

By Harriotte Hurie

"Momma, tomorrow is Easter, let's do something fun," my eight-year-old son muttered dreamily as he fell asleep.

The crushing reality of my husband's dark, paralyzed state of mind, my own struggling with full-time work which paid very little, and my hopeless sense that I was not giving enough quality attention to my son or our beautiful two-year-old daughter from India. While I was researching classical music in India we stumbled and blindly fought our way through 18 months, three different courts, in three provinces, to finally attain legal guardianship. Mind you, dear two-week-old infant Maya had been in our arms since she was discovered in a field near our apartment in Varanasi, India.

As I was arranging two modest Easter baskets for Keeler and Maya, the spark of a memory kindled.

"What about Arlington Street Church, my good friend Anne Goodwin's church?" Three years before, on a bleak January day, I had attended her father's memorial service. Bach's Prelude and Fugue in D minor opened the gates of joy and grief in my listening.

My resolve was complete. I laid out clothes for Maya and Keeler and fell into bed.

I knocked on the "hurricane" door (the nickname for the room where my husband slept). I entered and spoke quietly. "I am taking K and M to Arlington Street church in 45 minutes. Do you want to come with us?" I timidly inquired. There was a long pause and I turned to leave.

"I'll come," Eric's muffled voice reached my ears.

Another spark of joy kindled and energized me through the sluggish preparations to go to Church. To the Red Line, on to the Green Line, up the grand stairs with ASC bells ringing out welcome.

All four of us were warmly greeted and seated amid the colors of spring flowers and glad singing. All the children, including bold Keeler-Boy, distributed flower seed packets to all of us. Then he bravely escorted his little sister downstairs to join in the Easter egg hunt.

In those first moments we recognized home: for me, for our children, and for Eric as a gay man beginning to come out.

Sunday after Sunday we kept coming. Before I even considered becoming a member, another member approached me about joining the committee on making programs accessible for members and visitors. I assisted with ordering large print Hymnals and even uncovered a hitherto unknown source for Braille hymnals. We worked on getting FM headsets for those with hearing issues. Eric took on recording our Sunday morning

services, which were then on cassettes, which we distributed to those who could not come to church and sold to those of us who wanted to hear them again.

Even though our marriage was amicably ending, Arlington Street's church community sustained our loving connections to each other.

Our son was married by Reverend Kim, and our Granddaughter was dedicated by her last year.

Mine is just one example of the transformative power of our community.

Every gift each of us has to give counts. This applies to our gifts of time, skill, and money. Even small but regular amounts of money in our covenant pledges keep our doors open and supporting the multitude of community activities taking place here.

Let's celebrate and appreciate this home with astounding generosity.