

St. Pauls Stewardship Moment

November 2, 2008

By Jana O'Brien

It's been ten years since I stood before you and shared my Stewardship Moment story. Let me show you what ten years looks like. (PUT ON READING GLASSES) Today, in keeping with the "Great Place to Grow" theme for the St. Pauls Stewardship Campaign of 2008, I will update and freshly title my story "Growing Pains." And the first pain I will inflict is to bring up a subject nobody likes to think about: "*insurance.*"

While painful to ponder, we all need insurance as "assurance" that our families can live in a secure manner. I suggest that your St. Pauls pledge is an *insurance premium* for the most important policy you can carry. Let me tell you how I know this to be true.

From 1983 to 1993, I pledged to St. Pauls and never "made a claim" – never needed special support, prayer, or assistance from the church.

But in January of 1994, that all changed. During a routine outpatient procedure, our 8-week-old son was unexpectedly found to have a rare form of cancer and underwent surgery to remove the tumor across the street at Children's Memorial.

That's when I made my first claim on our St. Pauls insurance policy – the "personal life collision" policy.

St. Pauls was the second phone call we made that day, after calling our family. Within ten minutes of that call...ten minutes...Pastor Carol Munro-Mosley was praying with us in the hospital recovery room, and the church was mobilizing a prayer and cooking force in miraculous time. Two weeks later, our cured child was baptized right here in this sanctuary. Our prayers had been answered.

Like a good neighbor, St. Pauls was there.

In the years that followed, my marriage failed, and I made another claim, this time on my St. Pauls "emotional health insurance" policy. St. Pauls helped me -- and our entire family -- heal and carry on through our "rebirth" as a newly-defined unit.

Much has changed in the decade since my last Stewardship Moment. I have navigated into a new marriage and blended family. We have mourned the death of my father, my mother-in-law, and two far-too-young brothers. Our family and this church have welcomed my mother to her new northern home. Through joy and sorrow, St. Pauls has been there for us, making good on what has proven to be a "whole life" insurance policy with ongoing love and support.

So this year, as you ponder your St. Pauls pledge, do a homework exercise called "Consider and Commit" regarding YOUR St. Pauls insurance policy.

Consider all the money you spend per year on any type of insurance – life, health, auto, home, disability.

Commit to making your St. Pauls pledge at least as much as the lowest of those premiums, perhaps the average you pay for each of those premiums, or – if yours is a very fortunate household – equal to the total you pay for all of those premiums.

Because I guarantee you, if you ever endure a head-on collision with real life, a critical illness, or a loss of any kind, one of the first calls you will make will be to St. Pauls.

What a shame it would be if there weren't enough policyholders to underwrite somebody to answer your call and act on your claim.

As today's offering plate is passed and the 2008 St. Pauls Stewardship Campaign closes out these Moments, please ponder the blessed assurance – and the blessed **insurance** – that **is** St. Pauls Church. Pledge generously so that your **good neighbors** at St. Pauls will always be there.

Oh, and by the way – that 8-week-old baby whose cancer was cured? This May, he will be among the 16 teenagers who will stand before you as the St. Pauls Confirmation Class of 2009.

St. Pauls has indeed been a great place for him – and all of our family -- to grow.

Are you in good hands?