

Good <morning, afternoon, evening>! I am Cathy Sturmer **and I am Shawn Sturmer**. We are the senior generation of the Sturmer-Biel household that includes our daughter Katie, her husband Jordan, our son Patrick and our grandsons Luc (**2 years old**) and Jude (**2 months old**). We are truly blessed and never bored!

We have been members of Good Shepherd since moving back to Tallahassee from Atlanta seven years ago. It was a true “coming home”.

We are here this <morning, afternoon, evening> to share with you our personal journey of stewardship. Stewardship is the generous sharing of our time, talent and treasure. Stewardship of time includes the ways we worship God and develop our relationship with Him. Stewardship of talent focuses on sharing our gifts with others through service and sharing. Stewardship of treasure is the way we return to God from the fruits of our labor, by sharing both the money we have earned as well as our material possessions.

The focus of today’s talk is the stewardship of time and talent. This focus is part of the overall stewardship effort that began a couple weeks ago with the Ministry Fair and concludes with Commitment Sunday. In February, we will focus on Stewardship of Treasure. All three are important and one does not substitute for the other.

While we share with you, will you please pass out the commitment cards at the end of each pew. During the next few minutes, complete the cards, indicating your commitment to God in the areas of time and talent. These cards will be collected at the offertory and placed on the altar as a symbol of our offering of self to God.

We have both lived blessed, happy, easy lives, filled with family, love and God. It took the first big emergency in our lives to waken us from our complacency and what a jolting awakening it was. Our son Patrick was just one week old when doctors had the audacity to tell us that the congestion I heard in his chest was a bit more serious than a cold. The next thirteen months were fraught with concern, overwhelming with stress, yet filled with God, prayer and the realization that His plan was the only true itinerary for our lives. In October, 1990, at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, our Lord gave us our own personal miracle. Our then one year old son died during a catherization to begin evaluating the extent of the heart defects he was born with. God’s answer to our many prayers brought to Patrick’s bedside the very best doctors in the world. Seven weeks later, we came home to Tallahassee with a baby boy who is now a strapping, sixteen year old daily reminder of our Lord’s love.

This single experience awoke us both from our complacent approach to God. The one hour a week to attend Sunday Mass was no longer enough investment in our relationship with a God who had invested so much in our lives. At the same time, though, what talent do we have that anyone else would want? We are not musically blessed like the wonderful choirs that lead us each Sunday, we are not financial or business gurus who can help Father Mike build a beautiful church and parish center, we are certainly not chain saw artists who can create a beautiful symbol of our Lord from a dying tree. So what can we do?

Well, I'm a Mom. I love kids. I am an acceptable cook. I know how to make my family feel a bit better when they are sick or sad. So what do I do with that?

Well, I talk to Susie Perkins about Children's Liturgy. I remind her I am not a certified teacher, she reminds me I am a Mom who has taught her kids a lot simply by talking to them. I get much joy from talking with your children about once a month in Children's Liturgy. You wouldn't believe the wonderful things they have taught me about God and the sweet prayers they offer up.

I spoke to Suzanne Printy and found out that the meals Good Shepherd provides to the sick don't have to compete with Emeril's. Good, healthy food, some pretty napkins and a flower or two can really raise the spirits of someone who is under the weather. Add a small container of Haagen Daz ice cream and some prayers and you can really make their day. Being from a large family who spends hours being together, eating and enjoying each others company, it is a small difference to pack up some food, a kind word and hug, add a few prayers and join Gary and Doris Baranik in providing consolation to those grieving a death.

**I have a lawn business. I can mow, edge and blow with the best of them. I am also a second generation fix it guy. If it breaks, I can usually figure out why and fix it. A lot like Al from Tool Time and I have only resembled Tim the Toolman on a few occasions ... in which case, there is always Home Depot. So what do I do with that? Well, of course, I talk to Father Mike. I offer to keep these grounds under control at a discounted rate. To make sure he puts in a good word for me with the Big Guy (and that's God, not Father Tom!), I volunteer to keep up the rectory. Mowing time is great conversation with God time. Then I say, Hey, I can turn on an oven, warm up some frozen lasagna, grab a package of bread and a bag of cookies, no problem. So I speak with Marcus Hepburn about helping serve dinner down at the Homeless Shelter when a month has a fifth Friday in it. Not to mention the slave teenage labor I take with me to help serve that dinner.**

It's nothing we would have ever categorized as "great" talent. It's just us being ... us. And time? That single child reaching for my hand on the way back from the chapel, that hug and smile from someone I know is in pain, **that satisfaction of pulling out of this clean parking lot and edged lawn, the pride I feel when some of the shelter guests tell me what a nice son I have and what a great place my church must be,** all far outweigh any investment of time, talent or even treasure.

As always with the Lord, the return far outweighs the investment.

So, we encourage you to not wait for some great emergency to awaken you. Think and pray about your own time and talent stewardship. As you can see, you don't need extraordinary talents and the time you devote to God and His work is returned to you a thousand fold over in joy and blessings.

Thank you and God bless.