

What's Your Story?

How did you come to your faith? Everyone has a story. For some it just was, they attended Church, faith was strong in their home. For some who were exposed to the church all their young lives, it was just expected and there was no one moment. For others there was that time, that moment, that experience that solidified their faith. For me it was not a moment but moments that led me to that firm belief in God and caused my faith to grow. I was 15 and there was an offer of jobs for youth at Christmas. The Federal Department Store in Ferndale had asked the school for workers. I, being 15, required Working Papers. I needed my Birth Certificate to apply. When my mother found my Birth Certificate there was another form there. I had been baptized as an infant in the Methodist Church in Royal Oak. There was a place I belonged. I had for a few years, since the death of my brother been wondering about this vengeful God that had taken him and left me very much alone. I was curious and wanted to know more. In a few months I sought out the Methodist Church about a mile from my house. I walked in and must have looked alone and confused or perhaps I was just a stranger, and they were all about taking in strangers. I was greeted warmly like they were expecting me. I sat down in a pew, the back row just in case I was frightened off. I looked around and when the music started, I did not know what to do; people stood up and started singing. An older woman came over and sat next to me. She pointed out the numbers on a board hanging at the front of the church and showed me the hymnal and how to find the hymns posted on that board. She helped me find my way through the service. She stayed by my side and guided me through my first ever church service. I had found my place but now I needed to find my God. Little did I know he had found me. There were more experiences until I had that one moment when I knew that Christ died on that cross for all of us including me. But that church taking in a strange teenager 71 years ago was the beginning of a journey that continues today.

Paul told the story of his conversion and his journey. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 For when I came to you brothers. I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Lord, be with us this day. Be with those who are ill and suffering, those who are grieving, those who are hungry and those with no shelter. Give us wisdom and resources to help those who are in need. May we be the hands and feet of Christ. Be with our Pastor, bless him and bless his ministry. Be with his family, grant them your guidance and protection. Be with our Staff and Leaders, give them wisdom, strength, and purpose. Be with those who have suffered loss in the Condo collapse in Florida, may they feel strength and courage as you envelope them in your love. Be with our church as we seek to find our way back to normal, guide us and strengthen us. Be with those who are absent from us, may they feel empowered and strengthened as they find their way back to our services. We thank you Lord for our stories that have led us closer to you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Grace Epperson