

JIM DIXON'S FAITH STORY

My faith story is really just a typical faith journey, not marked by any single experience or traumatic event. My guess is that it's much like many members of the St Andrew's community of believers.

I was born and raised in a small, north central Minnesota town much like the Lake Wobegon that Garrison Keillor has described in his monologues over the years. Both of my parents grew up in this same community and were active members in the Norwegian and Swedish Lutheran Churches. My whole life growing up in this small town seemed to revolve around Immanuel Lutheran Church. And thus, my faith journey was launched.

Sunday school, weekly release from school to attend church Bible study, vacation Bible school, summer church camps, singing in the church choir, confirmation, special church programs and many other youth activities were all organized by my home town church. Throughout these formative years my knowledge and understanding of the Bible and the teachings of the Lutheran Church continued to grow and mature.

My parents were major role models in my life. Things like daily devotions, praying before meals, showing love and kindness toward each other and in general, leading a Christian life style helped to define who I was and strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ. Both of my parents left many positive impressions on me. I remember my dad being the Sunday School superintendent for years. Every Sunday morning he would drive out into rural areas to pick up kids for Sunday School and then return them to their homes after services.

Other influences in my faith journey included attending a Lutheran academy and college where I continued to study the Word and develop a stronger faith. While in college, I met and eventually married my wife Donna, who's faith story is much the same as mine. Being actively involved in our church communities, our faith journeys continued to grow and become deeper. As was true with our parents, we have prioritized the Church in our lives and created the same type of Christian life style to help nurture our kid's own faith journeys. We have found that leading by example is so important in passing along our Christian values and deepening their faith in Jesus Christ. How gratifying to see them passing this on in their families.

And finally, a significant growth factor in my faith journey which I'm experiencing currently has been our son Mark's decision to go into the ministry. Mark is in the middle of his internship year at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Anchorage. It is so rewarding and exciting for Donna and me to have Mark teaching us about the Word of God! We have had many wonderful discussions with him as he has helped us take our knowledge of the Bible to a new level, deepening our faith as we journey on together.