

I was once asked, "Are you living your most generous life?" At the time, I didn't understand the question, but now I do... In the United Methodist Church, Stewardship is the "giving of money, time and talent." It's only natural to choose ministries we will be most comfortable and experienced with; however, we're often asked to serve in new and different areas apart from our expertise and knowledge.

In 2018, Epworth needed a few Teacher's assistants in the K-2 Sunday school class. Pastor Amanda approached me about serving in this role. My wife and I have no children, and I only have two nephews and one niece whom I see about three times a year. Since I had been a camp counselor 42 years ago and served as both an Epworth tutor and mentor to a confirmand, I felt qualified and experienced enough to work with 5-7 year olds, answering, "Certainly, Pastor Amanda." So, I began working with Jill Schiflett last Fall, expecting the assignment to end in May of this year.

The children were all full of boundless, youthful energy and kept me alert and ready for anything. Their knowledge of Bible stories and the Bible was most impressive, as was their curiosity about things I'd never thought of...I found myself enjoying the exciting environment of youthful abandon. As the year passed, hopefully I became more useful to Jill as an assistant, having somewhat managed to help her keep things moving, both in the class and choir rooms. The time flew by, and soon the Sunday school year was over.

Man, did I miss those kids: their excitement over coloring and other projects; the answers to Jill's questions; and their interactions with one another! I was going to miss my two Sundays each month with these adorable, inquisitive children...until one day in August I got an email from Pastor Amanda regarding this Sunday school year, "Would you be willing to serve again?" I jumped at the opportunity!

Folks, this should have been clearly out of my comfort/interest zone. Instead, I found a ministry that is meaningful, necessary, fun and challenging...I've even learned Bible stories I didn't know before. Each Sunday after "teaching," I leave church with a smile on my face and stories of my day to share. Don't be nervous to try a ministry that you think is out of your comfort zone...it could well become a favorite.