



The Difference Made by One Gift

This took place in a community in which an older generation of residents was gradually being replaced by families with young children. As Sally approached her 80th birthday what she observed in her parish on Sunday morning gave her some concern.

The number of worshippers from her generation who had helped to establish the congregation was gradually dwindling. There were very few new people joining the congregation. “Why would a family with young children come to our parish?” Sally thought to herself. “There is nothing to attract them, just a group of gray heads who gather for worship and once a week lunch and bible study.”

As Sally pondered and prayed about the future of her parish, an idea slowly began to take shape in her heart. She was not equipped or prepared to start any programs for children herself, but perhaps there was a way that she could be a catalyst to make this happen. She had read an article in her neighbor’s church newsletter about remembering the church in your will....

When Sally died, members of her surviving family and dear friends received bequests symbolic of her deep regard for them. But her home went to her parish with the expressed intention that proceeds from its sale establish an endowment fund for outreach and Christian education.

The income from this fund was sufficient to hire a full-time Christian education outreach worker. Quickly a sign appeared in front of the church, “After School Music and Art Programs.” An article appeared in the local newspaper about a support group at the church for mothers with young children. A children’s choir school was established, with occasional performances on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings.

As new families began coming to worship and some of them to join, the congregation began to grow again. A corner had been turned. This was all a direct result of one member of the older generation remembering the congregation through a bequest from her will. One of the original members of the congregation had, in effect, single-handedly re-founded it through a gift in her will.

One gift can make a life-or-death difference in the future of a congregation. Even a small gift can, through an endowment fund, make a perpetual difference in the Church’s mission.

What difference would you like to make?

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