

## Simple Gifts October 2

As a kid I loved going to Sunday school. I have vivid memories of fastening my Sunday school attendance pin to my dress, depositing my quarter offering in the white plastic church bank, and singing “Deep and Wide” with great enthusiasm. I may not have fond memories of doing the homework Mrs. Beal assigned us in Jr. High (really who assigns weekly homework in Sunday school?!), but when my grandfather died and the focus was on my mother’s grief, Mrs. Beal reached out to me. To this day she is still checking in on me via my mom. Whenever I go home I make a point to visit Mr. Alexander, my high school teacher. I never miss an opportunity to reiterate my love for him and gratitude for how he has shaped my life.

I feel fortunate that I have two church families – Duke Memorial and one in Gales Ferry, Connecticut where 1,000 miles and 15 years away have no impact on how I’m received whenever I return.

Even though they have only just begun their spiritual journey, will no doubt have similar memories of Duke Memorial and school teachers. I won’t be as startled the next time that Annie kneels and prays fervently in the middle of Target. After all, Barbara says that we can talk to God anytime, anywhere!” I her to get up, instead I let people navigate around her as I gave silent praise and thanks for Barbara Gillmer and the light of fostering in our three and four year olds.



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I was never taught that church was your family beyond your physical home. It was a concept that was obvious to me, it warranted no explanation. From a very young age the embrace and support I felt was just natural. I think of Althea’s lyrics and the theme of last year’s family retreat, “I’m organically grown -my roots go deeper.” As a member of this family I want to use the gifts that God chose for me to support that which supports me. I do this not out of obligation, but with love and gratitude. To me, it’s simply organic.

*Prayer: Thank you for the church families who nurture and love me. Help me to pass this along to our children. Amen.*

by Kimbie Sprague