

Myrna Johnson – Why I Give

Hi I am Myrna Johnson. And Shane McBride asked me tell you a little bit about why I give to Arlington Street Church

I actually have lots of reasons:

- One is because I am so proud of the leadership role this church plays in the community. The vigil held here on Tuesday night after the horrible events just blocks from here on Monday is an excellent example. It made me very proud to be a member of ASC.
- Another is because the community just constantly surprises me. This week I read about Mary O’Kane and her bell ringing, via an *AP story*. I loved that. Mary, I want to meet you (!)
- And a third is because we need to pay for and support the amazing team that keeps the church running. The ASC staff *is outstanding* and at the heart of what we do. And as a non-profit executive, I know there are real expenses behind any good endeavor, and it is up to *us* pay for them.

Those are all excellent reasons, but I want to focus on one more:

Because ASC is my healing place.

You see, when I walked into Arlington Street Church in spring of 2011, I had had my own personal marathon disaster. I had broken my hip at mile 24 of the NY marathon. It utterly turned my world upside down: from vibrant long distance runner to being in a wheel chair and then crutches, and long months of a deteriorating situation in which my hip didn't heal, eventually leading to a hip replacement. And during that period, another shoe dropped: my marriage imploded. **I was physically and emotionally broken.**

While I had some faith history, growing up as a Methodist in the Midwest, and even serving in a faith-based

volunteer community just out of college, in my adult life I had turned away from organized religion. But when my life started to implode, I started to look for a place to help me staunch the flow. And ASC did it in spades. Rev. Kim was there for me, even somehow appearing out of nowhere as I was walking down Commonwealth Ave. to give me a hug when I was bawling my eyes out.

My entry point was the Literary Salon and it grew to include the Arlington Street Zen Center, which has become an anchor for my spiritual life here. Over time, at the Zen Center I learned – incredibly -- that **I didn't need to hold my breath and brace for the next blow.** I learned to breathe *into* life again, and to find peace in **this moment.** . *This * beautiful * moment.* I began to meet people here who showed me love, and helped hold some of the pain, so I didn't have to bear it alone.

That has been a blessing.

I walked in here a very broken person, and I stand before you in a healthy body and with renewed emotional strength that I couldn't have dreamed of. And I couldn't have done it without Arlington Street Church.

I didn't tell you this to bring attention to myself. Because, frankly, that makes me really uncomfortable. I told you this story, because I believe Arlington Street Church has the ability to heal the *next* broken person who walks through the door. Just like you did for me. That is why I give to Arlington Street Church.

I haven't yet filled out my covenant card, but hope to do so today. I hope you do too.