

A Message from Alec Mansfield

Dear Members of Blessed Sacrament Parish,



I want to tell you the story about how my wife, Judy, and I came to Blessed Sacrament.

Several years ago we were attending All Saints Episcopal Church, here in South Charleston. When it closed, Judy and I spent a few years looking for another Episcopal Church that could allow room for our van and for her wheelchair. We considered most of the churches in the area and we found that none were truly handicapped accessible. The downtown church would accommodate the wheelchair but not our van. We continued to seek another church. In most cases it was a parking problem or an access problem.

We stopped looking and sat at home discussing and searching for an appropriate solution. One Sunday morning we were out scouting for a church and we both saw a wide open parking lot and easy access to the doors. We parked in the lot, got out and I wheeled her into the church. Someone held the door for us, someone said, "Hello." We went into the sanctuary, and sat in the far back row where I could sit in a chair and she could be next to me. The service was very nice. "It was exciting!", she told me, "We could be together! We could both attend!" After the service, several people spoke to us and indicated that we would always be welcome. "We should continue coming here!" Judy said excitedly one Sunday upon our return home.

A few weeks later, Judy was unable to attend because she caught a cold and was just not feeling well. I stayed with her at home, and the following Wednesday, there was a knock at the door and Father John was there inquiring about Judy's health. I invited him in and ushered him upstairs to meet her. She was astounded that he took the time to come and see us as well as visit with us. He was very surprised that no one from our former parish was even interested enough to make a phone call.

Judy shared with Father John the details about our search for a church. He told us both that we were always welcome and to come when we could. He asked us if we needed anything. I think I mentioned to him that I could use some help with some occasional dinners because I am not the best cook and Judy was wanting some foods that I had no idea how to cook.

A few days passed and I received a call from someone at the church asking about Judy's diet restrictions. Within that week there came a knock at the door and behold a parishioner with a dinner fit for a king and cooked to order. These acts of kindness and the attention people gave us, all unsolicited, are the reasons we both were going to pursue membership in this parish.

Judy was very excited about the upcoming RCIA class. Father John had explained to her she could attend when she was able and the rest could be made up in other ways. However, she fell in late September and then passed away a few days later.

Judy's enthusiasm for this church has become a passion for me. It is my intention to carry on and finish the RCIA program that I have begun as a testament not only to the parish but also to my Sweetheart.

I thank you all for your prayers, support, blessings and for all the kindness you have given us to make us feel welcome and at home.

Bless you all!! Alec