



BREAKTHROUGH LIVES OF REAL PEOPLE, BREAKTHROUGH GIVING FOR 2008

Nothing can be more uplifting for a parish pastor than to hear about the Spiritual growth and transformation of people, especially in one's own congregation. And this fall, as part of our Breakthrough Discipleship program, we are doing just that. During worship on most Sundays, one member is giving a brief "testimonial" about how God has touched, moved, encouraged or supported them in a breakthrough ministry experience. How blessed we are to hear others share their true stories of God's work through them!

So on Sept. 9, Michael told us about God's pull on his life to lead our "Habitat for Humanity" efforts at St. Mark's. And what a breakthrough it appeared, for he said he had no real background or talents in construction. And then Kristie told us about the day when she felt very empty and unfulfilled in life – even though she had friends, a good job, material blessings. And it was then that God encouraged her to begin volunteering her time through several not-for-profit agencies, including our own St. Mark's, where she has become our organizer for the LCS Walk/Run, and more. And the emptiness was filled! Next was Stephanie Bradley and her work to organize global mid-wife kits that will be sent to women in the developing countries. And more testimonials will be given in October.

Jeremiah, a prophet in the Old Testament, was most confounded when God called him to be a prophet, for he was but a young man, with no experience. Sounds like he was being pulled into a breakthrough experience. God was, and Jeremiah responded and the rest is 'breakthrough history.' Yes, God comes to use us, in small and large ways. It might be to help us grow in prayer when we thought we had no such skills; or to give us courage to meet with those with emotional hurts when we felt very ill-equipped; or open our hearts with compassion to someone who has hurt us in the past; or to help with youth when we were sure we didn't have any more time to give.

Part of our ministry at St. Mark's is to uplift and proclaim this God, who has such love for us, such grace and power, that we might be moved and transformed to be even more of the followers of Christ that God has intended us to be. Even breakthrough disciples.

On October 28, Reformation Sunday, we will begin collecting our financial pledges to support the ministry of Jesus Christ in 2008. Begin your prayers about this now. Ask God to guide you in your considerations. If our ministry to make disciples is to be strong, St. Mark's will need faithful and generous support from its members. Is it time for you to make a "breakthrough pledge," a significant increase in giving? On a practical level, St. Mark's has lost several members this past year, due to relocation, death, etc. It is an opportune time for all of us to grow in giving, so that our ministries can be supported and that we might reach out to an increasingly unchurched world.