received a call from the doctor, telling us Tim's bili-count had risen to such a dangerously high level that they were planning to do a complete blood transfusion within the hour, unless it came down substantially! That would involve removing all his blood, drip by drip, and replacing it with a donor's blood!! I was terrified at this news, so we immediately called our Assistant Pastor, Tom Witter, to ask him to pray for Tim. He not only prayed, but within 1/2 hour, Tom drove all the way up to Highland Hospital and was at Tim's side, asking the doctor if it would be permissible if he laid hands on Tim, anoint him with oil, and pray for his healing. Well, the doctor said, fine, but time was running out. If the levels continued to rise, without intervention, there would be a concern of possible brain damage. So Tom administered his healing prayer with

oil...and within the next 1/2 hour, the doctor called us to tell us that a miracle had happened!!! Tim's bili-count had fallen dramatically to a level that was lower than when he was admitted to the hospital, and he was not going to need a blood transfusion after all!!! Matter of fact, he was released from the hospital the very next day and came home with us!!! Tim's doctor was in awe!! The amazing healing power of our pastor's faithful prayer, and the prayers of our church friends, was a real testimony of God's love and care for Tim, and a cause for great rejoicing for all who witnessed this miracle!!

My second story is about the birth of Jennica Joy, on March 24, 1984. After a much less difficult labor and delivery, a beautiful baby girl was placed in our arms!! In my mind, I was already planning how joyous it would be to come home with this wonderful bundle of Joy!! But God had other plans for us....another test of my ability to "Trust Him and Let Go" of our baby, believing that He would take care of all our needs. Within 5 hours after Jennica's birth, the head nurse in charge of the newborn nursery came to my bedside and told me that they were concerned about a problem Jennica was having. She was repeatedly turning "Blue" if she wasn't touched or held, and with the huge boom of babies in the nursery, there weren't enough nurses to give her the constant monitoring she required. So, they asked permission to send her by ambulance to Strong Memorial Hospital's Newborn Intensive Care Nursery where they could put her on a monitor and check her over carefully to see why she was having these "Blue" periods. So, at 5 hours post partum, both Jennica and I were discharged from Highland and she was rushed to Strong Memorial Hospital. Ken and I followed the ambulance and they wheeled me up to the Newborn I.C. Nursery, where they began sticking probes and needles into her tiny little body!! Once again, I was instantly thrown into a state of panic. Ken reassured me that people were praying, as he had sent a prayer chain around as soon as he got word from the Highland nurses of her condition. Jennica's every function was lovingly monitored from the moment she arrived at Strong. They kept her there for 5 days. I went home to recuperate as best I could. With the loving care of my family, Ev and Nancy Sahrbeck's pastoral visits, the Deacons' food, and constant prayers for Jennica's health, I somehow managed to get through that time. I tried to visit her 2-3 times each day. The nurses wondered why she even needed to be there, since the monitors were all silent, and she seemed just fine. All the same, they were delighted to have such a healthy, robust baby to pass around. They saw no signs of any "Blue" periods from the time she arrived at Strong. I was sure then, that the prayers lifted up while she was in transport did the trick. The doctors told us that she had a small developmental glitch in a valve that is between the aorta and the pulmonary artery. This valve had not closed completely at birth, so her heart pumped unoxygenated

blood at times, hence she was turning "Blue" till she was touched or awoken. The doctor suggested that the valve problem must have been resolved (healed) during the trip between the hospitals, since she never showed any signs of this problem while at Strong. They monitored her for 5 days, just to make very sure she was safe for us to take home. Finally she came home, a perfectly healthy baby girl! She never had another of those "Blue" periods again. As you can imagine, there was much Joy and celebration in the Avery house on that day!

My third story is about the birth of Matthew on April 30th, 1989, which turned out to be the biggest surprise of all. I had gone into labor and was settling into a nice routine of breathing through my much practiced "hoo-roo" routine as I lay in the hospital birthing room. Everything was going perfectly...I was finally able to get the private Birthing Room, and we had a real nice set up. My labor was going along textbook perfect, I even had control of my breathing, a first for me!! Ken was getting excited as things were really beginning to progress. A young intern came in to check me, to see how well I was doing. He hadn't checked me once since I arrived about 1 1/2 hours earlier. After checking me and confirming I was 7 cm. dilated, he yelled out "STAT" and never let go of me, as he and about ten other doctors, (who instantly appeared out of the woodwork), careened my hospital bed as fast as they could possibly go, down the halls to emergency! They told me the baby's cord had prolapsed just at that moment, and they needed to do an emergency C-section to try and save the baby before my next contraction. I quickly consented amidst a flurry of doctors, needles, gas masks and the weight of my babies life dangling in the balance. It was all over in 15 minutes flat!!! They performed an amazing feat and saved Matthew's life. The very next contraction could have left him brain damaged or dead, for it would have cut the cord's supply of blood off. By God's grace, the intern who checked me got there at just the right time to catch it, and was able to physically hold back the baby, till the medication they delivered to me took effect, and halted my contractions!! Phew!! That was enough excitement to be in an ER episode, but it was a real live event!! I still can't believe how calm I was in the midst of this crisis...I suppose Ken was praying harder than he had ever prayed before. He didn't have time to do much else!!! The next day, the intern passed me in the hallway as I slowly walked down to the nursery. He turned and came up to me, put his arms around my shoulders and just sobbed!! He was so moved by what had happened with Matthew's birth. He had never been through anything like that before, and he was so happy that Matthew came out of it alive and well. The doctor told me later, with a great deal of emotion, that I was a very lucky mother...since they don't usually catch them in time as they did with Matt. He had delivered other babies

with prolapsed cords, with much less fortunate endings. I told him we were simply blessed by God's tender loving mercy, and very good timing on the interns behalf!!!

In reflecting back over these three stories, I am impressed once again with how much we depended upon the prayers of our friends at Parkminster to pull us through these times of crisis! As I watched Tim's bili-count drop, when Pastor Witter laid hands on his tiny body and prayed; and as Jennica's "Blue periods" faded, even as she was being rushed by ambulance transport between hospitals, and the prayer chain was lifting her up; and lastly, how God was able to provide for Matthew's miraculous safe arrival: I know God answered the prayers of our dear friends who lifted our needs up to the Lord. We have so much to thank God for! He has shown His great love and faithfulness to us through the wonderful prayer support of our friends at Parkminster. Praise the Lord!!

by Corinne Avery

MY FAITH STORY

In my late forty's, it started with my wife, Arlene asking the Lord to come into her life. Being a catholic, I thought she had gone to another religion, so I would have no part of it. I was born a Catholic and I will die a Catholic, said I. My wife and her girlfriend went to New York City (since I wouldn't go) to a Katherine Khulman healing service and there met a couple from Sweden (missionaries) and invited them to stay with us until their VW bus came over on a boat. When they came, I got laid up on the family room couch with back trouble of which I have had a lot. The Swedish couple asked me if I would let them pray for me for God to heal my back. (I really thought they were spaced out). Since I couldn't get off the couch I consented and after the prayer he told me, everytime I have a pain to say "Thank you Jesus for healing me." I thought it was pretty wacky but what did I have to lose. So I did. The next night I slept for the first time in three nights, woke up in the morning with my back completely healed. That was the start of FAITH working in my heart and it wasn't long after that I joined my wife in becoming a born again Christian. From that time on, I began studying the Word of God (the Bible) and I still am to this day. Praise God for not giving up on me even though I was so stubborn.

Since I have been at Parkminster, I have been blessed at the early morning men's prayer meeting by having my level of faith raised by watching answers to our prayers materialize. God honors the effort that we sleepy eyed men make to get together and pray for our Pastor, our congregation and one another's burdens. Quote: "Where two or more gather together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them". I have also felt God's hand on me through the prayers of the people in Parkminster when I was in the hospital going through my physical problems.

Praise God that His word works.

Ray Puff

What a challenge to write and distill a continuous faith story in a few paragraphs! I think that perhaps the problem lies in being female. The Lord had to help me to briefly describe some of the high points that He wants written down, so here goes.

I was saved on March 9, 1973 at 2:00 pm as a result of one of God's handmaiden evangelists who "Just happened" to drop by. She left after ministering and leading me to Christ. Soon after, I heard an audible voice coming from I knew not where. The voice gave me direction, and called a halt to a close call I experienced of culminating a divorce. Praise God forevermore for His miraculous perfect timetable regarding our marriage..! God warned me of the voice of the enemy who subtly whispered "incompatibility...not much in common...different backgrounds...different temperaments, etc. etc. etc." But God had something wonderful in His plan for my husband and my life together. It unfolded gradually. I can't say that it was easy; most challenging, to say the least, but as stated by God to the Apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient". I hung my hat on this scripture, I prayed, and then prayed some more! The flesh doesn't want to give up easily. I am still learning, and will continue to learn until my Lord takes me home to glory!

One of the unfortunate experiences, which proved to be a real stumbling block to my walk with the Lord happened before I was born from above. I dabbled very lightly in the occult which involved astrology, numerology, dream interpretation, handwriting analysis, and had my tea leaves read on occasion, never dreaming that it opened a wide door for the powers of darkness to torment and have their way with my life. However, when God sent a pair of Swedish missionaries our way, who had recently traveled from the Canary Islands to America, (which is another wonderful faith story, which eventually led to my husband's salvation) the Devil was unmasked, and wonderful deliverance took place. Bless the Lord, oh my soul! We have been privileged to lead many others to freedom as a result of our experiences. If we give the Devil a silly millimeter,

he will take a mile every time! Our faith grew, knowing the faithfulness of our Lord to always be there during great trials. We are aware, according to the Word of the Lord, that He will always be with us in the trials, but not necessarily deliver us from them immediately. My Lord had helped me to grow more during hard times, than with the cruising seasons. With faith "as a grain of a mustard seed" our family and friends experienced healings and deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't think that there is anything more exciting and faith building, than to see someone healed in front of your own eyes. Many times these eyes witnessed great miracles of deliverance and healing from giants of the faith but when it happened personally, it was awesome and exciting, just to be aware that God can work through anyone, anyplace at anytime. Praise the Lord!

Our experience since we first attended Parkminster church in October, 1997, had been most interesting and edifying. Our hearts melted into koinonia with the congregation whom we love so dearly. After a brief period of two months attending our new church home, an unfortunate accident happened. A patch of ice found my foot while walking in Big Lots parking lot, which resulted in a hip replacement. That surely changed my busy lifestyle into a more sedentary one, to say the least. But God, showed His love and concern through it all, and I experienced His wonderful faithfulness to me. It was probably the first time, that I was on the receiving end of needing physical ministry. It was altogether overwhelming to receive so much attention and love from the congregation, i.e. food, favors, visits, prayers and more prayers. It brought me through a hard place in my life, when discouragement was doing a good job of enticement. My faith again took another giant leap knowing full well that God was in full control and leading my steps, even though a nasty hip problem appeared on the horizon. He was lining up the next step of the journey. The telephone was an undeniable asset for communication and prayer. More time could be given to the study of His Word, where the busyness of the past took up too much time from this important and crucial habit. A higher level of compassion for

others with the same affliction developed. God surely knows what methodology to use to accomplish His purpose to develop the special motive gifts for each of His children.

The Lord has convinced me to never look back, which can be likened to a canceled check, nor live in the future, which belongs to God, because I would surely miss the blessing of the NOW. Worry and fear are most effective, I think, when we meditate on the past or the future. It takes enough mental and emotional energy to live in the present. There have been times when I got out of focus. I've been shown that I should focus not on what I do not have, but on the blessings I do have, and also to not focus on a problem but on God's promises and solutions.

It is wonderful to be able to have a life style of rejoicing, praising and thanking God for His constant intervention and also for the saints at Parkminster, who have given loving support and input in the lives of my husband and myself. I consider it grace, mercy, love, and faithfulness all wrapped up in one wonderful bundle!

God's blueprint for our lives is laid out in His Holy Word. My favorite scripture is Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy flesh and life to thy bones". In conclusion, I believe that the Lord flashed a thought of His reminder to me in Romans 1:1, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." I can't please God without it!! (Hebrews 1:6)

Arlene Puff

FAITH STORIES - PARKMINSTER

Over the last 13 years that I've lived in Chili and the last 18 that I have tried to follow the Lord, He has worked many, many miracles as John said "...even all the books of the world couldn't hold them..." In the following pages, I'd like to document just a few, starting with the involvement Parkminster has had with the AA community in Chili... This "missive" will go back beyond that time and into some current for personal stories of faith....

"His Hand in AA"

Currently, at Parkminster, there are four AA meetings each week (thank you)... Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday are open to all and Tuesday is a women's meeting... That makes 208 meetings a year as we have them no matter what... If you average 35 people a meeting, that makes 7280 people coming to meetings each year and if you figure 2 hours each, that is 14,560 hours!!! That is almost two years of sobriety each year for people who formerly suffered greatly... This amounts to 145,600 hours over the last 10 years. Your openness to our Fellowship has brought rewards you cannot see but are there!!!

"Bible Study Salvation"

Another part of your contribution to the Lord is the Thursday night Bible Study (actually misnamed AA Bible Study as it is open to all and is not associated with AA)... We have been trying to bring God's word to anyone who wants it on a simple and personal level. We have studies on forgiveness, faith, prayer, a Gospel each year and many other topical studies... This study will soon enter its 4th (!!!) Year and most importantly there was a personal salvation along the way... Two people were married in your church in 1998.

I have several personal stories I'd like to share:

"God Started My Car"

A number of years ago, in the middle of winter, I was having a particularly difficult day and decided that what I needed to do was get out and go to one of my AA meetings... My car, parked in what looked like a snow drift, needed cleaning off. When that had been accomplished, I climbed in ready to go - but the car wouldn't!!! The battery was deader than the skunk by the side of the road. I was not happy and not in a AAA mood (although I'd sure have had the letter A covered that day!!!)... I went into my house and up the stairs to my special prayer place and informed God of the situation and that I wasn't happy... I felt this small voice say, "Go start the car".

Out I went, BUT I stopped by the hood because that is what you do when the car doesn't start. Right??? Lift the hood??? Well, that little voice said, "Trust me." I passed the hood and climbed in. I turned the car and listened to the Pontiac Grand Prix resurrection!!! God had started my previously very dead car and I was off to my meeting and believe me, I did tell that story!!! Oh, until the day I sold that car, it started every time!!!

"He Even Uses Sparrows"

I was asked one day about my faith in the Lord. I was told this person felt I had a lot of faith. I had to make a major correction in that idea. I have a very small faith in a great God. What he wanted to know is how to know if God exists. I muttered something about, "...then you wouldn't need faith..." but realized he was searching. I told him to pray that God show himself in a way that there is no other explanation...I had to explain that I also meant to let God decide how that would be and no "If I win the lottery..."

He prayed the prayer and few days later, at work in a tool and die shop, a sparrow flew in the window. The others tried to kill it by hitting it with various projectiles, but my friend said he felt bad for "that dumb bird" and didn't know why...All attempts at "sparrow-cide" failed and my friend was relieved. BUT, there was one problem, the bird was still in the shop. He went over to where the bird was perched high in the rafters and held out his finger. The sparrow flew down onto his finger and let him take it to a window and release it!!!

He came to believe!!! God even uses the sparrows for His purpose...

"The Little Boy Lived"

A friend who knew I prayed, and asked for prayer for the son of two PhD's at RIT who didn't believe in God contacted me. Their son had been seriously injured in a car crash and the parents were told to "make arrangements as he won't make it through the night." We hit the prayer trail, spreading the word...That day the little boy had many prayers sent to the Lord for him... The next morning HE WOKE UP from the supposedly deep and final coma and said, "I want to go home." The doctor told the parents in his whole medical career he'd seen nothing like this and there was only one explanation. There had been a miracle of unexplainable proportions.

"God the Orthoped"

My friend, Bill, had been seriously injured in a skiing accident, tearing his ACL (it's a ligament in your knee and I'd never spell it right, soooooo)... We prayed for God to do some orthopedic surgery on Bill's knee...A couple days later at a retreat, while still on crutches, Bill noticed his knee felt very, very cold!!! He had his son touch his knee and Steven could feel it too...Bill sensed God was doing something...Yup...Bill went back to the doctor and they did and MRI and pictures showed that where there had been a major ligament tear, it was fine!!! God was an Orthoped that day!!!

"Broke or so I Thought"

I have two checking accounts, God's and mine. One month I ran out of money way before I ran out of month. I was going to use some of God's cash for me as I needed \$325.00 fast and I did not want to try the "Bank of Dad"...Something inside didn't let me do that and so reluctantly, I trusted...When I let go of something it usually had my fingernail marks on it!!! Just before the end of the month, and I was losing sleep - so you see how well I trusted - a check arrived from the US Government for \$326.00...I had made a mistake in my taxes. I think the extra \$1.00 was God's way of saying, "See, I can meet your needs and more..." Plus He probably had a good laugh...

These are just a few stories of how God has worked in my life and has used Parkminster to help me in my faith journey. Hebrews 11 says that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, conviction of that which is not seen." But, sometimes He lets us see His handiwork....

John Stanley

It was a balmy spring day in April of 1968 when I looked out into the congregation to see a couple very obviously not from the inner city. With his legs crossed over, the top one out in the aisle and his petite wife beside him intently listening, and a yellow legal pad sprawled across his knee I knew instantly we had a member of the Parkminster Presbyterian Church pulpit committee visiting our church in Bridgeport CT. This was Duncan and Alice O'Dwyer, and this was the beginning of our journey to Rochester to become the senior pastor of Parkminster.

And from the moment we arrived in Rochester for our first visit until the day we drove away 17 years later God had a part of our hearts and our lives, for better and for worse, and there was a bond that would not be broken. And relationships and friendships were formed that have continued in a deep and wonderful way these many, many years later. We will never regret any moment of the journey where God did such healing in our own lives. It was really like a marriage....it was a deep commitment, it was so incredibly joyful, it was so very meaningful and yet it very definitely had its sad points. As the years have gone on the memories have solidified in our hearts and become more valuable.

Here are just a few that we would share:

The fact that Parkminster had called another man who on the eve of his preaching for the committee was told by God in a prayer that he was not to take the pulpit...that He had someone else for this church. I was choice #2.

One of the first small group meetings where Betty Schuman's swollen leg went down right before our eyes as we were praying.

The beginning of the Parkminster Preschool and the hiring of Sue Furhman who still serves so faithfully in that call.

The incredible friendships of Bill and Dorcas Thompson and Bob and Joy Barcus as we served together those many years.

The year of the Leighton Ford crusade in Rochester and all of Parkminster's participation in that event.

The summers we all took fresh air children from New York City and came to understand the love of God in a new and wonderful way.

The Bible study classes on Wednesday morning's that filled the East hall.

The beginning of the 3D program which this year celebrated it's 25th anniversary and all the involvement of the church in watching that ministry effect lives all over the world.

The New Year's eve dinners....sometimes with over 200 people attending and sharing what God had done in their lives.

The people who passed through our lives there in that church that are now in heaven waiting for us to join the great army of saints.....Fred Schuman, Jerry Frazier, Ron Ardizzone, Ed and Doris Carey, George Evans, Barbara and David Steinmiller, Ed Morse, Hazel Rugg, Norma Harmon, Walt Garnham, and many others whom we never would have known if it had not been for our Parkminster years. What a joy it will be to see them all again.

And the joy we have now as we see the children of the families we served going on to serve the Lord in Christian ministry-- the Kirk Prestons, the Greg Harps, the Matt Odmarks, the Michael Kulkins, the Jon Evans, the Jeff Furhmans, just to name a few that are close by. And we suspect there are many, many more.....too many to mention.

Recently I baptized the two children of Andy and Pam McGaan (Pam O'Dwyer) in Chicago and Duncan and Alice sat in the congregation smiling and I praised God for that day he sat in our inner city church in Bridgeport CT and made the recommendation to the committee that I be called to Parkminster.

We could write on and on about our 17 years as part of your family but most of all we want to say thank you for being there and for

inviting us to share our spiritual journey with you. And even with all we remember we believe the best is yet to come to the Parkminster family as you have remained faithful to your call in Christ Jesus.

Very sincerely and with much love,

*Bill and Carol Showalter
January 12, 1999*

MY MEMORY OF PARKMINSTER'S MINISTRY

A number of original Parkminster members came from the First United Presbyterian Church located at 131 Plymouth Avenue North. Some of those members were: Sanky Mullen, George Dinsmore, Walter and Jane Wilson, Hazel Ruqq, Norma Harmon, and Catherine Morris. These were a few of the many dedicated people that helped me with my faith.

A number of us from the Chili and Gates area joined the group who came from the downtown church and became charter members of Parkminster. For our family, Parkminster became the place where our faith was challenged and started to grow.

In 1960, a small prayer group was formed and met regularly to pray for the congregation expecting God's work to increase in our midst. Gradually we were experiencing a growth in God's presence with an air of expectancy.

After our beloved pastor, Dr. Herman King passed away, we began to pray that God would send the person He wanted to lead our congregation. God answered by sending us Dr. William Showalter.

It was not long before there was an increase of the Holy Spirit's presence in our midst. People were helped and a number of ministries brought encouragement to many. One of these was the Stephen Ministry Program where about forty people were trained in person to person ministry on a long term basis. Dr. Showalter had a radio program which challenged many to faith in Christ. Carol Showalter wrote a weekly article in the Gates Chili newspaper posing challenges to readers and answering questions that readers sent in. There were times when many Parkminster people went door to door within a half mile radius and invited people to church.

One morning standing in prayer before the chancel, I had a vision. People were entering the sanctuary filling the pews and then leaving by going through the cross to many parts of the world.

As Dr. Showalter would say, "The Best is Yet to Come".

Domenic Mancini

My Journey

Where to begin? My life has been blessed in so many ways by Jesus and His love for me. Let me share with you one life changing experience that has strengthened my faith and demonstrated God's love, power and presence.

My wife, Mary, and I along with three of our four children (Tom, Jim and Marianne; our eldest son Paul was married) became members of Parkminster on Sunday, October 8 1973. Just six days later Jim fell down the basement stairs at home and was seriously injured. A phone call for an ambulance was immediately followed by a call to Bill Shewalter. He appeared within minutes (at 1:00 am) to comfort and pray with the family. After returning from the hospital, I remember walking with Bill down the middle of the street in the middle of the night. I experienced love and peace as he prayed for Jim and ministered to my needs.

Jim died at 7:30 the next morning. He was just nineteen. Our sadness and sorrow in the loss of Jim was profound and seemed that it would never end. The strength of our faith was tested as never before. We then experienced many wonderful things: our family drew still closer together (a closeness that exists to this very day!) Parkminster members demonstrated a depth of love, support and encouragement that was almost beyond belief and Bill and Carol Shewalter enveloped us in love and care that brought comfort and hope. They helped us realize that God is in charge and that He will meet our every need ~ even in times of great sorrow. Our family became active in the life of Parkminster and were blessed in many ways by Christ's love lived out through the church family.

I had things left unsaid to Jim when he died so unexpectedly. It grieved me deeply. Needing help, I turned to Bill. He talked and prayed with me and encouraged me to write a letter to Jim telling him all my unspoken thoughts and feelings. I wrote the letter while secluded in a home at Brewster on Cape Cod. It took a week. I wanted the letter to be "just right". When I presented the letter to Bill, he said, "I don't want to read it. The letter is between you and Jim. He now knows what is in your heart. Now tear it up!" Yes, I had indeed talked with Jim. He knows how much he is loved and how much he is missed.

My spirit is no longer heavy and without hope. The love of God has touched my life throughout this loss. I am blessed.

Tom Doughty

FAITH STORY

When I think back over my life, I can see a series of lessons the Lord taught me on trusting Him. I grew up in a Christian home and cannot even remember when I first accepted the Lord. I do remember going to see the Billy Graham film, "A Man called Peter", about Peter Marshall, and standing up in my seat afterwards in response to the altar call. My mother said, "Sit down! You've already done that!!!"

Anyway, I was always active in church in the choir, youth groups and even teaching Sunday school to the little kids. I asked the Lord's direction on a number of things and He always answered me in a way I could understand. Sometimes my answer was in the form of a "fleece" I had asked for, and once it even robbed me of seeing my boyfriend (now my husband) when I prayed that if we were really supposed to stay together, he would call that weekend. Well, he had been planning on coming down to surprise me, that weekend being a special ceremony at my nursing school, but then he pulled guard duty (he went to a military school) and was unable to come, just to call. (And I didn't even get to talk with him— he talked with my grandmother, but he did call, and I considered that my answer.)

Fortunately, my faith matured over those years and I don't have to ask for fleeces any more, but the Lord was always faithful and patient with me in them, just like he was with Gideon and He has continued to teach me. The lesson that made the most impact on my life happened when I was pregnant with our son, John. Our daughter, Peggy, was three then and she loved to run down the steps and jump off into my arms, usually without much warning. Well, every time she did that, I'd have cramps and I became concerned that I was going to lose my baby. This went on for several weeks. I was reading Catherine Marshall's book, Beyond Ourselves at the time and I came to the chapter on the prayer of relinquishment. I understood that to mean that God loves you better and knows what you need better than you do or anyone else does, either. So, whatever you are concerned about, just give it to Him and He will do what is best. Sometimes the answer isn't what you had wanted, but it's still His best for you at that time, because His knowledge is infinitely above yours. "Relinquishing" your problem somehow frees the Lord to act and so, believing that He loved my baby even more than I did, I "gave" my baby to the Lord, and THAT WAS THE END OF MY CRAMPS!!! I never had any more!!!

I have given a lot of things to Him since then and always there has come a peace. God made me more aware of my worrying about things when I should be trusting Him instead, like the time I found myself checking and rechecking the locks on windows and doors when Ed was away on a business trip and then realized that I needed to do it just once and then trust God for the rest. What I was doing indicated that I was not trusting Him at all. I have learned that it is a choice not to worry, like when I was concerned about our son driving home from college in snow storm and decided that I had to turn off the radio and its incessant road and weather reports and turn on Christian music instead so I could better keep my mind on the Lord and trusting Him.

"Let not your hearts be troubled"...it is a choice. When our daughter wanted to go on a mission trip to New Guinea (and before that when she went to Haiti), I had to choose to give that situation to Him, or I would have been so much more concerned about what might happen. When she and her husband lost almost everything in a fire and the Lord used what happened afterwards in a miraculous way to redirect their choosing that instead of worrying brought about seeing how He again "worked everything out for good". (Romans 8:28). Right now, when their home in Pennsylvania has not sold for almost four years and they are living in a mobile home with three children back up in Northern, NY, where their house burned, the Lord has continually supplied their needs and He has enabled me to choose to trust Him through it and not really be concerned about them.

Ed and I have seen three of our parent's die, but have been able to see some good in all of it. Right now I have a dear aunt that has been diagnosed with terminal cancer; she first got cancer when I was a baby(!) and has had it so many times since that, it's unbelievable. My one reaction is that I am grateful that she has had the years she has. The Lord is a gracious God; He has brought me thus far and will bring me out on the other side still trusting Him, I am sure. He has shown again and again that He is able and worthy of my trust in Him. I KNOW that whatever happens He can use it for good, making us more like Jesus and that is what is more important than anything else.

As I read over what I wrote last week to make sure it was okay, I realized that I need to add a postscript: Our daughter and her husband have at long last received a written offer for their house in Pennsylvania with no contingencies and a pre-approved mortgage!!! And the amount is higher than the amount they had decided would be the lowest they would accept. Again, I praise the Lord for that and for His faithfulness to them through this difficult time. (And for the trust He has given me through it, and probably because of it, as well.) Several other details have fallen into place as well and only the Lord could manage to arrange all that....PTL!!!

Pat Brooks

My spiritual journey, in relationship to Parkminster, began with a struggle with God about our future — teaching or the ordained ministry. Through Peter Marshall, a pastor then in West Dennis, we talked with vacationing Bill Showalter at a time when Parkminster was looking for an Assistant Pastor. Fred Schumann, the chair of the Search Committee, was also on the Cape, and so we had the chance to talk with him as well. Neither could guarantee anything except an interview by the Committee in Rochester. Believing the Lord was in this, I turned down a teaching position that same day and trusted Him to lead Dorcas and me. After visiting Rochester, I was offered the position, and so for the next year and a half, juggled a pastoral position, a full-time schedule at Colgate-Rochester, and helped rear our two-year old daughter, Rebecca.

The nine years we spent at Parkminster have been the foundation for everything I've done since as a pastor. Because of the tremendous blessings of those years, it is impossible to write about them with any justice. I learned from Bill Showalter how to pastor and received permanent benefits from his "on-the-job training". When the pastoral staff increased to include Bob and Joy Barcus, our cup overflowed! The love and friendship of the Parkminster "family" enriched us so much there is no way of expressing that either! Looking back, I remember a sense of vitality and life during those years. There was so much: the skits we put on after our church dinners at the Country Club; the planning and leading of retreats at the quiet Cenacle House in the city; long, long session meetings!; elder-deacon breakfasts; cleaning up "flood-mud" around Painted Post; wonderful services of worship and glorious music; Fourth of July Picnics followed by fireworks' viewing in downtown Rochester; small group sessions and the closeness we learned; early morning men's fellowship in the library; sermons sweated over; Bible studies taught with Dorcas; visiting members with elders and deacons climbing hospital stairs all over the city; youth retreats. If I had the space, and you the patience, I could tell of a thousand memories of love built day by day that still exists so vibrantly in our hearts.

My life was deepened and broadened at Parkminster. Our family life was strengthened. Our marriage was blessed. My confidence in God's faithfulness was made surer. My love for the Church, for God's people, was increased there. My love for Jesus grew during those blessed years.

I was uncertain when we moved on. How could we function without the Parkminster family? God showed us, however, that the work he had done in us was permanent and so we moved into a new ministry. We found a new part of God's family, though not a replacement!, in Lambertville, New Jersey where the Lord continued His ministry in and through us. I'd like to share all that He did there – but that will have to wait until we honor Him for all He has done in Glory.

Now we are in Florida where we thought we would retire! Instead God, knowing the senior pastor here would resign, brought us for further service. I read some place in the Chronicles of Narnia that one of the children "had not yet learned that the reward of service to the King is more service".

So, may God richly bless our celebration of His faithfulness. May we always lean upon God's mercy in this journey we are on together. We thank God for you upon every remembrance of you and in our hearts have never left you!

Bill Thompson

On my spiritual journey, with all of its twists and turns, I've always had the recognition that the Lord God has been with me, working out His will in my life and in the life of my family.

God so ordered my early years so that I learned of His love as a child and was taught how to love Him and His Word. I didn't always live out what I knew! But I was still grounded in my faith, a resource that has been increasingly significant, as I've grown older.

Bill and I met at a church function in Boston and from the beginning the basis of our love was our commitment to Christ. He was an encouragement to my faith and together we began to seek ways of serving the Lord. Our daughter, Becky, was born on Cape Cod where Bill was teaching, and we continued to seek God's direction for us as a family.

Before coming to Parkminster, I knew that God had called me to serve Him, but I certainly never thought it would include being married to a Pastor! Personally, I had "other plans", but God profoundly spoke to me one day in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, while Bill was in turmoil concerning what God was asking him to do. God gave me the strong conviction that Bill had a call to finish seminary and become a pastor. That meant then, I was called by God to serve Him as a pastor's wife.

Shortly after, we met Bill and Carol Showalter through Peter Marshall. Through a series of events, we joined the staff of Parkminster in 1970. What a privilege it was to serve there for nine years! With the help of the Showalters and a very loving congregation, I came to love being a pastor's wife and serving Jesus that way.

Bill, Becky and I have many, many rich memories of Rochester. We experienced the joys of new life and growth in the church and much happiness at occasions with the church family at Parkminster. We saw transformations in many lives that only Christ can bring. It was a stretching experience – a spiritually alive one, as I too learned more about a deeper walk with Christ Jesus.

What precious memories we have! Inner healing; personal support through difficult times; women's luncheons with special speakers; opportunities to attend and lead retreats; fun times like the New Year's Eve Service and the "Afterglow" fellowship; preparation for wedding receptions (and all the funny things that happened); Parkminster's Anniversary Celebration; Bill's Ordination; international dinners; the family Becky had with the Barcus and Showalter kids; Bill and I teaching together. And to think, I'm mentioning only a few!

There were times of grief such as lost relationships through death. Yet for me, our decision to leave Parkminster was among the most painful of my life. However, it was life giving as I came to realize that my permanent relationship with Jesus Christ was what I could always cling to. It was an essential step in our lives. Yet it was with a price; the deep sadness of separation from those we still love so dearly. However, such grief was a catalyst for us to grow in the recognition that God is sovereign - over all and in all. And we still retain you deep in our hearts!

What we experienced at Parkminster equipped us to go on to a happy and fruitful 16 years in Lambertville, New Jersey. We certainly knew problems but we had great opportunities to draw on the resources we had gained from the past. I was richly blessed by years of teaching in a Christian school in that area as well as being active in a full ministry with our congregation. I wish I could tell you of those years of God's faithfulness! Our new ministry in Florida at the First Presbyterian Church of Vero Beach has as its base what God taught us from our family at Parkminster, enhanced and deepened by the Body of Christ in New Jersey. How marvelous it is that God continues to build up His children and use them for His purposes.

We look forward to the time when we, His completed "works of art" will be reunited in Glory and share forever what He has done for us here.

Dorcas Thompson

My Faith Story for Parkminster Presbyterian Church

My husband, Dave, and I were members of Parkminster Church for over 21 years. We joined when our middle son, Jonathan, was just a little over a year old, and were members until our youngest son, Thomas (not yet born when we joined) was headed to college. Our lives were touched and changed in countless ways through the ministers, staff, and membership. Currently, we are tremendously blessed to know that our oldest son, Greg, is serving Parkminster with his wife, Tracy.

When we first started to attend, we had just moved to Chili from Rochester. We wanted to find a church home in the Chili area. For six months, we tried many of the local churches, attending some for only a week, staying at others for up to three weeks. Each time, however, we moved on, sensing that something we needed was lacking. We were beginning to become quite discouraged about finding a place we fit when a neighbor, Lois DeLapp, told me about a Women's Bible Study she had attended at the imposing brick structure on Chili Avenue. She said the minister and the people seemed very serious about knowing and following God's will, and we decided to give Parkminster a visit. We felt something special as soon as we entered the building, and the spirit-filled preaching of then senior pastor, Bill Showalter, clinched the feeling. We attended only Parkminster from then on, and soon formally went through membership classes and were accepted into membership.

During the years at Parkminster, we participated in more events than we can remember. There was the choir, Men's Chorus and Boy Scouts for Dave; Sunday School, Youth Choir, Youth Club, and Vacation Bible School for our growing family; and lots of ways for me to become involved; from the Bible Study, to starting a Women's Book Group, to teaching, serving luncheons and serving on church committees.

Eventually, I served on the Session. I also went through the 3-D program and an outgrowth of it, Mother's Group, with Thom.

A special bond grew among the members as we learned together how to live the Christian life more fully. Although we've now become active in another local congregation, we have come to feel that we will never again have the kinship with so many people that we have with those we came to know and love at Parkminster Church. Literally all of our closest friends remain those we first knew at Parkminster. We will never forget all the pastors and wives whom ministered to us so kindly and lovingly over so many years. Bill and Carol Showalter were always there when we needed them, and even sometimes when we didn't know we were in need - such as the day when Carol showed up at our door with a homebaked banana bread about the time Thom was due to be born. Bill and Dorcas Thompson, Ev and Nancy Sahrbeck, Bob and Joy Barcus - all served in their own unique way and all shared their love and special gifts with us. We still camp every summer with three other couples we first camped with when Bob and Joy led a camping group every summer.

Thank you, all, current and former members and staff, for all you did to enrich our lives and to demonstrate with your lives the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Lovingly and prayerfully,

Sheila Harp

Little "c" - Cancer, Big "C" - Christ

All my life I had been afraid of getting cancer. My mother's father died a horribly painful death of colon cancer, in our home, when I was 10 years old. My father's mother died of stomach cancer and many other relatives had also died of cancer. So, when I found a lump in my abdomen in January of 1982, I feared the worst. By the time the cancer was finally diagnosed, 3-4 months later, the tumor had grown enough to cause me discomfort. I was absolutely petrified. I had a 7-year-old boy (Rich) and twin 4-year-old boys (Mark and David), and I was terrified of them having to grow up without a mother. My prayer at that time was to live long enough to raise them through high school.

I guess most people feel anger if they develop cancer. I, however, was overwhelmed by guilt. Whether it was actually my "fault" that I developed this disease or not, I don't know, but I know that I blamed myself. But I was also determined to fight to survive. What followed after that resolve was an awful year of chemotherapy, radiation therapy (during which I was so sick I wanted to die), and then more chemotherapy. After that came about 5 months of feeling sick, before my body finally forgave me for what I had put it through, and began feeling human again. I can still remember finally having the energy to work again in my vegetable garden in the spring of 1983. It was a wonderful moment.

My next jolt came sometime during the following year when I found out more information about my particular brand of cancer. I have lymphoma, and the type that I have is not curable (at least it wasn't in 1983). I was told that I would have to have repeated treatments, every 2 years or so, to keep the growth of the lymphoma controlled. And so it has been - every 2 to 2 1/2 years, or even less one time, I've been back to the oncologist for more treatment, having had a total of 6 series of treatments since 1982. A couple of times I have questioned whether it was worth the struggle. God has been gracious to me, however, and provided the right persons for me to talk to whenever I reached that state of mind. Also, new medicines have been developed which do not make me sick, only tired, and these were available to me for the last two series of treatments. They have made the whole process infinitely easier. I didn't even lose my hair! (I hate losing my hair)

FROM THE BACK ROW TO THE FRONT LINES

One of the biggest struggles I have had over the years has been with fear. There were times when I would be almost paralyzed by fear - fear of the cancer reoccurring, and fear of dying. Although I do believe that God will be with me and will help me through the dying process, at times the fear still was more than I could control. As the years have piled up since 1982, and I discovered to my amazement that I was still alive, my fears have lessened. My children are now 21 and 24, and I have lived 3 1/2 years beyond Mark and David's high school graduation! It's amazing! I have also had the longest period of remission since 1982 - it's been 3 1/2 years since my last treatment. God has taught me many things in these past 3 years - even though they are things I should have learned years ago, if I weren't such a slow learner. Such as - He loves me in the midst of my weaknesses, and will provide me with tender, loving care and direction even when I don't deserve it. And that a lot of things I spent 50+ years worrying about simply aren't worth worrying about. (What a relief!) And that He will provide me with the strength to overcome the obstacles in my life - if I will just ASK, and if I have the determination to accept His help. I think what I'm trying to say is that I have discovered that I can trust God. He has been excessively good to me, and I am very glad that He is my Friend, as well as my Savior. These things sound so very basic - and they are - but learning them on a deep, fundamental level has been a very slow process for me. I am sure that there are some equally basic things that the Lord has yet in mind to teach me in the coming years. I hope that I will be listening.

Mary Jackson

'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.'

Surely these words of truth from Hebrews 11:1 are the common thread that gives strength to the woven fabric of my life. Like Timothy of the Bible, I was privileged to have my faith passed on to me by a believing mother and - I have only recently found out - a believing grandmother. Through the years, God used many other people to build on my faith and to prepare me for the calling he had on my life, which is to pass my faith on to others through the sport of soccer. What does faith have to do with soccer, you ask? Maybe I had better start at the beginning.

I often tell people in sharing my testimony that I was the biggest mistake ever to happen in Whitinsville, Massachusetts. Born when my mother was 46 and my father was 52 (and already grandparents!), I was obviously not a planned baby - at least in the eyes of the world. Thank goodness God sees things differently.

Sports were the lifeblood of the family into which I was born; our home was a shrine to the athletic accomplishments of my older brothers. No-hit baseballs, trophies, and awards were prominently displayed, and one brother's record of 64 points in one basketball game was never to be broken. Sports were so much a part of our lives that my grandfather's passion for the Red Sox was mentioned in his obituary. I had no doubt that my place in the world was to be found in sports. But God was already at work in my heart through the influence of my godly mother and her prayers for me.

I had no idea at the time, but my mother was slowly dying of cancer. She and my sister had only recently become Christians, and regretting that she had not trained up my three brothers in a personal walk with God, she poured all her energy into seeing that I would know differently. One of my only memories of my mother is of her praying for me each morning before she sent me off to school. Perhaps Hebrews 11:1 gave her the surety of what she hoped, and the certainty of what she knew she would not live to see. I do know that God heard and answered her earnest prayers. Although she died when I was six, the seeds of faith had been deeply planted in my heart, and there have been many times in my life when I felt that the prayers of my mother kept me from wrong choices.

My wonderful father and I enjoyed two years together before his job required him to move to the south. Circumstances led to my being sent to live with my sister and brother-in-law, Carol and Bill Showalter, on their way to Rochester to take over the pastorate of Parkminster Presbyterian church. By God's providence, I again had daily Christian influence in my life, and received Christ as my Savior soon after. However, even though I had committed my life to the Lord, in reality my god was sports. Baseball, basketball, skiing, softball, golf, fishing, bowling, soccer - I did it all. When I wasn't playing sports, I was watching sports; when I wasn't watching sports, I was reading about them; when I wasn't reading about them, I was dreaming about them.

I did attend youth club, Sunday school, and church, usually sitting in the back row and scribbling sports plays on the bulletin. But even though it might not have seemed that way, I was listening (sometimes!) and God was working in my heart. Of course Carol

and Bill were a tremendous example to me; without them God only knows where I would have ended up. And there were others who influenced me; I recall the patience of Mr. Delapp in Sunday school, and the enthusiasm of Bill Christopher in Junior High youth club. Only he could get me to sing in the youth club choir. I was also greatly impressed by the faithfulness of Elsa Logan and Lily Pinneo, missionaries to China and Africa who were totally committed to the Lord, sold out for Jesus like I was sold out for sports.

Sometimes someone touched my life only briefly, as with Steve Merkel, a guy a few years ahead of me in Youth club, who took the time to shoot some hoops with me one afternoon and encourage me at a time when I was becoming very rebellious. More often than not it was people who were with me week in and week out like the Priestleys and Odmarks in Senior High. Jim and Laurie really stuck with me and encouraged me in the Lord. Jim was with me when, at 17, I began to realize the emptiness of sports and recommitted my life to the Lord. From that point on, the working of the Holy Spirit in my life has been strong.

I went off to college, where God began the painful process of tearing down the idols of sports in my life. It was at the end of my freshman year that God opened the door for me to go on my first missions trip, with a soccer team travelling to India. I will never forget the faith of the Parkminster people who supported this boy they knew as a headstrong sportsaholic. And it was because of their faith that I had my eyes opened to the neediness of the world and the joy of using sports as a vehicle for sharing the Good News of the Gospel. The light bulb had been turned on for me for sports ministry, but God still had a lot of preparation to do in my life.

During my sophomore year at Houghton, I experienced some major turning points. My father, who had been my best friend and biggest fan, died suddenly. I was with him as he took his last breath, and it was a vivid picture for me of the truth that we come naked into this world, and we leave the same way. What good would all of my trophies do me when it came my turn to stand before God? I wanted my life to count for something more. By faith, Jesus became my best friend and God truly became my Heavenly Father.

Another thing that happened my sophomore year is that I became engaged to Chris. God had given me a helpmate and a faithful partner for my life's work, and we were married the summer before our senior year. By faith, we trusted Jesus together for all our tomorrows, when six of our friends were killed instantly in a car wreck just before homecoming a few months later. Again, I felt the deep desire for my life to count for something of eternal significance.

After college, Chris and I headed to Puerto Rico to test our calling as missionaries, teaching in a Christian Academy. Our first child, Joy, was born there, and it was not long before our faith was tested more than ever before, as we faced serious health problems with Joy. Our Parkminster family was there for us in a very tangible way, with prayers, cards and gifts to care for us, particularly, the Prestons, who had a little Joy of their own. Our faith was strengthened, and God used this experience to lead us back to the States and into full-time sports ministry.

If we thought we had been walking by faith before, we had a lot to learn upon entering the world of faith missions. It was a very humbling and scary experience to begin raising support literally living day to day. Once again, God showed His love for us and faithfulness to us through the body of Christ in Parkminster. We are forever indebted to

Kevin and Laurie Burtner, Jerry and Sue Fuhrman, and Helen and Peter Bonney, who took us in to live with them during our months of support raising. Faithful friends, former Sunday school teachers and youth leaders jumped on board as prayer and financial partners. People we had barely known before, such as Dave and Joan Benietti and Ken and Denise Moore, became our supporters and also our dear friends. Others helped us find part-time work or housesitting, gave gifts of food or clothes. Mr. and Mrs. George Evans hosted a dinner for us from which we received over a hundred dollars a month in new support. The youth group raised money for us through a car wash. (And incidentally, Stephanie Bender, one of our youth, is still a great encourager of ours to this day, as are her parents.) The Palmers paid for us to take part in an evangelism-training seminar, where God had arranged for us to meet a pastor whose church was actually looking for a missionary to support! As always, God's timing was perfect. I remember when Don Oppedisano brought much-needed shoes for Chris and Joy, and when Mr. Mancini pressed a gift of money into our hand at church—just the amount we needed to buy Joy's medicine the next day. This was to become a pattern in our lives in faith missions over the years, God's provision for all our needs when we needed it. So many times we would receive a check in the mail, a care package, beautiful hand-me-downs, a food basket, or find just the item we needed at a garage sale. Like the writer of Hebrews, I conclude, "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about..." There is so much more I could say. So many special brothers and sisters in Christ, so many miraculous provisions, so many incredible stories of God orchestrating circumstances for His divine purposes so many changed lives.

I have been privileged to experience God's great love for me, and privileged to experience His patient molding of my love for sports into a fit vessel for His service. Through the strength of His spirit we have fought the battle for the kingdom on the front lines around the world—in Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, Bangladesh, Uganda, Sierre Leone, Liberia, England, France and Italy. We have been thrilled to bring Bibles to the people of communist countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and thrilled to break new ground right here in the United States with the establishment of the first all-Christian professional team. By faith we have gone where He has led us, even when we couldn't see the way, and done what He has called us to do, even when we didn't know how. By faith we can be sure that our hope to make an impact for Christ is being realized. We have truly been amazed by His grace in our lives, and can only proclaim, "MY GOD, HOW GREAT THOU ART!"

Brian Davidson

OUR FAITH STORY

Our faith story at Parkminster began in 1964 with a warm, firm handshake from Dr. Herman King, when he welcomed us by name and said, "Missed you last week." Dr. King was the expression of God's love for us—then a young couple expecting our first child. He baptized Andy in 1965 and Diane in 1967, and we became committed members of Parkminster, grateful for Christ's claim on our lives, as we had never understood it before.

Our faith was strengthened under the pastoral leadership of Bob Barcus as the congregation stepped out in faith with construction of the new sanctuary. We became close friends with Bob and Joy and shared the joys and tribulations of birthing and raising our young children. With the arrival of Bill and Carol Showalter, our involvement at Parkminster increased as Bob continued on Session and Jan became a "founding mother" of the Parkminster Preschool.

It was a time of deepening faith as we experienced God at work in our lives. The power of prayer became a living reality to our family when Bill Showalter and Bill Thompson prayed for our son, John, during his frequent episodes with bronchialitis. We know that God's protective love made the difference in our walking away from a head on collision in England in 1985—Parkminster friends were praying for our safety.

Ev Sahrbeck married Andy and Diane (our babies who had been baptized by Dr. King 25 years earlier) and conducted the memorial service for Jan's mother. We will always remember his gift for bringing the love of Christ to our family in such a personal way. Under the loving guidance of Jack Cleveland, our youngest son, Matt, began his walk with Christ, and the results of that teaching continue to be a joy for us.

Although we made the decision to leave Parkminster in 1991, we took with us a faith strengthened by 27 years of examples set by people whose lives in Christ were a witness to us. Today we live 260 miles from Rochester and our closest friends remain those whom we "grew up" with in Christ at Parkminster.

We are confident God brought us to our mountaintop home in the Adirondacks and led us to the tiny rural church where we continue to seek God's plan for our lives – something learned long ago at Parkminster.

Jan and Bob Thurling

Twenty-five years ago this August, Jim and I were married at Parkminster. Some months previous to our wedding, we became Christians in a small group with Tom and Fran Lynn. Shortly afterwards, the group stopped meeting on a regular basis and we started looking at different churches.

When Jim and I became engaged, I found I wanted to be part of a local church. Since Tom and Fran had been attending Parkminster, it was a natural choice for us, as well.

Over the past years we've moved several times and attended various churches, but Parkminster gave us our roots - seeing the Body of Christ working through the people in the local church and through small groups. We still find when we come back for a visit, even though much has changed over the years, that we are welcomed and the feeling of being at home still pervades. The recent memorial service for my Mom is just one reminder.

When Jim's parents died one year apart, our small group, as well as many in the church, was there to help, and not just with physical needs. When we struggled with whether to have children or not, Pastor Bill Showalter counseled us and helped us through that time. We did have our first child when we were away from Rochester, but God brought us back after four years. When Emily was born, there were complications, and people from the church were there to help Jim during the time of the surgery. Our physician, who was Jewish, was especially touched by this outreach since he had never seen anything like it before. When Emily was baptized, she wore a gown that Doris Carey had made for her children. Judy had let us borrow it. It was especially meaningful since Doris and Ed had just died a week before in the accident in Hawaii and her paintings were still hanging in the church.

In small groups, we shared our lives with each other. We began to learn what it meant to be accountable to the Body of Christ in the church instead of just ourselves. We still begin to learn.

Jim and Barbara Mutch

A Long Overdue Thank You Note

Thank you, dear Jesus, for directing us to visit Parkminster in 1960. Your precious Dr. King welcomed us and the Parkminster family loved and nurtured us.

All in your perfect timing, dear Jesus, you provided us with Pastors Barcus, Showalter, Thompson, Sahrbeck and their lovely wives.

I had always been so independent and determined to do things well that I was my own worst enemy. I was unhappy- the future didn't hold any great promises (that I could see). I ended in tears at a friend's home pouring out my frustrations over lunch. Thank you, Jesus, for being at that simple lunch table! Thank you for accepting me just as I was.

Thank you for giving me a hunger for the lifestyle you wanted for me. I took teachings from the pulpit, Bible studies and small groups and applied them to my life. (Hey, it wasn't always easy!) Such peace as the shackles fall away - each day a new beginning! I embrace the truth that we were created to love you and serve others.

Thank you also for choir directors from my youth to retirement age who have instilled a desire to worship you in song. And so, Dear Jesus,

*For the beauty of the earth,
For the Beauty of the skies,
For the love which from my birth
Over and around me lies;
Lord of all to thee I raise this,
My grateful hymn of praise.*

Lovingly.

Jean Leyland

Faith Story

In 1974 I recall feeling depressed and searching for peace. The Lord, in His mercy led me to tune into a radio program from the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) called the 700 Club. After listening to this program several times, I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart. I knew something happened but I didn't tell anyone.

Soon after my conversion I moved into an apartment in Brighton and I began looking for a church. A neighbor couple told me that what I needed was "a church with a Spirit filled minister." I didn't know what that was but I began the search! At times I phoned churches, other times I visited them. Every week I went to church but none of them seemed just right for me.

One Sunday morning I was sick and watching TV church services. Among them was a show produced by the FGBMFI. At the end of the program there were telephone numbers on the screen and I had the thought that "maybe if I phoned that number, someone could help me find a (Lutheran) church with a spirit filled minister.

I phoned and a man answered who said he didn't know of a Lutheran church but he did know of a Presbyterian one.

Well, the man was George Evens and the church was Parkminster!

I went to Parkminster the following Sunday and knew I had found my church!

I am so grateful to God for His leading. I became a member and formed many friendships over the years. It was a special place and God knew I needed the fellowship I would find there.

In 1980 the Lord called me to move to Canada and become a member of the Greenville Christian College community. I'm grateful for my call there also, but I will always remember the 6 years at Parkminster when I first became a Christian and found a church that was like a family and home.

Thank you! Congratulations and God bless you all!

Astrid Siefert

Faith Story for Parkminster Centennial Celebration, 1899-1999

It was third and down. The football was in motion when the sixteen-year-old tight end heard his knee crack. The final penalty was the doctor's warning—if he returned to the team, and got clipped again, he'd need surgery. But the worst injury was yet to come. The jocks left their former buddy benched and alone. Unexpectedly, it was the Parkminster Sr. High Youth Group who pushed this teen toward victory. These church kids scored a touchdown when their "special-teams" tackled Jeff Fuhrman with God's love.

As Jeff saw God's compassion in action, the Rev. Dr. Bill Showalter preached to the back pew. Jeff recalls that in the last row he, Brian Davidson, Mark and Stephen Christopher, Kevin McClurg and Kevin Schuman tried to act like they weren't listening. We are so grateful that Youth Leaders like Tom and Karen Miller and Jim and Laurie Odmark urged Jeff to join the musical, "Rock". It was Jeff's turning point.

On July 31, 1981, while Parkminster was draped with sawhorses and drop cloths, Jeff proposed to Joyce. The sanctuary "betrothal site" was un-b-knownst to Carol Showalter, who interrupted to see if the couple needed help. After a very embarrassed Carol left, Jeff told Joyce that he chose this construction site to propose because everything important had happened to him through church. So he wanted God to be present from the start of the engagement. In 1983, former Youth Leaders Walt and Helen Priestly and Bill and Marilyn Christopher did a wedding shower game; "Here comes the bride. Here comes the broom. Tell us something about the groom!" It was a treat to hear "back-pew stories" from peers and adults.

In 1982 Jeff went under care of Presbytery; in 1984 Joyce joined Parkminster. Director of Christian Education, Daryl Staneck, and Associate Pastor, Ev Sahrbeck, were terrific coaches for Joyce's graduate studies and Jeff's seminary preparation (both were Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary alumni).

Over 50 Parkminster members demonstrated their unique ability to care as they drove to Delaware for our wedding in June 1983, Dr. Showalter graciously worked with Joyce's minister to coordinate the ceremony. The caring continued in July as Ron and Jean Leyland hosted a "Rochester Reception" in their daisy garden. Church friends rallied around the family later that month when Dad (Jerry) injured a hand during work at Palmer Seafood.

The summer of 1983 featured house sitting in Parkminster homes. During the day, Jeff worked for Palmer Seafood, while Joyce worked with Tom Lynn and the Junior Highs at Vacation Bible School---nights were spent going door-to-door to raise Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship support. We are so thankful that our Lord used potential

financial stress to teach us how to work together positively. The Lord used the encouragement of over 50 Parkminster church families to form a special support system for ministry at the University of Delaware!

One of God's HUGE gifts was this "team" of Parkminster families. Many people in this group would pray for us through seminary and continue now!!!

Dave and Jan Jenkins encouraged us. They even brought Karen (still awaited Colleen's adoption) to visit us at Gordon-Cornwell Seminary, in Boston, in 1985.

In April 1986, the Lord provided the privilege of helping Bill and Cathy Leyland's family. They arrived in Boston to tell Jeanne Carey the tragic news that her parents, Ed and Doris, were killed in an airplane crash.

In March 1987 we rejoined the Sr. Highs at a Bristol Mt. retreat. Leaders Kevin and Jackie Schuman and Mark and Mary Christopher invited us to teach "Make the Connection" with I John.

1990 brought a call back to the Rochester area (to the First Presbyterian Church of Williamson). The Lord used the hospitality of Ev and Nancy Sahrbeck to continue to strengthen and enrich us. In the fall of 1992, when Ev and Nancy relocated to Philadelphia, it was fun to do a "Gordon-Cornwell quilt square" for the Parkminster friendship quilt.

In 1992-93, we lost two babies in five months, and "Gram" (Margaret Pollack) died in the sixth month. Parkminster friends helped carry us through the avalanche of grief (and a nervous third pregnancy with Carson). To help others thrive again after emotional pain and loss experiences, Joyce wrote a book, **SEE THE STARDUST**. The Lord inspired Cathy Leyland to hand-paint a cover (a beautiful tribute to Christopher's short life). The Rev. Dr. Sterling and Esther Huston pulled-along-side us and continue to be special mentors today.

In 1996, Jeff was called to Perinton Community Church in Fairport, NY. Jeff's partner, Wayne Hill, was Ev Sahrbeck's former seminary friend. And even now, God appears to be reuniting Jeff with Jon Evans in ministry. The legacy continues.

Our generous Lord calls us to remember and celebrate. Praise Him!!! Zephaniah 3:17; Jeremiah 29:11-13.

Joyfully in Christ
The Rev. Jeff, Joyce and Carson Fuhrman

Our Faith Story

My husband Fred and I were married at Parkminster Presbyterian Church, June 24, 1972.

We started our life together surrounded by Christian friends and we were blessed by the teaching of Rev. Bill Showalter and Rev. Bill Thompson. We were comforted and cared for by the body of Christ, the Church.

Twenty five years later we prayed that a way would be open for us to move to Phoenix, AZ, to be near our son and family. God answered our prayers and provided the way.

He sent the right couple to buy our house and He gave us a brand new, beautiful home in Arizona.

We experienced miracles everyday as we readied for this big change in our lives. And we continue to see miracles even now.

It is now October 1998 and we are established here in Arizona and have the love of our children and grandchildren surrounding us. We also have warm memories of a past life in Rochester.

We give all the glory and thanks to God and continue to experience His blessings on our lives daily.

Jan Brule

We were brought to Parkminster in 1991 by the will of God alone and in spite of our best efforts otherwise. A church in the midst of crushing financial debt and internal conflict tends not to draw new members; yet we were drawn there anyway. I think we needed Parkminster and somehow Parkminster needed us.

Our transition from Dallas to Rochester was a painful one for us. Beloved friends and family left behind and an awkward social standing, (newlyweds, 30's and childless) often made for a lonely time. Yet, God's plan brought us closer together as man and wife, and the long wait for our children only made them more precious to us.

Our faith story at Parkminster was one of learning what not to do. We learned much about how not to settle into a new community and took from that experience the means for a far easier transition into our next city. Folks at Parkminster put up with us, put us to work, and when the time came, sent us on our way with blessings and best wishes.

We still remember fondly the spiritual depth and passion of the Parkminster family. People there seemed to live just a little closer to the fire of the hearth of the Father. The grace of the Lord brought us briefly into fellowship with the Parkminster family and then moved us on in a continuing journey. We took away with us a hunger for spiritual depth, plenty of stories and a new appreciation for alternative Christian music.

Blessings to you on your first 100 years.

Jay and Barbara Peak

Faith Story

"We met at Parkminster." It sounds like a slogan, but Parkminster Church truly was the place Linda and I began our life's walk together.

We were attending the Thursday night Bible study in the Old East Hall in 1975 - two ships passing in the night then. Those were great times of looking into God's Word, usually led by the "two Bills" - the Rev. William Showalter and Rev. William Thompson.

When Parkminster asked for volunteers to hand out brochures to people attending the Billy Graham movie, "The Hiding Place", in November, Linda and I each signed up. So there we were, face to face at the entrance to one of the Fine & mini-theaters, and the Lord began to draw us together.

The Rev. Bill Thompson married us at the church on August 28, 1976 - an oppressively humid, but glorious day. The Parkminster women provided a wonderful reception meal in the social hall.

The Lord blessed our marriage year after year in countless ways, but the blessing Linda longed for even more than I was not bestowed for almost fourteen years. Then, praise God, we were parents-to-be in February, 1990. Our daughter, Rebecca Anne, was born on November 9, 1990 and is a bubbly, blonde eight-year-old who is growing in the Lord and doing very well in her home school studies. God is faithful and so good!

Mike and Linda Savadil

Our roots in the Presbyterian faith, and specifically Parkminster Presbyterian Church go back to Pentecost Sunday, 1974, when my wife Janet and I became members. Prior to that, my own conversion to Christianity involved some "grace-filled" encounters with a "Jesus-freak" fellow-worker (Tom Lynn), a charismatic Presbyterian preacher (Bill Showalter), a visit by two caring elders (George Evans and Dave Gardener) and most significantly, the living Lord, Jesus Christ. My computer's memory banks don't have room to hold all of the stories that we have lived out together since. Never the less, I am gladly and gratefully compelled to provide an offering that might helpfully add to the "Parkminster Faith Story."

Two things come to mind when I think of Parkminster - commitment and care. These two elements of Christian love were always a package deal for those who participated in the fellowship. My wife and I will never forget the times when we needed support and a caring presence. When our home was broken into, John and Connie Lish came and provided a comforting presence. When the "blizzard of 93" snowed all over my ordination plans, Nellie Morse gave us encouragement and a hot bowl of homemade soup. I remember all of the discovery groups we participated in as if it were yesterday. So many faces and names come to mind, linked with acts of friendship and love. I glory in the wild and exciting adventures of the Parkminster men's softball team. We were destined for greatness with coaches like Kevin Burtner and Bill Christopher leading us.

In retrospect, given the encouragement and guidance I received as I grew in the faith at Parkminster, a faith-crisis inevitably occurred that would involve answering the call into ministry. I can't say where or when it all started - that's a mystery. I can describe some moments that have contributed to my sense of call into the ministry. I remember Bill Showalter greeting us in the foyer, as the church was letting out, and encouraging me to consider teaching Sunday school. That was the start, for me and Jan, of eleven years of teaching, sometimes together, sometimes separately. We can lay claim, in fact, to having two members of the Jars of Clay as our students in our sixth grade class!

Perhaps the next significant movement in my faith journey involved making a commitment to the board of deacons. I discovered that Christian love required a sacrifice of time, energy, and a wrestling with priorities and my own expectations, if it was to be given unconditionally, with no strings attached.

It was at an elders-deacon retreat that I sensed with urgency the possibility that God was calling me into full-time ministry. The next morning, at church, I heard God's call ever more clearly through the preached Word. I felt fear and trembling, knowing that God was calling me into the unknown. After meeting with the Showalters that day, and having been confirmed and encouraged by them to remain open, my wife and I returned home to ponder what God was asking of us, and how God would prepare the way. Thus, in the spring of 1984, we began a long, sometimes arduous journey, involving finishing up an undergraduate degree, leaving job, home and friends, moving across the country for seminary and preparation for ministry. Like any faith journey, it has had its high and low points. Looking back, we can say that the Lord God was in the midst of it all, even when we didn't recognize or experience His presence.

Today, as the Coordinator of Clinical Pastoral Education at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, in Houston Texas, I am still primarily involved in teaching and providing pastoral care. To think that my preparation for this ministry began back at Parkminster, in concrete moments of call and commitment that involved many of you. As I reflect upon this, I have always been aware that my ministry is really an extension of Parkminster's ministry, and is the fruition of many spiritual gifts that I have received along the way.

To bring you up to the present, remember those two baby girls that were baptized at Parkminster? Karen is now 16, and an active member at First Presbyterian Church in Sugar Land, TX. Colleen is about to celebrate her 13th birthday, and is a church acolyte and enrolled in the confirmation class. So, our faith is a living faith, shared from generation to generation.

We are proud of our heritage as Parkminsterites! We celebrate with you the wonder of God's providential love and grace to our 100 year-old Parkminster family. No matter where we are, or how old we grow, we will always hold those days at Parkminster together deep in our hearts. God bless you and keep you, until we meet again.

Love, Rev. David R. Jenkins, Janet, Colleen and Karen

FAITH STORY

I would like to relate what Parkminster has meant to me and my family. We joined Parkminster in 1971. After joining we became members of a small group. We had never been members of any kind of group before. I had gone to a men's retreat at Camp Whitman a week or so before joining the group and had prayed for the first time that I would have some kind of relationship to God. After joining the group, we attended the first session and after a time of sharing who we were and what was happening in our lives. It didn't get to Bonnie and myself as our name started with R and there was not time for us to share.

The next week got to the R's. Bonnie started to share about herself and mentioned that I had a problem with drinking. She would not have dared to share this on her own, without a group present. When it was time for me to share, I started to cry and sob, and the other members of the group gathered around and laid hands on me and prayed for me. I at this point accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. It felt as if a huge weight was lifted off my body. That was October 22, 1972. This October 22 is the 26th anniversary of being a healed alcoholic. I have not had a drink of alcohol since that day. Were it not for Parkminster and the programs that they had, I would have not made it and probably would have been dead by now, a helpless alcoholic.

Bonnie could not believe what had happened to me. She had not had a Christian conversion and doubted what had happened to me. It was about 2 weeks later that she had a conversion, and our lives have been truly altered by our Christian experience. Thank you Parkminster.

George M. Reynolds, Former Deacon & Elder

MY FAITH STORY

The summer of 1973 was a momentous one for my family and myself. My husband, Roger, had lost his job and there were other situations I will not mention in this story.

At this time I was involved in a fundamental Bible-Believing church. I found myself devouring the word of God. I was memorizing scripture and taking Bible correspondent courses to give me strength to persevere in a painful, heart-breaking situation. However, I was frustrated and found life ebbing from my being. It was during this time I learned from a neighbor, Lura Morey that exciting things were occurring at Parkminster Presbyterian Church.

In August, I attended a service at Parkminster. Surprised is an adjective I will use to describe my first impression of Parkminster. For some reason I did not expect this type of service in a Presbyterian Church! Dr. Showalter delivered a spiritually challenging message and the music was inspirational. Something stirred within my heart and I knew it was a place I would have to return to-something was drawing me there.

Counseling was a ministry offered at Parkminster for which I took advantage of. One area for which I was seeking guidance was in the matter of a church home. I was so grounded in the Bible and in a form of legalism. It was in one of these sessions, Dr. Showalter said to me, "Jeanette, life begets life". I was advised to step out of this type of legalism and pursue a ministry that was more spirit-filled. In the fall I decided to participate in the membership classes offered at Parkminster. Also I was attending the Wednesday morning women's Bible study led by Dr. Showalter, which was tremendous.

It was during this time that I met some people who turned out to be instrumental in my spiritual walk. One was Rose Pinneo, an elder in the church. When I met with the session to become a member of the church, she was the one elder who testified of the importance of God's word in her daily life. Another person was Beverly Evans and her husband, George. Both strong believers and one hundred per cent committed in their walk with the Lord. Beverly and I both learned we grew up in the same farming area in Chenango County of New York. My father purchased food for our livestock from her uncles' feed store.

Through my counseling sessions, small group ministries and prayer meetings the Holy Spirit was moving within me. Repentance came into my life for the very first time. Having received Christ as a child I had never really experienced true repentance. It was a most painful time for me. For days I was unable to eat and sleep but when it was over I knew I had given room for the filling of the Holy Spirit. I met with Dr. Showalter and Rev. Thompson at this time and they confirmed this step taken in my spiritual pilgrimage.

The place of prayer became the most exciting part of my Christian life and continues to this day. I never missed a prayer meeting and became convinced of the importance of fasting as mentioned in the Scripture, "this can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting," Mark 9:29. Beverly Evans and I became prayer partners, meeting each week for prayer in her home. We kept a prayer journal and witnessed where God in His faithfulness and grace answered many of our requests performing great and mighty things to His glory.

As I conclude this story I am eternally grateful for the impact of Parkminster upon my pilgrimage. Truly, I could not experience the growth and joy that has come as a result of the repentance and filling of the Holy Spirit which keeps me focused on the Blessed Hope that is ours as God's children. May I not be ashamed at His appearing which I believe is imminent!!!

Jeanette C. Van Wormer

The Long Walk

Another Sunday, another church service and another discussion on the way home about looking for a new church. That seemed to be the way each Sunday started out. Later in the afternoon of that particular Sunday, however, things changed! Shari went to the store to pick up a few things and Jim was sitting in the yard reading the paper. An angel walked up our four hundred-foot driveway and invited us to attend the Ralph Bell Crusade at Parkminster Church. The reason I use the term "Angel" was because after many years at the church, we were never able to find out who invited us to come.

We checked our calendars and decided to go to the program on Wednesday night. The topic was marriage. We were both hurting people at that time, struggling with divorce and trying to make our relationship work. The program was a blessing to us and we went back to the church on Sunday. It was that day that Jim recommitted his life to Christ and that Things finally fell into place for Shari and she realized that she had to publicly accept Christ and have a personal relationship with Him.

We continued to attend Parkminster and we made many friends who loved, accepted and supported us through this difficult time. We became involved in the Parkminster family and, when the time for our wedding came, which was really fast as we put it together in three weeks, the meetings at church were cut short and many of those people were at our wedding.

The Parkminster family meant a lot to us and we made many friends there. There will always be a special place in our hearts for the church family that we had while we were there. This is where we really became a family and grew in Christ.

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SECOND GRADE SUNDAY SCHOOL MADE THE DIFFERENCE

The Lord touched my life through Parkminster. I was quite young when we began attending, maybe four years old. My mother had recently received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and was seeking some counseling. She had been informed that Rev. Showalter at Parkminster could help her and that he had also been baptized in the Holy Spirit. I received counseling from Rev. Showalter as well.

I believe I was eight years old when I gave my life to Jesus. I was in the second grade Sunday school at the time. The Sunday school teacher had been speaking to us in relation to the Scripture John 3:16 and asked if we wanted to receive Jesus into our hearts. I remember a number of hands going up, bowing our heads and praying with the Sunday School teacher to ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and come into our hearts, to be Lord of our lives.

In the years following, much of my life was touched by Parkminster through the teaching my parents were receiving; the message of self-denial and obedience, recognizing the self life for what it is, the Cross walk. I remember the church-related banners hanging on our walls at home - "when we get discouraged with who we are, it shows us who we think we are"; "whatever crosses you out is God's love. Let God Love you," and other profound and enlightening statements.

My attendance at Parkminster Presbyterian Church growing up laid an important foundation in my life for a walk with Christ. After high school, I attended the Eastman School of Music, Hope College, Muskegon Community College, and finally four years at Fort Wayne Bible College, where I received my degree in pastoral Ministries and Bible. I am now an ordained minister serving as an associate pastor at Parker City Christ Fellowship in Parker City, Indiana. My calling is that of an evangelist.

Thank you, Parkminster, for your ministry!

Tyler Garth

The very existence of Parkminster was an "act of faith". Not all of the Plymouth Avenue congregation were in agreement. They had no minister, no designated leader. Just a few people who had the vision - and faith - to make it happen.

Parkminster became a reality because a few people with vision - and faith - came to the fore, continued services to keep the church active. Walter Wilson presided over the service until Reverend Harrison from Laurelton Presbyterian Church was able to leave his church after the sermon there and come to Plymouth Avenue for another sermon. There were those who transported him back and forth.

There were those who investigated sites for building with the insight to choose a property large enough for growth. There were those who came Sunday to the Arnett YMCA to make a congregation to occupy this new church.

FAITH certainly is the cornerstone of Parkminster.

From,
Bill & Lorraine Loudon

FAITH STORY

Linda and I came to Parkminster in the late 1960's. Linda had attended the church before I had and encouraged me to come. We were both impressed by the church, mainly because it was quite active.

As time passed, we became much more a part of the church and became involved in the "Small Group" program. This program was an extension of the regular service, bringing the church closer into our personal lives.

By random choice, our group included Bill and Carol Showalter. What was unique about the experience, was that we developed a strong commitment to one another. Our group was fairly intact for about ten years.

The thing that was most appealing about Parkminster, was the way the church involved itself with the community. We offered our buildings to local groups, we hosted political debates and even more importantly, we worked in the inner city with those less fortunate. If I were to focus the most important aspect of the Inner City Ministry, I think my work with Teen Challenge would have to be it. Parkminster chose to be a part of the community, which really needed the support. I have always felt this was Parkminster's real strength.

I still remember one evening having an appointment with Bill Showalter, about some drug program in the city called Teen Challenge. He wanted me to go down there and find out about it. I did just that and found a powerful ministry working with the most needy drug addicts, alcoholics and other terrible problems. I saw Teen Challenge as a field hospital, on the battle lines of human suffering. People who were there had nothing but their hopeless lives. Many of these lives were rescued through an acceptance of Jesus. The Director at the time was a very young John Tuff. Fresh from Roberts Wesleyan College, John was fighting daily the forces of evil on the city streets. I had never met a man who had the courage he did to meet the enemy and defeat it with the love of Jesus.

When I first met John, I was a skeptic. Later, he made me believe that God was alive and that his son truly loves us all. I think the early history of Parkminster for me was this kind of "fighting a battle", wherever it existed. People, who had never encountered human suffering, were suddenly facing it. They could, through the church, find ways of doing something. Each small victory was a victory for Christ, as well as personal. That is my fondest memory of the church.

When I was an early member in the family of Parkminster, I knew they cared for others by the way they became involved. When I was involved I was okay. Helping others does something to you. It makes you feel better about yourself and it gives another human being a sense of God's love. I found that in abundance at Parkminster when I was a member. I felt, we all felt, that what was happening was really making a difference in the world.

I could share endlessly how Parkminster rolled up sleeves and did God's work. There were many exciting times. We even had Pat Robertson speak to us! The church parking lot was rarely empty and there were always someone doing something.

Parkminster was among the first to offer a day care program in the community. There were children in the program whose parent, or parents could not afford the service, but were enrolled anyway. We had a cooperative where families could work, fellowship and stretch tight budgets. There were many seen and unseen programs helping those in need.

In closing, I would like to say that the early Parkminster, for us, was the church which most met the needs of everyone. Within was an energy, which gave strength to the provider and recipient. The Parkminster of the late 60's and early 70's was "out there", taking the slings and arrows of human despair and turning them into hope.

I really support your efforts in this important task of recalling the church's roots, people and history. All will certainly be blessed with this effort.

John Groves

The Bradley's at Parkminster (1969-1986)

As Jim and I look over our seventeen-year involvement with the people of God at Parkminster we remember how we were blessed. Jim Bradley had been visiting the prayer meetings at the Mancini's for a year or so before I arrived in 1970. The Pentecostal style of worship was new to me as a 19 year old Episcopalian. I can remember pecking up from prayers to locate and identify the strange sounds that I heard. The Lord guided me gently into this new form of worship and the concepts of the inner life and total surrender to God. Little did I know how much I needed these new friends and the new skills they offered in the years that were to follow.

Jim and I barely knew each other when we started working with the Senior High Youth Group. Prior to our arrival, three Senior High youths had asked that a group be formed for their spiritual growth. Bill and Carol Showalter asked Jim and me to lead the newly formed group along with Carol, Bill Christopher, and Cork Florenberger. I wasn't much older than the teens but we took on the challenge. We saw tremendous growth in ourselves and the teens. Several had very deep commitments to Jesus, and of that first group, several went on to become pastors and missionaries. We especially learned a lot about prayer and depending on Jesus for everything in our lives.

Our story would not be complete without the story of our wedding at Parkminster. It has been used as an example by several pastors as a reminder to engaged couples to rely on the Lord and not on themselves. We had invested a lot of emotional energy in the preparations for the celebration. Jim and I wrote our ceremony, a very controlled, proper, and long service. We planned the regular service, communion, and allowed time for anyone to stand and give us a scripture verse as encouragement or lesson. The verse we remember most was presented to us by one of our high school students. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 has become our life verse.

"Two are better than one they receive a good reward for their toil, because, if one falls, the other can help his companion up again; but alas for the man who falls alone with no partner to help him up. And, if two lie side by side, they keep each other warm; but how can one keep warm by himself? If a man is alone, an assailant may overpower him, but two can resist; a cord of three strands is not quickly mapped."

The service proceeded normally until the point in the service where Bill Showalter prayed over us. I fainted from the heat! After a few minutes of confusion the service proceeded while Jim and I stepped outside for a breath of fresh air. Upon entering the Nave again Jim was guiding me to my position when he fainted at exactly the same spot I had. We believe the Lord did not want us to enter this marriage with any notions that we were in charge or that either of us was superior to the other. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 has been an encouragement to us throughout our marriage, especially when we are allowing Jesus to be the "third cord."

Our two children, Peter and Jeanette were born while we were at Parkminster. The many friends who sat for our children and the Mother's Group were an important part of our life. We supported each other when the children were ill (How many children have found Nellie Morris's secret closet?) We prayed for each other for every reason. We sat for each other's children when it was needed and we taught each other what to do when we ran out of answers. Clothes were passed from family to family and at times other church members even bought new shoes for my children. When we moved to Michigan, I realized how much I missed this extended family that we had grown up with.

While we were at Parkminster we purchased a house very near the church to be a more integrated part of the church body. The house had a large back yard big enough for a community garden and an extra room for another church member to live with us. The house was made possible because of generous financial support towards a down payment from a member of our small group. The garden was shared with several families who gathered once a week to weed and pick the produce. Our first year we had a bumper crop, especially of zucchini.

One day when Peter was six, he was playing near the community garden and stepped on a nest of bees. By the time he was rescued by Jim he had received nine bee stings and Jim had two. Peter was in great misery and asked that Jim call the Elders of the church to pray for him. George Evans and Don Mancini were gracious enough to interrupt their busy Saturday schedule to come over and anoint Peter with oil and pray for him. Within an hour Peter's bee stings were no longer swollen and he was back playing in the yard. Jim, on the other hand, had not asked for prayer and suffered with red welts for a week. The Lord taught us over and over again to follow him as a child does.

Our first "live-in" was Paul Olchowski, at that time an engineering student. He was very patient with our new roles. Previous to his moving in with us, we had donated our old car to him instead of taking it to a junkyard. When he moved in the car came with him and he nursed it along for another year or so. This experiment in living together has mixed reviews. We learned much about ourselves and obtained a much broader view of life. At other times the "live-ins" were more than we knew how to help and put a strain on our family. Always we were dependent on the Lord to try and maintain the balance between authority and friendship. These experiences and those were shared through the small groups taught us much about how the body of Christ is interconnected and dependent on one another.

Through Parkminster small group fellowship and Sunday sermons, Jim and I learned how to face the hurts of our parts, confess them, and remove them from affecting our relationships in the future. Early in our marriage, we realized that my reactions to Jim were often too extreme for the occasion. I faced some difficult truths about my relationship with my mother and father and began the long and sometimes twisted road to forgiveness. With forgiveness Jim and I were able to overcome the obstacle, find healing in our relationship, and strengthen our commitment to one another. The faithfulness and prayers of our friends at Parkminster were the healing agents Jesus used in our lives.

There were so many people who offered us their strength and belief during difficult times. When my niece, Crystal was diagnosed with a severe case of cancer the day before my sister Faith's wedding, many people helped us cancel the wedding, pray for Crystal and wait with us at the hospital. Then the following Sunday when Crystal was out of immediate danger, these same people helped us put together a wedding service. Nellie Morris held the reception in her home with only a six-hour notice. During the ten-year struggle Crystal had with the effects of the cancer and chemotherapy there was always support and encouragement from the church. During one of Crystal's stays in the hospital, Pastor Tom brought Harvey, the six-foot Rabbit to stay with Crystal and keep her company.

Peter and Jeanette had a lot of good role models to follow at Parkminster. Peter was impressed when George Evans recited an entire chapter of the Bible during a Kids Klub meeting. He had a desire to be like George Evans or Don Mancini during his elementary years. The first three years of Summers Best Two Weeks at Parkminster were instrumental in helping Peter and Jeanette accept responsibility and to teach others. Peter began to wrestle with theological ideas through his contact with the adult leadership of this program. I am grateful to those who were insightful enough to get this program going and to allow the youth to take leadership.

Not everything was perfect during our seventeen years at Parkminster. There was a gradual shift from dependence on God to dependence on the counsel of humans. People exerted too much control over one another's lives. Individuals stunted their own spiritual maturity by abdicating responsibility for their growth to others. The shift of the center of dependence was subtle and slow, which made the problem difficult to identify and to correct. This difficulty also led to much disagreement among church members. The issues were blurred because healing and hurts sometimes were together in the same mode of ministry. In our new home in Michigan we gradually began to sort out God's truth for us from people's opinions. But we recognize that we contributed to hurts as well. We apologize for any hurts that we caused during our involvement at Parkminster.

A large book could not contain all that we learned and experienced at Parkminster. Jesus has been very faithful in leading us through the hard times and supplying all that we need when we need it. Thank you, friends of the Parkminster community for helping us in our walk with the Lord.

Jim, Hope, Jeanette, and Peter Bradley

MY FAITH STORY

I grew up in a single home. My natural father died when I was one year old. My mother's parents had us live with them for several years until my grandfather was transferred out of town for work. Mother was able to work to support my older sister and me. We did not attend church. Mother worked six days a week and did all of her household duties on Sunday. A pastor and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Ernest McClellan, came to our neighborhood to pick up a girl to take to church and Sunday School. They asked her if there were other girls who could come. As the girl, Marguerite Northmore, was my sister's friend, she took Betty and later took me, too. We began attending every week. The church they took us to was the UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in downtown Rochester at 131 Plymouth Avenue North. In my new Sunday School class at United Presbyterian Church, I learned that God wanted to be my Father. I didn't have an earthly father... and God used that to draw me to Him. We learned that we had to accept Jesus Christ as Savior to become part of God's family. My sister, Betty Niles, and I received Jesus as savior and were baptized when we were about 10 and 12. We were blessed to be in a Bible believing church that had a good Sunday School program with good teachers. One of my heroes, friend, and role model was Mrs. Hazel Rugg. Others were Walter Wilson, George Dinsmore, Miss Niven, etc.. I remember the Worship Services where we sang only Psalms from the Psalter Hymnal. We used other songbooks in the Sunday School and Youth Group. Many members of the congregation were of a Scottish heritage. I loved to hear them speak with a brogue. There was only one other United Presbyterian Church in Rochester. That was the Laurelton United Presbyterian Church, which had been started by our church. (Many years later, our denomination merged with the Presbyterian Church U.S. and ALL became United Presbyterians.) Our Youth Group was part of Christian Endeavor. Occasionally our whole Youth Group would visit Youth groups at other U.P. Churches in our Caledonia Presbytery. We also went to rallies and events by Christian Endeavor, which included the Reformed Churches in Rochester. One time when we visited Youth for Christ at West Ave. Methodist Church they gave an invitation. I raised my hand... and made a new commitment there to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

I had already become interested in reading the Bible and "discovered" verses. I KNEW the presence of God and I prayed regularly and was aware of answered prayer. My heavenly Father was very real to me throughout my teens. In August, 1947, Walter Wilson drove a group of us from our Youth group to attend the 50th National Convention of United Presbyterian Youth. This was held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The theme there was Paul's question at his conversion... "Lord, what wilt thou have ME to do with MY life?" I realized that I had been a "taker" from my physical family... and from God. Now as I was entering the work world after High School I wanted to learn to be a "giver"... to give to my family... but more importantly, to give to God. I gave Him my life... and made Jesus LORD of my life. So receiving Christ as Savior was a very real decision earlier, but the second step was necessary to serve God with my life and to turn over the controls to Jesus. I have really felt the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit throughout my life.

I was privileged to also know the next Pastor, Rev. Thomas Lament. As I took a business course in High School he gave me practical experience doing secretarial work in his office at the church... typing bulletins and correspondence once a week. He also recruited me to teach Sunday School there, which laid the foundation for me to study and teach most of my adult life.

It was Rev. Lamont that officiated when I married Charles Dittmar on May 13, 1950 in the old church. Ours was one of the last weddings there. The last service in the Church was on Easter, April 13, 1952. Our Church had to come down to make way for the Inner Loop and a parking garage was constructed on the site. The congregation met in the Arnett Y.M.C.A. for several years before they became the Founders of Parkminster Presbyterian Church where I taught Sunday School and he became an Elder there. We then moved to Williamson, NY and became members of the Williamson Presbyterian Church for most of my adult life. I again taught Sunday School and it was there that I was ordained as an Elder and served as Clerk of Session and on Committees of Geneva Presbytery. It was a privilege to be a Commissioner to General Assembly from Geneva Presbytery in 1966.

Our mother remarried and she and our stepfather, Ethel and Andrew Discavage, would attend the old U.P. Church especially for Children's Day and events we were in. After Mother quit working she was regular in all Church activities. She especially enjoyed being a part of the McClellan Circle. She stayed close friends with them even after retiring to Florida... and always visited them when in Rochester. Some of her special friends were Jessie Hondorf, Peg Merle, Hazel Rugg, Jean McCloud, Norma Harmon, and Eleanor Neese. Dr. King was pastor when Mother and Andy became part of the Founders of Parkminster. They moved to Orange City, Florida in 1960 and were members of the DeLand Presbyterian Church. Andy died on January 3, 1973 in Florida. Ethel Discavage moved back to Rochester in 1980 and died on October 28, 1995.

I give thanks to God for leading me to the old church as a child... thanks to the caring outreach of the McClellans. I was privileged to receive a good foundation there and to enter into the family of God and begin my walk with the Lord. I have felt God's guidance all of my life and my faith sustained me through my husband's heart problems and his death thirteen years ago. I continued to serve God alone for four years and then God led me into another marriage to Donald Ducharme and we have been serving God together for nine years. I hope that I will be found faithful in having shared God's Word and bringing others and our own children and grandchildren into the Kingdom, as well as being faithful through our outreach in missions.

Virginia Niles... Dittmar... Ducharme

January, 1999

He Touched Me

In 1975 I saw a notice in a church bulletin about a new diet program. I had been wanting to lose ten pounds for a long time, but I just hadn't been able to (now I say "willing") stick to a diet. "Let's go to the orientation," I said to a friend. Expecting to see ten or fifteen people there, we couldn't believe we had to wait to get in! "Must be pretty good," I thought to myself.

As I read the application it said "Read the Bible daily"- well, I could do that if I could find a Bible. "Call members of the group"- what ever would we talk about? I could do it though. "Keep track of food and follow the diet prescribed:- that's what I was there for, so I would try. "Memorize a verse of Scripture each week." And, finally, the worst of all, "Learn to pray out loud"- in front of people? Never! But I signed, figuring I'd get by somehow.

At the first meeting I was very nervous. My friend was late, and I sat next to strangers. I felt as though the chair I was sitting in was outside the circle. "What's all this Christian business anyway?" I wondered.

The leaders came in, we (they) prayed, and I don't remember anything else except there were fat women, young women, unfriendly women, and too talkative women. I wished I hadn't joined, and I was worried about that praying part. Whatever would I say? (Didn't have to pray that first time, the leaders did it).

The day before our next meeting, I had a checkup with my doctor. Seven years prior, I had breast cancer. I underwent a radical mastectomy and hysterectomy, so this was the time to have my regular checkup. The doctor noticed something unusual in my shoulder and decided I needed an x-ray, which ultimately showed severe deterioration of the bone in the right clavicle, indicating a tumor. The radiologist was a personal friend, and he didn't tell me that I had a 50-50 chance of survival. I was terrified. What would happen? Diet was the farthest thing from my mind.

The next morning I was supposed to attend a meeting. I called my leader (we were required to do that if we weren't going to attend) and told her I would not be coming anymore. "I really don't need it now," I said. When she asked me "Why?" I started to cry uncontrollably, trying as best I could to explain this awful crisis in my life. The tears would not stop. I sobbed, "Just let me out." Very calmly she said, "Close your eyes while I pray and then listen to me."

Suddenly, while she prayed, I stopped crying. I felt as though I had a long distance connection to God. Someone was praying for ME! Someone I hardly knew cared for ME! When she asked me to come that morning, I said I would. "But please don't ask me to share," I pleaded. When your heart starts to pound and your throat gets dry, you'll share," she assured me. "And it is okay to cry."

Well, that is exactly what happened. I did share. I did cry. Suddenly I felt that my chair had moved silently into that circle. The other members all wept with me, prayed for me, and cared for me. Oh, God, how could I have been so quick to judge?

Many other people were praying for me while the doctors debated on radiation, chemotherapy or surgery. Finally the day came for a biopsy. That morning my new friends, the two leaders, came to visit while I waited for my husband, Bill, to pick me up.

(I might mention that by now I had bought a Bible, since I planned to stay in the program.) As we shared and waited, my leaders asked me if I would like to open my heart to Jesus. I could hardly wait to get down on my knees. Was this really me? What a wonderful, indescribable feeling crept over my whole body. Like a lovely warm shower enveloping me. I felt a tingling in my entire being. I know that I belonged to God.

Just a couple of hours later, during the biopsy under a local anesthetic in the operating room, there was another Presence with me. I felt the Lord so close. I wasn't nervous or scared.

I heard the two doctors discussing me, saying they could find nothing wrong. I asked about the deterioration of the bone and was told the bone was clean and whole. The x-rays did not agree with their findings. Later x-rays showed nothing. I was healed. Praise the Lord!

Can you believe that I shared this testimony at my first celebration dinner? This was the same body but a different person from the one who felt she couldn't share with the group. I sat with my friend who had joined the program with me, and she just pushed me out of my chair, otherwise, I never would have done it. When I sat down I asked her why she had pushed me so hard. She looked at me in amazement saying, "I never touched you." Right after that a wonderful soloist sang "He Touched Me." Then I knew why I had gotten up.

Thirty one years have passed since I became a born again Christian. I have just recently rededicated my life to God and plan to serve Him forever the best I know how. However long that may be.

In case you are wondering, I did lose ten pounds.

Shirley Harrington

Dear Friends,

The chapter of my faith story that unfolded at Parkminster is the story of God's faithfulness to me. Now looking back, I realize how young I was when I first arrived in September of 1979!

It was at the community of Jesus in MA that I met Dr. Bill Showalter, and by the time we'd finished our conversation I knew God was leading me, drawing me like a magnet to Parkminster church.

Bill had given me the phone number of Mary (now McGuire), a young woman with a spare room in her apartment and within three days I was moving in with this stranger and being introduced to 40+ young adults in the Parkminster singles group. I got a part time job at the Rochester Museum...and I prayed! WHAT was I doing here? What had God called me here for? Mary Doughty asked me to help out with 3D and Jo Mancini asked me to teach Sunday school...but I was very hesitant to get busy. I needed to hear from God.

Finally, with no answer forthcoming, I called the church office to make an appointment to see Bill. With plan A (find God's call on my life in Rochester) in a state of limbo, I had begun working on plan B (try foreign missions). This had been a strong interest of mine at Seminary, so with various application forms in tow I went to talk with him about why I couldn't get any further sense of God's leading.

Before letting me go into details however, he wanted to ask me one question...would I like to work at Parkminster as his assistant! It had been a little over three months since I had arrived. While I struggled and prayed, God had been using the time to put the pieces of my call to Parkminster in place. I was hired for three months, at which point session reviewed the situation.

Every three months my future hung in the balance as I learned how to trust God and be secure in His faithfulness. My faith in Him grew as I learned how scriptural principles worked in real everyday life...like the time I didn't want to go deeper in my commitment with Jesus, and everyone I called to do

VBS said "no". When I fought through my resistance and chose to trust Jesus in taking a new step, folks began to call back to say they had decided they would help after all!

At the end of my first year I was hired permanently- eventually as the Director of Christian Education and I felt as though I had never been anywhere else. Parkminster became my home and its members my family as God began to graft me into His body in a way I had never experienced before. Through it all a foundation was laid in my life of who God is, how very personal He is, and how faithfully I can expect Him to be there for me.

I look back at my time at Parkminster with tremendous gratefulness to God for His goodness to me in that place, for the many deep relationships that were forged, and for the many ways in which He used my time there to prepare me for the challenges that lay ahead.

As I consider Parkminster's centennial year with you all, it is with the conviction that you have the privilege of walking on holy ground, sanctified by the lives of prayer, sacrifice, commitment and love that were dedicated to God in that place over the years. May He who is faithful continue to keep your minds and hearts focused on Him as you journey together through the years ahead.

With much love,

Daryl Staneck

While a member of Parkminster in the 70's, I experienced a healing that has changed my life.

I have always been a fearful person and had a hard time believing God really loved me unconditionally. Somehow that love always seemed connected to performance, and I continually tried to get "A" in life. I felt that if I didn't do everything God expected of me I would be abandoned and end up in Hell. And if I didn't know what God expected I would try to think up the most disagreeable possibility in case that was it. Yes, though my theology was loaded with Biblical understanding, certainty about salvation by faith in Christ's finished work, confidence in grace, my head and heart were in different countries. My understanding said one thing, my emotions another.

One night in a "Discovery Group" I began to shake in terror when I was asked about my father. Bill Thompson asked me what I was afraid of and immediately I answered, "Of going to Hell." There seemed a connection and somehow I realized for the first time in my life that this fear was related to the loss of my earthly father. When I was three my father abandoned me, and I undoubtedly thought it must be through some fault of mine. I am "bad": I am abandoned. If I am "bad" God, my Heavenly Father, might abandon me and I'll be one of those people saying, "But Lord, I....." and He will answer, "Depart from me. I never knew you, you worker of iniquity!"

Bill asked me what I would say to my father if he were in the room that night, and I said, "Why did you leave me?" The next day I faced in my imagination a father I never knew, and I forgave him for leaving and I wept and grieved that loss. I felt as though I were actually touching him somehow and was being reunited. This was in May.

Seven months later, in December, I received a letter telling me that my father had died in California the previous May. I telephoned the family that had gotten in touch with my family, and over the phone I met a loving Christian woman, about my age, who had visited my father in the nursing home and had him in her home for holidays. She learned from him that he had a child that he longed to see, that he had spent his life wandering in alcoholism, finally becoming sober through Alcoholics Anonymous. She became a daughter to him and welcomed him to her family. She told me he loved Jesus and read his Bible regularly, and that his greatest longing was to be forgiven. And that he had told her he was asked to leave because of his alcoholism. He missed me all his life.

Norm and I went out to California and had a memorial service, visited his grave, learned all we could about his life, met people who had known him, and finally put to rest a chapter that had never before been finished. And since that time I have not been afraid that God would abandon me. I thank the Lord for a powerful healing and the amazing timing of the events. I needed that healing at that particular time of my life more than ever before. God's timing is perfect. It was perfect for me. It was perfect for him. Through my forgiveness he was set free to die in peace. I visit his grave from time to time and sense a bond of love and the confidence that someday we will be reunited perfectly.

Jean Coombs
8/27/98

My Faith Story

Growing up as an Evans, my life in many ways revolved around Parkminster Presbyterian Church. I remember countless and seemingly endless Saturdays working at the church with my father George. Together we at one time or another fixed or repaired just about everything at the church at least once. I learned from my father that being a Christian involved a much deeper commitment than just attending a worship service once a week, and that stewardship involved much more than giving 10% of our money to the church. I learned from my dad on these Saturdays that being a Christian meant that we must be willing to live our whole life in dedication and service to Christ.

As a middle school and high school student I was able to participate in many youth group activities and retreats. I am so very grateful to all of the people who gave of their time to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst a group of kids who probably often didn't give them a lot of attention or respect. In the middle of each week of school I knew there was a place where I could go where I would be accepted and received by my friends and leaders. The weekly teaching and discussions went a long way towards developing and instilling in me a Christian world view. My times in youth group provided a solid basis and inspiration for the youth ministries with which I have since been involved.

However the most important thing which Parkminster did for me was when as a second grader, I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior with the guidance and direction of our Sunday School teacher Ida Selig. For this I am eternally grateful.

In Christ,

Jonathan Evans

A Faith Story

It was early Saturday morning, the day I was to go home after having prostate surgery for cancer, five days earlier. I awoke about five-thirty to find the whole left side of my face swollen. My swallowing and breathing were being affected. Everything had gone well during the radical surgery; the pathology report showed no spread of that dreaded disease anywhere else in my body; the MRI and bone scan were both negative; I was uncomfortable, of course, but healing had begun.

My son, Andrew flew in from California to be with me that week, as a surprise on my 60th birthday. I knew that people were praying for me all over God's kingdom. But now I was frightened. What was happening to me? Why could I not get the nurse to come in? I could not get out of bed by myself, because of two large incisions in my abdomen. I had a hernia repaired at the same time! Time was racing on and the swelling was moving on down into my neck and throat.

My hospital bed was directly opposite the door to my room, and I considered throwing my water pitcher out the door to try to attract attention from someone, anyone! For me, things were growing desperate. I began to pray, "Jesus, help me!"

On Sunday, two days before my surgery, I stood in the pulpit of First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, and openly shared with my congregation, at both services, just what lay ahead of me. I remember mentioning the risks that the surgeon had told me about, including bodily dysfunction and even death. In front of all those people I declared, "Am I afraid? Yes. But I know that my life is in God's hands. I know that I belong

to Christ, and there is nothing that can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus."

As I lay helpless in my hospital bed, all of this came flooding back to my mind. "OK Lord, is this a test?" I said out loud. A surgical resident came in, looked me over, asked me to raise my eye brows, then smile, telling me that he would find an ice pack. He disappeared. More time went by. I rang for the nurse. No response. The resident came back, checked me over again, and decided to call my surgeon, who happened to be on call that weekend. He immediately went into action, sent in an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist, who indeed informed me that my throat was closing up. "Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus...neither death nor life..."

The medication the EENT specialist prescribed reduced the swelling and guarded against any infection. So what precipitated all this? I was having an allergic reaction to the red coloring dye in Jell-O! It was so simple, but the stage had been set by other medications I had to take following the surgery. But the stage was set on that Sunday before my surgery, when I made my declaration of faith. Yes, when it comes to practical faith, we pastors just might be helped by listening to our own sermons!

Everett W Sahrbeck, Pastor

First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Pennsylvania

FAITH STORY

Congratulations on planning for the Centennial Celebration. I think it is a wonderful idea to have many write their Faith Story. Out of this will come healing and reconciliation among many who have had or are presently involved in the life of Parkminster.

I came to Rochester in 1967 from Philadelphia to work on the faculty at the University of Rochester. I visited several churches week after week, seeking the Lord's guidance for the one I should attend and join. A friend took me to Parkminster one Sunday. The feeling of love and caring was immediately recognized and I knew I had found the right place for me.

Through the years I have felt a real bond with my friends at Parkminster, for they were like family to me. My own family was far away in India, Africa and Alaska. So it meant a great deal to be part of a loving church family.

I became involved in many of the activities at Parkminster, including the Outreach Committee, Keenagers, Sunday school, Women's Association and the session. I have many happy memories of Outreach dinners, picnics in

the park, Easter sunrise service, candlelight services on Christmas Eve, and special services at Easter time.

My life verse is Proverbs 3:5 and 6 - "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths." This has been so true in my life. I am indeed grateful for His guidance step by step.

In 1985 I retired from the faculty position at the University of Rochester as Professor Emerita from the school of nursing. Ten years later, in 1995 the Lord was leading Penny (Lily) and me to move to Sebring, Florida. When we flew down to find housing, we came at the right time to the right place. We love our home and the spaciousness of the lawns around us and of the house itself. We have become involved in the life of the SIM Village by being on the social committee which plans for social activities. We are also involved in the life of the Presbyterian Church which we attend.

Rose Pinneo
1806 Elf Dr.
Sebring, FL 33872

LIVING FOR JESUS - LIVING WITH JESUS

It has been my privilege and joy to live for Jesus in serving Him for 38 years in Nigeria as a missionary nurse-midwife-anesthetist. Teaching the Word to hospital staff, church women and Sunday School children was the icing on the cake. I went to serve. Then things switched. I needed to be served. A new, deadly virus entered and caused havoc. Imagine being a hostess to a virus! Two others whom I nursed had died from this virus. Yale University stopped research on it when two staff became infected. One died and a researcher recovered after receiving my plasma with antibodies. This was the beginning of a new disease, called Lassa Fever, from the town where the first patient had come. A second outbreak occurred at "my" hospital a year later with a 50% mortality rate, even taking the Medical director. This new virus is one of the 5 deadliest known. Other outbreaks continue to appear in West Africa.

While going through the dark days of the havoc the virus was causing in my body, I experienced what it means to live with Jesus. "If I should have only ten days to live, what should be my attitude," I thought to myself. "Well, I'll just enjoy my Lord". "Help me to take this, Lord" I pleaded daily. He did. "When you walk through the fire you shall not be burned," said the Lord through Isaiah Chapter 42:2. Even with a temperature of 107 degrees, He was there. His presence carried me through. God does draw us closer to Him in suffering.

With healing came an enlarging of service. There was opportunity to witness through the world-wide publicity this story made; helping virologists with research in Nigeria and Liberia, nursing Lassa Fever patients, sharing my serum with antibodies, saving lives and obtaining serum with antibodies from recovered patients which is used for treatment.

Read all about it in the book, "Fever" by John Fuller, published by the Readers' Digest Press in 1974. There is a copy in the Parkminster Church Library.

Rejoicing in the Lord,
"Penny" (Lily) Pinneo

A Letter of Faith

After my accident, I became a quadriplegic. My wife and I loved each other, and she being a trained nurse, took exceptional care of me for most of twelve years, going through the different stages of depression caused by this disaster.

She had to give up nursing and do housework, so she could come home between jobs and take care of me. These were hard times, financially, as well as emotionally. Over 85% of marriages of this type end in divorce as ours did. A friend and neighbor took my place – a crushing blow, but perhaps predestined.

Several of my close friends saw the dreadful condition I was in and invited me to go to Costa Rica on a vacation. The beautiful weather, warm ocean water and balmy air was a far cry from the Alaskan cold long dark days.

We stayed for several weeks and when we left I made up my mind to return. This was a real leap of faith, as I did not know where I would live or who would take care of me. I did not speak Spanish and had to try and explain the various health precautions to be taken, which were not understood and I almost lost my life from infection.

The Bible was the only book I had been able to take, and needless to say, I all but memorized it.

Later I was able to rent a small house opposite a church and hire a man to cook and take care of me, who also held a job at a bakery. We had people coming and going and being so close to the church they often stopped before and after services.

We had a pleasant living room with two doors to a front bedroom and bath. The bath also had a second door to my bedroom.

One young man asked if he could use the bath. He stayed in there for quite a time, but we though nothing of it until later. I had saved enough money to buy a ticket to return to Alaska to spend the summer with my two daughters and this was a short time before I was to leave.

When I went to the bedroom to get my money to purchase the ticket, to my amazement and shock, it was gone! My friend, a young policeman did everything to find the culprit, but to no avail.

I had to lay back and say, if the Lord wanted me to return he would have to do something, as worry was useless. It seemed hopeless! Several days went by and all of a sudden the guilty one returned to my door. All but a few dollars were returned.

I said, "Why did you come back?" He said he had gone into the mountains, where no one could find him, when one day something took hold of him and told him to return the money to the owner. He was scared and followed the instructions.

I came home for the summer and thanked the Lord for answering my prayers. He continues to be a presence in my daily experiences.

Kent Aslett

Footnote:

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Kent found himself in the poorest part of Nicaragua, supporting a family of five in return for his care. Small children had no clothes; many had never had a meal. The Sandinistas had taught hate and dissent. The need for change was a fertile ground for his missionary work to begin.

Now speaking fluent Spanish, he was able to organize some women to come in Sunday mornings to teach and cook a meal of staples such as rice, beans or a stew. The first hour and a half is spent with Bible stories and singing hymns followed by a hot meal. Starting with a handful of children the attendance has grown to 130 or more.

Having survived several bouts of malaria, scabiosa, infections and a violent volcano mudslide, he still is enthused enough to acquire some land to grow food for these people.

He may not be able to open his hands but he has surely opened his heart. (Ruth Aslett)

1970 – I prayed to the Holy Spirit, "I haven't thought of you since fourth grade when I was confirmed, but I know you're called Comforter, and I need you now. Please comfort me."

All of a sudden I had the driving desire to get the mail. It was Wednesday – Gates-Chili News delivery day. I felt compelled to read it. I came upon Carol Showalter's column, telling me how much Jesus loved me.

I wrote her a note right then. I told her I hope she appreciated all the love she had from her family and church – the unconditional acceptance, how fortunate she was. I mailed it.

On Friday I received a note from her inviting me to visit with her. Saturday I sat in her living room.

That is how I got to Parkminster and a very close walk with Christ.

I brought my three children to services the next day. The people were so encouraging. We were invited to the Wednesday night supper. I brought my dish to pass and my children. We found the Social Hall and before we could wonder what to do next, Nellie Morse invited us to join her family at their table. We had a lovely time. Everyone was so warm and friendly. I could hardly wait until next Sunday so we could go to Church again.

I volunteered to help Doris Carey teach arts and crafts at Youth Club and stayed on to help make the evening meal for all of the kids.

One thing I've learned about Presbyterians is that they eat a lot. I helped with meals for shut-ins, Women's luncheons, Presbytery luncheons, and meals for any type of reception and retreats.

I am a joiner. Parkminster offered something every day of the week. My husband worked out of state and was seldom home during that period. Our neighbors were elderly and stayed to themselves. There were no children in the area for my kids so I had to invite them from other areas.

Sometimes at night I would drive to Church just to sit in the library and meditate. I felt the Presence of the Holy Spirit everywhere in the building. It was so comforting. Sometimes I would run into another member who was seeking the same solace. And we would talk – and leave feeling better.

Soon I was involved in Vacation Bible School, 3-D, Women's Choir, flower arrangements for the altar, weddings, etc.

We were spiritually fed through all of our activities and retreats. I became a deacon and worked in the Church bookstore for many years. Our lives were so full. We grew in Jesus.

Everybody cared about everyone. We were available to each other for everything, joyfully.

As my children grew into adults, they stayed at Parkminster and it was wonderful to worship together. Eventually, our two grandchildren attended.

I smile when remembering the fun we had at the square dances, the skits of the young adults, and the various dinners and brunches. This was Family – Christ's Family. I praise God in my daily prayers for bringing us to Parkminster.

Diane Privitera

A part of the Christian life includes the process of learning to stand on our own, with God, regardless of what the rest of the world is doing. Amidst all the "teaching," God used our years at Parkminster to increase my understanding of the importance of seeing Him as the Provider in all areas of life.

One day, home alone, I was grieving over the loss of a friendship I had enjoyed. I was saying to God – "I needed that friend. Why did our relationship have to come to an end?" In the midst of my tears, an inaudible voice projected into my mind this thought: "If you believe that I provide for all your needs, apply it to this situation." I was then able to see that if God provided the friends that I need, this particular friendship must be a want and not a need. I could be happy with the people God brought to me, since He knew what was best. I did not need to yearn for relationships with those who were not part of His plan for me.

Settling that issue brought contentment. Praise the Lord!

I hope this sharing will be a blessing to someone.

Ruth Letson

You are dear to my heart and always will be. For it was as a member of Parkminster that I heard Dr. King preaching a sermon about the unconditional love of God. Previously I daydreamed during church but for some reason that Sunday morning, I heard the sermon and it had a powerful effect on me. In short, I started to wake up spiritually so much so that I wrote a letter to Dr. King. He replied in a touching letter, which I have saved to this day. So began my journey to accept Jesus into my life but not without a struggle, I'm afraid. Why are some people so stubborn? After all, if we want Him, we do have to open the door. At any rate, I finally did invite Jesus into my life and there began a work in progress, so to speak, as the Lord began "the clean up". I had so much to learn, so much sin to deal with, and so much to be healed of. Through all the pain, the joy, and the laughter, there were dear ones at Parkminster to help me through. I will always be grateful to them, especially Bill and Carol Showalter, Ev and Nancy Sahrbeck, and many other dear friends who helped me so much. Those were wonderful times as we learned how to care for others.

So dear Parkminster, may God continue to bless you. May you always be a beacon of hope and love to all who enter your doors. For surely you are called.

**Love in Jesus,
Helen McClurg**

Every time I prayed about submitting a testimony to the book being compiled of faith stories, I couldn't get away from this little story I had written for a local paper. It didn't seem to fit. Or not until I submitted to the Lord to send my story, whether it made sense to me or not.

Read the story - a true story - which began the beginning of June and know the analogy to Parkminster Church.

I was one of the little birds, left to die in self and sin. And some do die and some do live to go on to be nurtured to learn to fly, to be used in God's Kingdom. I was caught in the storm of life and Parkminster Church became my new nest. There I was fed and taught to fly, and then go out as God sent me.

It was the place God had chosen. He led and He provided, and He built for such a time as I had need. And I did have need. It was 1973. With a sick body, and sick spirit and sick emotions, God fed me. Not on corn mush, but by His Word, holy and pure. Not on worms, but by His Holy Spirit, divinely directed. Not on fruit, but death to self, resting and trusting, like a baby bird must do so to allow a human to supply what was needed to survive.

Praise God for His provision through Parkminster Church. Praise God for His Holy Spirit in the place. It was my launching pad. I give God the glory for He does all things well.

Cherie Caille (Garth)
306 N. Division Street
Parker City, IN. 47368

Many people at Parkminster probably do not even know who I am, and though I was never a member and was only in your midst for one year, I feel as much a bond with Parkminster as with the other churches I have been a member of. Let me tell you why.

It started with a roommate I had in college, Sarah Kuyt, who would talk to no end of her church back home and the wonderful people that made it so special. Then it was a month spent in the Kuyt's home while I was interning at Strong Memorial Hospital, and the wonderful Christain love in the house, never mind their obvious dedication to Parkminster. However, I did not completely understand the beauty of Parkminster until, by the grace of God, I was provided an opportunity to live with Beverly Evans while I did my graduate work. Not only did Bev show me how the truly faithful walk with the Lord, but she continually encouraged me to do the same. When I first moved to town, she introduced me to Becky Davis and encouraged me to play in the orchestra, and when she met my friends she encouraged them to come and participate as well. When it came time to make some major decisions in my life she not only prayed for me, but she helped me listen to what God wanted for me not just what I thought I wanted. Now that I look back at my one year in Rochester, I am so thankful for what God provided me in Parkminster: a faithful roommate, an adoptive family, a godly landlady, and a church full of friendly and supportive people. For all of you at Parkminster, I thank you, for you made a temporary resting place feel like home. God bless you and may you touch the lives of many more.

**With Love in Christ,
Karen Storms**

My Conversion to Christ

It was the early 1960's. I was attending college, and involved in a fraternity and intercollegiate sports. I was running a part time business and going to class. One morning I woke up with the question drumming in my mind, "So what if you finish school, enter a good paying career, marry, have children, own a home, have all the "toys" and money in the bank? You're going to die and leave it all!"

I thought, "God, if there's a God, He's played a cruel joke on us all. After all, what's the point to life if this is all there is, and then you die and leave it all?" For a year after that I was driven by the question: "What's the point to life?"

I quit school. I went to work. I asked every one I met, "Why are you alive?" And then one day a person told me, "Pray!" When I tried to pray I didn't know what to say. As I cast about for the right words a thought came to me, "Say the name, Jesus."

I had used that name regularly as a curse word. And now I was going to say it as a prayer. I said, "Jesus!" Immediately I sensed an invisible door standing in front of me. I repeated the Name. Each time I did so, I sensed that door opening wider, until it was standing wide open and Jesus was before me.

The thought came, "Find a Bible and read." I picked up the Bible, opened it to John's gospel chapter one. The words: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" stood out in bold print like the headline of a newspaper. Immediately I knew Jesus had the true answer to my question about life.

My first church experience was at Parkminster United Church. There I was introduced to people who took seriously the Faith of Christ. They nurtured my faith. For almost forty years the memory of those people has been a reference point in my spiritual life.

I thank God for Parkminster and it's enduring influence in my life and ministry.

During the past thirty one years I have served as pastor of three Evangelical Covenant Churches in Illinois, Minnesota and now in California.

Ronald Mancini
Rocklin, California

My Faith Story

There are those among us who must sink into despair before we can acknowledge our total need of God. I am one of those. It took a devastating illness - an emotional upheaval - to force me to let go of my self-sufficiency. Then from my bed, in the darkness of the night, I could cry to the Lord, "I can't handle this anymore. I surrender. I'm in your hands from now on."

No, I didn't experience immediate healing. It was a long, slow, painful process, aided by a counselor who prayed with me. But each step of the way I learned to toss my anxieties to Jesus, to allow Him to carry my burdens, and to lead me into a deeper faith and understanding of His love.

It was many years later before I was finally freed to recognize myself for who I really am - a sinner unable to save myself - in need, not just of healing, but of forgiveness, mercy and grace. And the need has always been met.

What a great God we worship!

Shirley Barnum

FAITH STORY

Our Sunday School class has been studying the book of Romans. Throughout the chapters the word faith appears numerous times and this has caused us to ponder the meaning of the word and its impact on the Illi family. God has been forever faithful to us through our walk with Him.

Shortly after our marriage in 1973 we moved to Chili, and began attending Parkminster Church. George Evans and James Bradley were faithful in their visit to our home, welcoming us to the community and church. It was at Parkminster that our Christian faith as well as our marriage grew with a solid foundation in the Lord. Our children, Ted and Katherine, were baptized and raised in the church to become believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. Their Preschool education at Parkminster, Summers Best Two Weeks and Young Life played a big part in nurturing them along in their faith. We thank all the Sunday School teachers and youth leaders that gave of their love, time, energy in providing a Christian education that continued to build up their faith.

Each of us had the privilege of serving the Lord at Parkminster and are grateful for the time spent in the fellowship of believers. We were enriched by the worship services, adult Christian Education classes, the many meals and fun activities shared. The fellowship and friends we made will last a lifetime. We were continually blessed and praise God for the years that we were a part of such a faithful congregation.

God indeed has been faithful and will continue to bless you all as you follow in His footsteps.

Love in Christ,
Bob, Ginny, Ted and Katherine Illi

One hundred years! Amazing! What seems equally amazing to me is that I graduated seminary and was ordained more than twenty years ago. From my senior year in high school (1971) until that ordination (1977), the family and friends of Parkminster were like constant companions. I look back with deep gratitude to God for the way he put us together.

As much as I would like to be with you on May 22 and 23, I am afraid that I have to decline the opportunity. It is not my job, which prevents me from coming, but my "hobby." For the past three years I have been pursuing a Ph.D. in Liturgical Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. My course work is complete, and I am now in the midst of Comprehensive Examinations. I must complete four of these exams between now and September, and May is the date of my second one. Though I thoroughly enjoy the studies, this stage is rather unpleasant, and quite demanding, as you might imagine. Even the dissertation process itself looks like a relief!

I hope that you can understand the constraints, which compel me to send my regrets. But with those regrets, I send my prayers for a blessed and joyous event. The life of Parkminster has been a source of strength and hope to hundreds of people who found the love of Christ in that place. I am one of them, and I shall always be thankful.

Sincerely in Christ,
Robert L. Shannon
P.O. Box 2006
Orleans, MA 02653

I can remember being involved in churches most of my youth in one way or another. I clearly remember being baptized in the Bethel Full Gospel Tabernacle in Decatur, Illinois when I was eight or nine years old; but I did not follow or develop a heart for Jesus until much later. Most of my younger years were spent as an angry, rebellious and often obnoxious human being. I had all the excuses: broken home, not wanted, etc. Basically I did not trust anyone - and that included God.

At seventeen, after some trouble with the law, I joined the US Air Force. At twenty I married Fran, had two daughters, Nathalie and Dominique, and after five years of marriage divorced my wife.

I spent one year in Viet Nam (1968-1969) and returned more troubled than ever. All this time the Lord had been working in my life situations. I didn't know it until much later but I can see the many times he literally saved my life. I now recognize the plan he had. The plan was to change this creature through his love.

When Fran called me in 1972 to say she had a neuromuscular disease and that she needed help with our kids or would have to return to France, I decided to join her in Rochester, NY. I had been thinking about my life and God. I had come to a point where I was ready to allow God to prove himself to me. I was not ready to give him control. I had been fighting all my life and the issue for me was NO TRUST! I said, "OK God, if you can do better, show me!"

It was like God planted a seed of love and it started to grow. God became real to me. By the end of 1972 Fran and I were remarried. For the next two years God worked to place us in a church family.

I spent from 1974 until my ordination in 1984 at Parkminster Presbyterian Church. Through the ministry and support of members like George Evans, Helen and John McClurg, Discovery groups, the ministers, especially Rev. Showalter, I heard and responded to God's call to the ordained ministry. I have always known that this call was something I never achieved or was qualified for. Rather, I needed to be a minister more than God needed me to be a minister.

I cannot even imagine my life without Jesus. I hope you who read this realize how important Parkminster was in my faith development. In the nearly 15 years of service to God's church in Pennsylvania and now in New Jersey, I continue to share the journey with many people lost, lonely and afraid. Whatever success God has granted Fran and my ministry, Parkminster was the place where I received much training and encouragement. I always think of you with affection.

If I listed all the people who contributed to my faith development from Parkminster the list would rival the begets in the book of I Chronicles. You know who you are, and it's to you I send love and warmest greeting and grateful thanks! Keep begetting!

In Christ,
Rev. Tom Lynn
552 Union St.
Rahway, NJ 07065

I do not remember a time when Christ was not an important part of my life. Born and raised in the Catholic Church, this was not surprising since I grew up in France where the Protestant Reformed Church was absolutely forbidden to me.

So when I married my husband, I embarked on the path to change him. We married in the Catholic Church. He signed the papers promising to raise our future children in the Catholic faith - and he tried! When we divorced four years later he went his way and I went mine only to be reunited five years later under very difficult circumstances.

Tom had committed his life to Christ and again I believed we were to worship in the Catholic Church. But God had other plans for our life so that after hearing Bill Showalter speak at a "Men's Breakfast" we decided to go visit his church. (I had matured enough to know that God would not strike me dead if I walked into a Protestant church.)

We found a home at Parkminster Presbyterian Church, even though, for two years after Tom joined, I still went to Mass on Saturday and to Parkminster on Sunday. But when Tom felt a call to the ministry, I knew that a house divided could not stand and I needed the care, love and teaching that Parkminster provided.

Our years in Rochester were at times very difficult since I was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis. Being very weak I was most grateful for all the help while Tom was in college, then seminary while still working at Kodak full time and trying to raise two teenagers. This was such an awesome time of growing up into the Lord.

Ordination came in 1984 and when we left for our first church in Pennsylvania, thanks to all the pastors and ministers of Parkminster, we were ready.

We had seven and one-half years in Pennsylvania and went on to New Jersey where we have been ministering now for seven years.

Our daughters are now married with children of their own and the irony of it is that one married a Catholic and they worship together in the Catholic Church and the other married a Presbyterian and they worship in PCA tradition. They both chose a very conservative church and they both love the Lord that was presented to them in Parkminster.

With All My Love,
Francoise Lynn
552 Union St.
Rahway, NJ 07065

Congratulation to the congregation on the occasion of your centennial year. Most of you are way too young to remember that small beginning back in 1899. But the seeds of faith sown that year have brought an abundant harvest of faith in the lives of many through the years.

We want to share a brief faith story of our own. We moved to Gates and became affiliated with Parkminster in 1971, when Larry was directing the Rochester Reachout for Dr. Leighton Ford of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Bill Showalter, the chairman of the Reachout, was pastor at the time. Ida joined Parkminster and taught 4th grade Sunday school, attended a Bible study, and thoroughly enjoyed the Christian fellowship with many women there, some of whom became lifelong friends.

Our 5 year old son, David was suffering with allergies at the time, and was receiving weekly allergy shots, but with little improvement. Eventually, he became worse following each shot. One evening we invited George and Beverly Evans to come and pray for David. After praying we all felt that we were to discontinue the allergy shots. When Ida called the doctor to tell him of David's most recent allergy problem following a shot, the doctor said, "I think we should discontinue the shots!" David's symptoms immediately disappeared! Praise the Lord!

We are grateful for the year spent in Rochester as part of the Parkminster family of faith. The friendship and fellowship we experienced there deeply blessed and encouraged our family. May Parkminster continue to be a place where individuals and families will find faith in Christ, be discipled, and go forth into the community and world to give away their faith.

Cordially in Christ,
Larry and Ida Selig
230 Mayfair Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

MY FAITH STORY

My husband, Walter, and I were charter members of Parkminster United Presbyterian Church. Walter had been a long-time member of First United Presbyterian, had been an elder, treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, and was chairman of the committee that selected the Chili-Pixley property as a site for the new church. He was on the search committee when Dr. Herman W. King was called as pastor.

My own membership had been in Asbury-First Church where I grew up. I had always attended church and Sunday school as well as youth group and Sunday evening worship.

However, I did not know Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. I had drifted from the church in my college years. When my mother died I knew that she was in heaven with Jesus. I was also pretty sure that I would not be there.

That's when I went back to Asbury-First, and that's about the time I met Walter. Through him and my association with Parkminster Church, Dr. King, and people like Dominic Mancini, Beverly and George Evans, I came to believe in Jesus Christ and accepted him as my personal Lord and Savior.

My years in Parkminster were a time of spiritual growth. I was privileged to serve as church secretary for several years, to teach junior high Sunday school, and serve on the evangelism committee. Participation in 3-D fellowship (Diet, Discipline and Discipleship) also encouraged me in a closer walk with the Lord.

I'll never forget the wonderful friends I made at Parkminster or the great opportunities offered me in various roles. You will always be in my prayers as you are in my heart.

Jane G. Wilson

OUR FAITH STORY

We give thanks to the Parkminster family for their care and discipleship of us during our courtship and early marriage. When Rich surprised us eight weeks prematurely in February 1980, Pastor Tom Witter read Psalm 116 to us in the ICU at Strong. The Lord has been good to us! Rich is a freshman at Elim Bible Institute, preparing for full-time music ministry. Audrey is a junior at Lima Christian School and hopes to be a missionary nurse.

**Don and Sharon
Oppedisano**

God has blessed me and our family so wonderfully and in so many ways that I can think of many "faith" stories that I could share, but there is one in particular that keeps coming back to me since I've received your request and I believe it's the one the Lord would have me tell.

My story takes place about twenty years ago. Elaine Gallup and I were the co-directors of Vacation Bible School that summer at Parkminster Church. We had the largest number of children that Parkminster had ever had until that year. There were many tasks to perform to get ready for the school and we knew it was going to be a big job. We also knew that Satan might try to throw a "monkey wrench" into things as he likes to do whenever any of us try to do something for the Lord. We decided from the start that no matter what happened and whatever the devil would throw our way that we would not be shaken and we would put out trust in God to provide what we needed.

Pretty soon the children came swarming in the doors of the church every morning. It was wonderful and exciting to see so many little faces and here was the opportunity to teach them about Christ.

One morning just minutes before school was to start, Elaine came running up to me and said "Joy, half the staff has called and are unable to make it today as everyone seems to have come down with the flu." Meanwhile hundreds of children were pouring into the sanctuary of the church.

Elaine and I remembered our promise to trust God and so we immediately dropped everything and started to pray. We told the Lord we believed he would provide for the school and we were not going to give into fear and confusion as to what to do.

What happened next was absolutely incredible. Complete strangers started to appear at the church and ask if there was anything they could do. Many of them were not even parents of the children and Elaine and I did not recognize them. We immediately put them to work and gave them assignments. There were so many people available to help that Elaine gave out extra work for them to do so everyone could be given a task and do some work for the next couple of days in case some of our staff was still ill.

I believe that these strangers could have been angels sent by God. We never saw these people again and we have no idea where they came from, but they appeared just after Elaine and I prayed when they were most needed.

This incident did so much in building my faith and learning to trust in God. He has proven to be so faithful to me over the years and I have learned that no matter what happens, that Christ is always with me, always loving me, protecting me and providing for me and it is in Him that I can put my complete trust - Praise God!

With a grateful and loving heart,
Joy Brower

The meal she brought was so amazing! There were so many wonderful things to eat, far more than what we needed. The message was clear....no matter what the outcome, God's love would prevail!

Parkminster has always been and remains an excellent place for faith building with the help of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our faith is not strengthened by a sort of placebo by which we hope to comfort ourselves, but by the very real witness of God at work in our lives. If you have been putting off becoming more involved or connected in the church family, you're missing a lot. Don't wait any longer, take a small step in faith! Walk with someone or have them walk with you in whatever you're going through, big or small, now is the time!

My Faith Story

I begin my story, with a grateful heart, talking about our time as members of Parkminster Presbyterian Church. My husband, Michael and I have been members for 22 years. I was 8 months pregnant with our first born, Sarah Elizabeth, when we started coming to our church. It was a time that God nudged me to take a serious look at him and it changed my life. I still remember when the church had their greetings to each other how nervous I was. I knew no one. Sitting in front of us were George & Beverly Evans. How many can remember back to their first Sunday only to find the same people were sitting in front of them? They wrote down our names and asked all about us. The next Sunday, they were there again and it was such a nice feeling to actually know someone.

We showed up a few Sundays later with this brand new baby. Many were surprised to see this little girl and thought I was just a very fat person. Being a new parent was a scary time but we received plenty of support from other mothers in our church. I remember back to luncheons that were given for all us new mothers. As we sat around the beautifully decorated table, I felt very special! Here were other mothers that had the same concerns and we could ask the ladies with experience what to do. We met every other month and I recollect how I looked forward to those times.

In 1979, Michael and I were praying about opening up our own business. At this time we met with others to study the word and support each other in prayer. The group had many exciting things going on. The Tribbleys had just started thinking about mission work, the McClurgs had just gotten married, many newly married couples all seeking where they were to be in God's plan for them. I still remember when we found our first location for our business, this entire group showed up to help us paint. Someone beautifully painted 'JESUS' on the back wall of our store for us to see every day. As I look back over the years, one of the words that describe our church family is, supportive!

When we joined the church, we were asked what talents we had that we could potentially share. I remember sitting there thinking to myself, talents? When it got to me, I said that I could cook. I just didn't know what else to claim. A week later I was called to help out in the making of a church dinner. Our church kitchen was in constant use. I showed up and also 8 other women to cook a dinner from scratch. I still remember slicing up carrots to make for the feast and having a great time getting to know more members really well. When you cook together for three hundred people to be fed, you get to be great friends.

I remember back to my first teaching assignment. There I was, a fairly new Christian and I was to teach the 5th & 6th grade. It was a pretty big class with three children from our pastors' families, kids that had been raised in the church and were Bible smart. I only made it through my first class because of the grace of God and the kindness poured over me by those kids. Becoming humble was something I needed and it was in this group that I learned it. I have

to tell you that those were smart Bible kids. I would start work on the next Sundays lesson the Sunday before and they still would know more! It was just what I needed to get me into the Word. Thank you guys!

For most of my church life, I have been a member of a prayer chain. Prayer support is what I'd like to see our church family written in God's book, as their strength! No greater joy can be experienced than seeing God's hand touch someone. You never really know how it works, but His greatness showers over me every time I bow my head to pray for someone.

In 1989, I experienced a showering of love and prayer support as I laid in a hospital near death. I had an Arterial-Vascular Malformation in my brain, explode. I was in a coma and not expected to live. Prayer support was lifted by our church family and they spread the need to others. I remember being prayed for in the middle of the night by someone who got up, dressed and drove to the hospital because that was what she thought she was being called to do. What an extraordinary display of obedience that this woman demonstrated. The showering of your love over me and my family is incredible!

I was in that hospital for two months before I stabilized enough to be operated on. A brand new procedure had just been discovered in Buffalo. I, was their first patient! They entered a vein in my leg, went through the heart and up into the brain to pre-determine what my losses would be when they entered my brain for the corrective surgery. It was brand new! Our God is so good! They decided that I would lose part of my sight. I was flown back to Rochester in a Helicopter and everyone waited for me to stabilize before my surgery could take place.

They had flagged my brain to let the surgeon know where to cut and what to avoid. I picture it to be a lot like road construction, with flags to show you the way. The AVM was found deep into the brain. The surgeon finished his work and came to talk to my family. The prospects were not very good. It had been a very tough surgery and he cautioned my family for the worst. Just the very fact that I was still alive was evidence enough for this surgeon to mention to my family that he had experienced a miracle.

The fun of sharing this point in my life is that I was not an active participant. God placed me in a position that my body could be used to demonstrate His handiwork. For those that were part of the prayer process, they could see His work and stand in awe of Him. My three children, Sarah, David and Annika, and husband were cared for like no one ever has been. My church family thought it best that my three kids were kept in a stable routine. Music lessons, sports, horseback riding lessons were continued. Annika, then 3, was cared for everyday which allowed Michael to spend his time at the hospital. Dinners were brought to them, laundry was taken care of and I go into tears, just thinking about how YOU, gave for 102 days so richly to my family!

As you can see I have recovered more than most could even hope for. Because I spent such a long time in a coma, I had almost complete loss of knowledge. I learned to walk, climb stairs, conquered my adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing skills. I learned how to read and write which meant being taught all my words again. The list of losses could be much longer if I stated all of them. My church family was there to encourage me and reflect on where I had been. God left me with no personal memory of it. Praise the Lord! Many people, after going through this type of set back, spend years in rehabilitation. I spent two weeks!! The rest of the work was done at home where I was never allowed to give up.

So, why, were all of us put through this? As believers, I think, God allows us to exercise our faith to help build strength. In this area, we stand strong! I look at the possibilities and felt that God had me right where He wanted me. Other very strong faith members have been graduated to go to live with Almighty God. As a Christian, it turns out to be a no lose situation!

My brain surgeon kept having me come to visit him in his office. After a year and a half, I asked him, what he was looking for? He told me that he just liked to see this miracle over and over again. He told me that I should not be here. When I went back to Genesee Hospital to be with my mother, who was then dying of cancer, a nurse came up to me and asked, if I was Julie Kuyt? I told her, yes and she got this incredible smile. She said that in all the years that she worked in I.C.U., she had never seen anyone so richly cared for by her church family!

You have taught me a lot about how to pray without losing hope. You have showed me that keeping your faith in Almighty God allows you to stand strong in your praying. I get so excited when I get a call from the prayer chain, I, now have an opportunity to join each of you as we seek God's will. You have taught me that if it is God's will for us, it is good!

I write to you all, to let you know how fantastic it is to be a part of this church family. We have lived through a lot. Joy, sadness, abundance, insufficiency and we have gotten to do it together! No matter how tough things got the body of Parkminster Church stood faithful! I pray that we stand firm on Galatians 6:9-10,

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."
(NIV)

I love you all very much!

In Christ,
Julie M. Kuyt

"DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD AND HE WILL GIVE YOU THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEART." PSALM 37:4

There have been many times in my life when recalling this quote from the Psalms has comforted me. The Lord has answered many prayers for me in my life and given me more than I could have imagined possible. I would love to share a very special time when God used the wonderful people of Parkminster to walk with me.

Parkminster Church is a special place. It isn't special because of what it is made of or where it is located, though. After all, the church is only the building. It is a special place because Jesus is Lord and Savior there. It is a special place because of the thoughtful, loving people who choose to worship there.

Chuck and I joined Parkminster Presbyterian Church in 1990, when our son Alex was almost a year old. We had attended many churches and found Parkminster to have the excitement and life that we were searching for. After two more years we were happy to find out that we were expecting another baby. About eleven weeks into the pregnancy, some problems arose and I was confined to bed rest, indefinitely. While I was at home hoping for the problems to work out, I received numerous letters and phone calls from people offering help. There were women who offered to clean my house, cook and babysit for Alex. I was grateful and perplexed since I did not know many of the people offering help. We were still fairly new members of the church. It was a foreign concept to me for strangers to come forward with help. We ended up losing our baby halfway through the pregnancy. It was an extremely sad and emotional time. Monty Burnham, who was our minister at the time, offered to hold a Memorial Service for our daughter, Grace. We agreed, and had our families come in from out of town. Monty and Jeanne Houpt held a service for us in the Chapel. I cannot tell you how grateful we were for them to put that together for us. It gave us a chance to focus on our daughter who had now gone to be with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We will always miss our Grace, yet with all of life's big experiences, it brought us closer to God and also connected us to the people at church.

It was soon after Grace's death that I started to attend a Tuesday morning prayer group. It was a small group of women who supported and prayed for one another weekly. Upon each gathering, I would pray for a chance to have another baby. I was sure that the ladies in the group, and especially God, was sick of my monotonous prayer week in and week out. One Tuesday, after I had lifted up my usual prayer, Beverly Evans said, "We need to lay hands on Sue". These incredible women came over to me, put a hand on me and prayed for a new baby. I was deeply touched by their faith and love. A few weeks later, there was a women's breakfast with a fabulous speaker, lovely music, delicious food and superb fellowship. I felt the Lord's presence at this meeting and was very emotional. Jo Mancini saw my tears and encouraged me to go to the Sanctuary with the Speaker so that she could pray with me. While this woman spoke to me, Nellie Morse and Jo Mancini prayed silently next to me. We talked about loss, hurt and having another baby. It was a very uplifting experience. I went home feeling free from hurt for the first time in months. As an added bonus, the very next month Chuck and I found out we were expecting another baby! We were surprised and ecstatic. This pregnancy went well and our precious daughter Elizabeth was born the following February. She is certainly a very evident answer to prayer. I will never forget the loving, caring way that these women treated me.

These experiences brought us closer to each other, to our church and ultimately to our Lord, Jesus Christ. We are thankful for the chance to worship at Parkminster, to serve here and to build friendships with so many special people. God bless our church and all who worship here. Happy Centennial, Parkminster!!

Sue Weir

BIRDS ARE HIS MESSENGERS

A few years ago, Harold and I planned a trip by car, pulling a fifteen foot camper to visit relatives in Saskatchewan, Canada, a distance of 2,000 miles.

Harold became sick with cellulitis and was hospitalized, so I decided to cancel the trip. However, he wanted very much to take the trip, feeling that it might be his last. So after much prayer we started making preparations.

The morning we planned to leave, Harold was hooking the camper to the car, and I was bringing from the house the necessary things to take.

Then I noticed a small gray bird hovering over the camper. He stayed there a few seconds, then flew over on our neighbor's telephone wire, and returned, hovering over our camper again, then flew to our telephone wire, and returned over our camper again, flew to the neighbor's wire and hovered over our camper the third time. Then another gray bird slightly larger flew over the car and the smaller bird took off following the larger bird.

Shortly after that we started out for Canada, but wondered about the birds. The answer came the next morning at a K. O. A. campsite when I said to Harold, "The Lord showed us He had us covered with His creatures all the nearly 5,000 miles we traveled to and from Canada safely. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 91:4)"

Clarise Blair

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

When Carol and I landed in Rochester in July 1975, we had little else but educational promise and definitely no ship and no anchor. It was a classic case that we didn't know what we didn't know, and in some respects that was a mercifully good thing. Married barely a year, we had just received a marriage - saving, life-altering miracle of personal salvation at Woodland Presbyterian Church on Penn's campus in November. Our "blissful" marriage in June of 1974 had taken a straight downward plunge, but God prevented the bungee cord from snapping and we were at least headed upward again when we arrived in Rochester. Having put all of our faith in each other, it was anything but a smooth ride.

Arriving on Parkminster's doorstep sometime in 1976, we needed a lot - most of all, another miracle. When Carol was to complete her Family Dental Practice Residency in July of 1977 we were searching for a place to live, a place to practice and even whether or not to work together. But also we were weaving into the life of Parkminster and joined the church membership in March of 1977. Through the group nature of the ministry here, we had the Emery & Scuro business search committee, the real estate board and the general contractors division all working on our case. In the midst of all this activity and sometimes chaos, Pastor Bill Showalter gave us some of the best advice we or anyone else could ever receive - "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Thank God for the next miracle.

As the clouds began to clear, many of the wrong doors were shut and a few of the right ones opened exactly on schedule for us to practice dentistry together in God's chosen place. Our office opened March 17, 1978 having been selected, built, decorated, staffed and patronized by our Christian brothers and sisters from Parkminster. Since that day we have remained close to our spiritual roots and have faithfully followed, to the best of our ability, God's will which began simply by seeking first His kingdom and righteousness when we were in such a quandary about the future. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve God through Parkminster and our business, and we look forward to a long and healthy relationship with each to continue.

Dr. Brad Emery

Dr. Carol Scuro

Twenty years ago my world of family and personal ambitions and dreams for myself came crashing down, leaving me in a disturbing crisis of faith. My long-splintered family had (finally) broken apart and within weeks my dream job in Europe had also fallen apart. My attempts to find other work there so as to keep an ocean of distance from the mess and heartache I had left behind in the States came to no avail. Consequently (or fortunately) I ended up on my knees at Westminster Abbey in London. Raw from disillusionment with myself and others, I offered up in a grain of faith (in the midst of more numerous grains of unbelief) a prayer: "please show me that you care, that I can count on you, and that you can do something better with my life, or I'm ready to call it quits altogether". God clearly let me know I was to come to Rochester where my mom had moved with my four younger siblings in the meantime. Within a couple of days I had done so, and within a couple months was taking more toddler steps of faith. I had had my go at trying to make life work; it was His turn now.

I started attending Parkminster and honestly wasn't liking it ... I wasn't liking a lot of things. I was trying to cooperate but rather like a two-year-old, I was zigzagging between God's will and mine. My relationship with God was based mainly on my desire for stability. I had too many walls up, too much anger, hurt, and confusion that needed tending to before I could be in a place of authentic love or enjoyment of Him. It was however, a beginning; of a very good thing when I look back now and see all the good He had in store for me. In the following weeks, months, and even years, God has been dissolving those walls and reconstructing my heart. Along with that, He blessed me with meeting at Parkminster and eventually marrying, my best friend Charlie. Although at one time I decided to never marry or have children for fear of repeating the same heartbreaks, God had other plans. He has been faithful in sustaining Charlie and me in our marriage and in the parenting of our four precious children.

Parkminster has been used by Him to help in all that, in spite of some very difficult times in the Church since my time here.

We have been blessed with many facets of church life these past 20 years. There has been premarital counseling, families to live with during engagement, support with wedding planning, wedding vows, sharing groups, Christian education (adult & kids), Bible studies, prayer throughout pregnancies, baby showers, birth visits, baptisms and dedications, Mom's groups, meals shared, Church baby-sitting, Preschool, VBS, SBTW, youth group, counseling, and prayer and care from friends, elders, deacons & pastors.

My heart is full of gratefulness for the layers of healing and wholeness God has been weaving into my life, as well as for the strength He has given me to grow through some very painful and challenging things. He has been truly faithful in responding to that prayer of mine then ... and to many, many prayers since. Thanks God!

Gretchen Forte
Faith Letter
February'99

FAITH; RELIANCE, LOYALTY, OR COMPLETE TRUST IN GOD

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by Faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory. We know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and His approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit who is God's gift to us. Romans 5.

As we sit to write our Faith story this was the first entry in Chris's journal of 1984, the year when our lives turned down a road that was not the turn we either expected or would have chosen to ventured down on our own, yet we thankfully had the reaction to ask God along on this journey which was of His marvelous plan for us.

This sudden twist in the road came on October 9, 1984. Our healthy adorable eleven-month-old boy just would not wake up that morning. After frantically calling our pediatrician and then the ambulance, fear and helplessness set in when typically all was calm, predictable and life was good. After arriving at the hospital at least fifteen medical personal surrounded Scott, anxiously trying to save his life, in the meantime medical staff pushed us for clues as to why he was in this state. Then a staff Chaplain was summoned to pray with us, as Scott's condition was very grave. What could be happening, was this just a bad dream? "Lord help this to be fixed quickly", we barked. They soon found out that he was suffering from severe hypoglycemia and they would administer glucose immediately. "Wow, thanks God, he is all better", we thought. They told us they would be taking him to intensive care to continue to stabilize him. As we walked along side his bed going upstairs to ICU, Chris excitedly said, "Oh look he is waking up", the nurse just took her hand and said, "No, dear, he is having a seizure". No, this could not be happening, we thought. The next few days were sleepless, long and frightening. We tried to hold him during this time just to let him know we were there and encourage him to wake up. It was very difficult though as he had so many wires and tubes consuming every limb, including his head. When he did regain consciousness after three days of this coma, he was very weak, reflecting the injury his brain had just sustained.

Finally after ten days in the hospital, Scott had improved enough to go home. There was no explanation for why Scott was hypoglycemic and why he had suffered some seizures, but when they said we could go home, we just thought, oh wonderful, he is all better. We brought Scott home with great Joy however, what we thought was a horrible nightmare ending was really just beginning. Scott started having more and more seizures. There were days when it was not unusual for him to have over one hundred a day. We had to hold him constantly to keep him safe. Not much time for Libby. She suddenly had preoccupied parents who were tired and consumed all the time.

The prayers offered were many. At the time we were worshiping in the church we were married in and we had wonderful support from these folks. But we had just as much support from the Parkminster family. You see Chris was born in 1957 and was baptized as an infant by Dr. King here at Parkminster. She attended here with her family until 1977. Tom's family was also members of Parkminster. To have the support of the many, many loving people representing both congregations at that time was so dear to both of us. Parkminster's Dominic Mancini was at our side almost daily and sometimes twice a day during all of Scott's numerous hospitalizations. He brought with him the reminder of Christ and His love and care for us by his prayers and anointing of oil on Scott. His very short but steady visits helped sustain our faith in this journey.

What would happen one day was quite remarkable in what Chris feels was a change point in her understanding of what was happening? She was talking with a dear friend of ours who was the youth pastor at our church. They talked about the fact that this illness, or journey seemed like it was not ending. You just pray believing and healing takes place was what Chris claimed. In her conversation with this gentlemen she said, "I have faith, I believe God can heal Scott." In his wisdom he asked her, "but Chris do you trust him?" "Well of course I trust him," "No, in your faith do you trust him to do what he thinks is best?" Wow, healing as we saw it was not what God had in mind at this time, but growth and spiritual depth in our walk. You see once Chris accepted this and claimed her trust hand in hand with her faith things started to turn around. What truth was realized was God's will, not ours. She started to understand the reality of what might be to come and she had peace in the midst of it. Lord, may your perfect plan prevail.

There was also a specific day in Tom's life where a 'flood' of understanding entered his heart. There was close to twelve years of not just asking "WHY" but also twelve years of people attempting to answer that question for him. None of those explanations felt right nor satisfied his spirit. One day in 1996, out of nowhere, came this comforting thought. You see, before Scott fell into the coma we were beginning to be a real force in God's Kingdom. We were very involved in the leadership of the Church and youth ministries. Our extended families were also close to the Lord. Tom's responsibilities and respect were growing rapidly in the business world. We were on our way to make a difference in this community for the Lord! Well, Satan saw a great opportunity. He had much to lose if the Doughty's continued in this walk with the Lord. He had to use this 'tragedy' to kill their spirit. He was going to use this event to create a lifetime burden so heavy that they would not have the time, neither energy nor spirit to make a difference. Our loving God is all knowing and all-powerful. The thought that flooded Tom's heart that day in 1996 was that the Lord had His own plan for Scott's life. The Lord also saw a real opportunity here, an opportunity for a vessel of blessing.

He will allow all this to take place partly to allow the Doughty's, through His strength, not their own, to be even more powerful in their testimony, stronger in their faith and touch more people with the hope that is in Jesus Christ. It's almost like the Lord was saying, "Satan, IN YOUR FACE!" The Lord has been true to His plan. He has given us the strength, perseverance and joy to continue to live for Him. He has also allowed us to stand strong in opposition to the 'world' that recognized someone like Scott as a burden. If you know Scott at all and look at his life you will agree with us that Scott is a **BLESSING!**

Scott was not to be who we dreamed he would be, but who God said he would be. We can not imagine life without Scott. Even in the hourly challenges he brings before us, he is PERFECT and WONDERFULLY made. He blesses us and stretches us. He teaches us, he reminds us of FAITH and TRUST and allowing God to take us on those unfamiliar roads. Without God, without faith, what would we be? God has remained on these roads with us and even though we still don't feel as if we would choose this road, we go forward letting God take over the steering wheel, asking for his guidance and strength everyday. Thy will be done.

Tom and Chris Doughty