

Stewardship testimony
November 6, 2016

The night when we set our clocks back is one of my favorite nights of the year. It gives me a little taste of what it would be like to go back in time.

In July, I had another taste of what it would be like to go back in time. As part of our summer vacation, Kate and I attended Sunday morning worship at Bedington United Methodist Church in Bedington, W.Va., where I lived from 1973 to 1980 while my dad was the pastor of the church. After the service, Kate and I were talking with Albert, the church's friendly custodian, who was a young, newly married man when I moved away. Albert mentioned that the house I grew up in was still owned by the church but was no longer the parsonage, so I asked him if he could let us in to have a look. He was happy to do so, and for the first time in 36 years, I entered the house where I had spent most of my childhood. I was thrilled to be there again.

But what does my visit to the Bedington United Methodist Church have to do with the stewardship campaign here at MCC? It's about the direction where people of faith are headed. As someone returning to Bedington after a long absence, I was on a little nostalgia trip. But the current members of the Bedington church aren't caught up in the past. As their town has changed, and as the needs around them have changed, they have responded in faith. One example of a new ministry that didn't exist when I was there is a food pantry—and I was delighted to see that this food pantry happens to be located in my old bedroom. Food insecurity is now a problem for some people in Bedington, and the church has stepped up to meet that need. The church bulletin was filled with information on various other ways the church supports people in need—and this generosity exists in a place where the per capita income is just over \$20,000 per year.

Whether we're in Bedington, W.Va., or Monroe, Conn., we followers of Christ, though grounded in the past, are driven to move forward, trusting in the promise that God is with us. So let's equip ourselves for the sacred, life-giving work that God is calling us to do in 2017. Let's put our money where our faith is. Please join me in making a grateful pledge to our stewardship campaign.