

Fall 2017

Dear People of St. John's,

Sandy Millspaugh was one of the most joyful people we have ever known. When he died, the top of Mount Harmony shut down, because so many people wanted to gather for his funeral. At the reception following our worship, person after person had a story to share about Sandy, about how he made them feel, how his life shaped their own life. Sandy was many things, brilliant, humble, kind, self-giving, faithful, and generous. But above all, we will remember his joy, even on the final days of his life.

At the center of Sandy's life was a passionate generosity. The day before he died, he told his family that he wanted to give more money to the poor. But that wasn't enough. Trying to explain his wishes, he threw his arms open wide and declared, "I want to give everything to God."

He died fulfilled and happy, having lived every moment until he could see God face-to face. Even to the end of his days, Sandy revealed unabashed joy. The kind of joy that makes you throw your arms open wide and embrace whatever is to come next.

Sandy knew something that the rest of us so often forget. He knew that if it is joy you are seeking, the most reliable way to find it is to give yourself away.

Every year at this time, we give thanks. We thank God and we thank one another. And every year at this time, the leadership of the parish asks our members to join us in this holy work by sharing their resources with us. Every year at this time, we ask for your money. We tell you what we need, and we tell you what we plan to do next.

We need lots of things, not just fiscal support, but we certainly do need money. We plan to do lots of things, and most of them require money. We want to continue our great tradition of worship, our commitment to pastoral care for those who are hurting, our formation of young children, and our engagement with people whose needs pull us closer towards God and our neighbors. Every year we rely on all of you to help us continue to serve God in this place.

Obviously, that is why we are writing you today, to ask you again to support the parish as so many of you have done so generously for so many years. But we also want to celebrate Sandy Millspaugh, our brother and teacher, whose joy changed us and shaped us.

Sandy was one of those people who didn't want his generosity to be a secret. But seeking glory was not his goal. Anyone who knew Sandy can tell you that he was the last person who would want praise. He wanted others to know that he gave because, he said, it changed him, and he wanted his own giving to inspire others to try the same. Sandy found joy by giving whole sections of his life and his money to the Living God. When he gave a gift to the church (which was often!) we would always ask if we had permission to tell others about his generosity. "Yes!" he would declare. "Tell them! So they can do it too!" He placed an envelope in the offering plate each and every week, even when his gifts were given in other ways, because he wanted to model for others what was so important to him.

Dear friends, we write not only to ask you for money, but also to tell you what most of you already know, that our brother Sandy gave himself away. And he was the most joyful person most of us have ever known. We invite you this year to honor his life and legacy by giving away whole parts of your life to others. We invite you to give generously, and be unabashed in telling others that you give of your money to support the work of the Lord Jesus. Throw your arms open wide as he did. And we suspect that joy will fill you as if filled our beloved Sandy.

Gratefully and faithfully yours,



The Rev. Susan Ironside
Rector



Nina Dixon
Senior Warden



Steve Sbaraglio
Junior Warden



Bob Courtemanche
Stewardship Chair