

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

Deacon Ministry



Deacon Faith Stories

DEACON ORDINATION
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

DEACON FAITH STORY

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Bryan Boyd

My name is Bryan Boyd and my wife Sabra and I moved to Liberty from Arkansas four years ago as of January 2006. 2nd Baptist Church and Liberty has really opened up their arms and welcomed us here and we are really grateful for this.

Like a lot of you here today I was raised by Christian caring parents that from the time I was born we attended church every time the doors were open. You see my parents are staunch Southern Baptists and church is just a normal part of what we do as a family growing up in the south. There may be 12 inches of snow and ice on the roads as it has been lately and we lived on the far side of town, but my dad was determined that we were going to church even when we showed up and there were only a handful of families that made it. We were there. What I don't think my dad remembers is when we went back home because they cancelled church and we couldn't get the car up the steep hill that was about two blocks down the street from our house we had to walk home in our Sunday attire because that is just what we did.

Because of all the faithful Sunday School teachers, the pastor and my parents I knew who Christ was and what he had done for me at an early age. A week before my ninth birthday I felt tug on my heart and that still small voice that just said how about today? I immediately tugged on my mom's coat and whispered in here ear that I wanted to be saved and I had accepted Jesus as my personal Savior and she turned to my dad and whispered to him and she nodded to me that we needed to head down front. The next Sunday I was baptized on my ninth birthday and I had the most wonderful feeling all over. It was like I was excited and ready to tell the world about who Christ was and how awesome I felt at that moment.

A few years after I was baptized and on this constant spiritual high the Smith family moved into the neighborhood just a few houses down from us. With five boys and one girl the neighborhood really came alive when they came out of the house. The youngest, Jerry, was a couple of years younger than me, but we immediately hit it off. We became really close. Believe it or not I used to be very shy. It would take everything I had just to talk to a group of people or I would really blush and stammer a lot when talking with girls that I really liked. Jerry became

my voice. He was gregarious, wasn't bashful to talk to anyone and was always scheming about how to talk to girls and for them to be his girlfriend. He seemed to have no fear in speaking.

Over the next few years I would always invite Jerry to church or Vacation Bible School in the summers. His family was Catholic and for whatever reason they didn't attend church much except for the usual holidays. But one summer especially stood out to me at Vacation Bible School. The teachers asked us to put our heads down and not to peek. Then they asked us if everyone understood what the lessons for the week were about Jesus and who wanted to accept Jesus as their Savior. I admit I had to peek and I saw Jerry raise his hand. It made me grin from ear to ear and I was really excited because now I knew Jerry and I would hang out with each other forever.

Over the next several years as we got older and I turned 16 and was able to drive Jerry was the guy that would set up our double dates. He always had a way with the girls that amazed me. I became involved more in sports as I went into junior high and high school and spent a lot less time at home and the neighborhood and started hanging out more with my new sports friends who weren't such nice guys or should I say very spiritually grounded. I got into the high school party scene as much as I thought I could get away with and slowly began to separate myself more from my neighborhood friends and Jerry and hang with my new friends.

One evening when I was 17 years old, I asked Jerry if he wanted to go to a party that night with a group of my new friends and he said no, he was going to hang out at his house because his girlfriend was coming over. I left that night and went to the party and got back to the neighborhood about midnight. I always had my friends drop me off at the bottom of the steep hill that I told you about earlier so I could walk home and sober up. By the time I got to Jerry's house my long time neighborhood friends were standing outside looking very sad. My oldest friend Bobby just looked at me and told me that Jerry had passed away. He went into long details about what had happened, but the short of it is that he was allergic to bees and had been stung sometime that day and had an allergic reaction and no one could save him.

Needless to say my whole world came crashing down around me. Why would God take away my best friend? Why would God take away my voice, my brother, my soul mate as Jonathon and David are described in the Bible? Why would a just and forgiving and caring God do that? Everything I had believed in was shaken and I had a huge hole or void in my heart. God was not a part of whom or what I was about any more. I began to party and date more. I drove myself into a self destructive lifestyle that now days is just reality TV.

I graduated high school and just barely got into college because of my grades and ACT scores. If my lifestyle wasn't hardcore before it just got turned up several notches and I did all I could do to feel my pain that I felt for the loss of my friend.

Even through all the rejection that I was giving towards the way I was feeling about God, I have looked back over the years and seen how His hand was always there to protect me even if I didn't realize what was unfolding or knew what was happening around me.

Let's just say I should probably be dead or in jail somewhere if God wasn't merciful.

Allow me to explain only one instance briefly how I know he was trying to get my attention along the way. I played intramural basketball for my college dorm and my team wasn't very good. We were playing a fraternity and of course I was talking some serious trash on the court. After the game this guy from the other team came over and shook my hand and asked if I had lunch plans the next day. I had no idea what his angle was but he said he was paying so being the poor college student that I was I said sure. I met him at the Student Union about noon. As we sat down to eat he began explaining a little bit about himself and kind of his faith walk and then he asked me if I knew Jesus. Mostly stunned I explained to him using many expletives that I had been saved when I was nine and I knew who Jesus was and I couldn't believe he would ask me that question, and "By the way, lunch is over," and I walked away. You see I know now that God was just tapping me on the shoulder to say "I'm right here when you're ready."

After my college party life and graduation I still didn't want a relationship with God when I went back to my

home town and got an architectural internship at a large firm. So I got a weekend job cutting trees to occupy my time and justify why I couldn't go to church. Of course my destructive party lifestyle was the same and this kept up for another four years. By the time I was 28 years old I had been away from any type of relationship with God for about 11 years and this had taken a serious toll on my inner self. I had no hope, no vision for tomorrow, no love for much of anything or anyone, and I felt so alone, so very much alone. This feeling of loneliness can only be described as being abandoned on some far away remote place with no communication with anyone. A total abyss surrounding my soul.

I remember laying by the apartment pool one week day which I had taken off for a vacation day feeling this loneliness. So I got up and went to my apartment and locked myself in the bathroom for about an hour and just cried and repented to God for all the things that I had done and had abandoned my faith and relationship and I wanted to get back into some sort of fellowship with him. It is amazing how this huge weight just instantly lifted off my shoulders and a calm like I have never felt before came over me. I was at peace.

I made it a priority then to get back in church and when it rained on Sundays I started going back because we couldn't cut trees in the rain. Finally I called the guy after a couple of months and told him I couldn't work on Sundays any more and began my journey back in God's grace and mercy.

The thing that I learned from my experience is that I found my own voice and I am able to speak to you today without Jerry having to do it for me and God never ever leaves or abandons you even when you are not looking or wanting Him in your life.

My object that I would like to leave you with is this sack of seeds. There were many times in my life journey that I could have been planting God's love, grace and mercy and I just plain missed out. I don't want to miss out planting those seeds anymore. I want to be the one tapping someone on the shoulder and saying "God loves you just the way you are and He is right here waiting patiently whenever you are ready."

NEW DEACON FAITH STORY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

Sabra Boyd

I grew up in Glenwood, a very small town in southern Arkansas. We had one flashing stop light in town and a church on almost every corner. My story begins here where my family's life centered around our community of faith and service in the church. I witnessed my parents and my grandmothers live out their faith daily, giving of their time, talents, and money even when those commodities at times ran thin. I heard the Word of God preached and taught in my Sunday School classes and sang through hymns like "Trust & Obey," "There's Power in the Blood" and "Just As I Am."

One summer night at Bogg Springs Church Camp I knew beyond any doubt that I wanted to give my life to Christ. I prayed to God my prayer of belief in Christ and his sacrifice for me. I was 9 years old. In the days before cell phones I remember calling my parents from the pay phone in the center of camp! They were overjoyed. A few weeks later I was baptized in the Caddo River which runs along the edge of my hometown.

My faith journey is truly a testament of God's immense patience, mercy, and long suffering. I don't know how old I was when my parents first rushed out to purchase that James Dobson book "The Strong Willed Child," but I'm sure it was early on! For others who identify with being strong willed we will tell you that some lessons in life, we just have to learn the hard way. Through the sometimes lonely and turbulent years of adolescence and into college, the Christ that I accepted at 9 years of age did not leave me but continued to call me back to him. My Heavenly father placed key people in my life at strategic moments to guide me and give wise counsel. There were Sunday School teachers, friends, mentors, co-workers, ministers and always, my parents. Although my walk was far from consistent, I continued to seek God during this time and He was faithful to continue His work in me! I am so thankful for God's faithfulness.

In 1992 I moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, to attend graduate school. I joined Immanuel Baptist Church and became involved in their singles ministry. There I met Bryan and in September of 1994 we moved from the singles' department to the young marrieds. We are a great team and worked together in student ministry for many years. We also both have a heart for missions and God's work around the world and had the privilege of serving in mission projects here and overseas.

A little over four years ago Bryan shared with me that he felt that he (we) were being called to move in a new direction. I knew that he had been prayerfully seeking God for several months about something. I thoroughly expected him to say that we were being called to the mission field in Africa, (and that would have been fine with me!), but he said, "I think we are to go to Kansas City to join an architecture firm there!" It was a God thing. We sold our house in Little Rock in three days and I was able to find a job at Children's Mercy Hospital in KC. We packed all our belongings and moved to Liberty on December 30, 2005. After visiting Second Baptist just one time, shortly after our move, we knew that this was the place for us. We just immediately felt at home – thanks to all of you!

I brought a smile today to represent my faith journey and my service as deacon for my faith family. While on a mission trip in Russia several years ago our team was standing in a local café waiting to order some lunch. We were talking together, fellowshiping together and laughing together. An elderly woman approached our group and tapped me on the shoulder, I turned around and she began speaking in Russian. As she concluded I looked to our translator to relay her words. She had asked, "Why are you smiling so much?" It was a divine appointment. I shared about the love of Christ in my life and joy it brings and that His love was for her too. We gave her a bible in her language and prayed with her and for her. All from a smile.

A smile may seem simple enough but a smile can say so much. It can say, "I've missed you and I'm so glad you have returned." A smile can say, "I'm so happy you are here and you belong! A smile tells someone, I'm listening and what you say is important to me." A smile can break down barriers, cross cultures and languages. A smile can encourage, uplift; it is contagious.

I am truly humbled to serve in deacon ministry here. I love this church; you are my second family. And through this role my heart's desire is to encourage and minister to those who have long been a part of Second Baptist, those who may be new to our fellowship and those yet to walk through our doors who may be looking and longing to be greeted with a smile, just as I was on my first day here.

Thank you for the this opportunity to serve.

NEW DEACON FAITH STORY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

Harland Ginn

HISTORY IN ME

Good morning. I was ordained to the gospel ministry in October 1948, at the First Baptist Church in Cameron, Missouri. I had served the church as a youth and music minister from my sophomore through my senior year at William Jewell. After my graduation from Jewell, I became the pastor of two Baptist churches in Gentry County in Northwest Missouri. One was in the village of Alanthus, and the New Friendship Church was a country church near Albany. I had also started to Central Baptist Seminary. There were soon some people to baptize in those churches, and those good deacons thought that I should be ordained in order to baptize them. My membership was still at the First Baptist Church in Cameron, so the church at Cameron was contacted, and they brought a council together for my ordination. Present were people from Cameron, Maysville (my hometown), and from the churches I was serving. There were also some professors and friends from William Jewell College and Central Seminary.

Now, 61 years later, in my home town of Liberty, my ordination is to be brought up to date at Second Baptist Church, and I would like to share with you some of His story in me.

There has never been a time during the 84 years of my life that I have not believed what the first verse in the bible tells us, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

I started to Harvard (New Harvard, that is) when I was five years old. It was a one-room country school where one teacher taught eight grades. My dad had gone to New Harvard, and his cousin was my first grade teacher. Miss Verna Clarke used phonetics in sounding out the vowels and consonants, and I wasn't very old when I would go into the front room of our farm house, the room reserved for company, and would sit on the carpet in front of the library table and take the Bible from that lower shelf and read those words in the first chapter of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created..." That seemed perfectly reasonable to me, and I believed it then, and I believe it now.

However, there were events that followed in my childhood that brought new dimensions of this reality of God into my life.

There was a chronic physical problem which was a result of measles when I was about two years old. That problem led to ear infections. At the age of twelve, the infection spread to the mastoid. That, of course, required immediate surgery. But the surgery did not solve the problem. The infection had become more invasive and that led to spinal meningitis. At that time, there was no cure for the disease. A few years before, an outstanding surgeon at the Missouri Methodist Hospital in St. Joseph had the illness and was taken to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, but lost his life from that disease.

A young intern came into my hospital room one night after the diagnosis and told my mother of a new drug that was not yet on the market, but experiments were looking very promising. It would involve a risk and was expensive. Word got back home to my grandfather Ginn, and he stepped up to the plate. He never drove a car, but a son still at home drove him to the hospital. He went directly to the business office of the hospital and told them he wanted them to try the medication and that he would be responsible for the cost.

Needless to say, I am here to tell the story, and God's grace abounded in the lives of many good people. New kinds of relationships developed as grace and faith within the family, the community, and the Baptist church in my hometown was being expressed and experienced.

The result was that I accepted Christ as my Savior at the New Hope Baptist Church near my hometown where my uncle was leading the singing for a revival. Two years later, a dedicated young pastor whose name was Leland Heriford was called to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Maysville. I started attending the church and soon presented myself before the church for baptism. There was no heater in that baptistery, and the water was cold, but when I was raised up from the water, I saw my high school English teacher wiping tears from her eyes.

That sight told me that people cared for me and that what I had done was very important. During my senior year in high school, that teacher asked me to come to her desk when class was dismissed, and she talked to me about college and spoke specifically about William Jewell. That suggestion of coming to William Jewell became a reality for me.

My mother's dream for me was that I would follow the footsteps of her father and become a doctor. I signed up for biology, zoology, chemistry, and other subjects that were necessary for a premed student, but I soon found that Dr. Hester's books, "The Heart of Hebrew History," and "The Heart of the New Testament" had a greater appeal to me. The chapel sermons of Dr. Walter Pope Binns, the president of William Jewell, that proud and gracious pastor from Virginia, inspired me. While chapel was required in those days, it was no burden to me. His proud stance, his Virginia accent, and his quoting Shakespeare and the Scriptures from memory inspired me. I found myself connecting with ministerial students and was invited to participate in the services of churches they served in leading the music and providing special music.

At the beginning of my sophomore year, I was called to the First Baptist Church in Cameron to be their minister of music and youth activities. Those years at Cameron were new and growing chapters of His Story in me.

Soon after I started to Central Seminary, Frances Whiteaker, a Marysville girl whom I had known from my teen years, became my girlfriend. Our dates were on Sundays when I traveled from Central Seminary to serve the churches in Gentry County. She played the piano for the churches and was the best pianist they had ever had. The people sang their hearts out. The month after I graduated from Central Baptist Seminary in 1951, she became my wife. Soon after our marriage, we were called to the pastorate of the Baptist Church in Hardin, Missouri, the home of the Quicks, who were Polly Bowles' parents, and the Hiltons, the grandparents of John Hilton. The good people in Hardin welcomed our baby, Elizabeth, into this world where she was loved and tended while Frances played the piano for the worship services. Following pastorates were the First Baptist Church in Excelsior Springs where we served six years and where two more daughters and a son were born at the old hospital in Excelsior Springs. The children were old enough to love and appreciate the Ozarks when we were called to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Camdenton. After four years at Camdenton, the Winwood Baptist Church, close to my Alma Mater, William Jewell, called me to a pastorate that continued for 26 years until I retired in 1991. This has been followed by 13 interim pastorates. It is an honor now to have been chosen to serve as deacon here in our church home in Liberty.

NEW DEACON FAITH STORY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010

Sue Wright

For those who may not know me, my name is Sue Wright. I've worshipped at Second off and on since I came to Jewell as a freshman in 1962. This is my Faith Story.

I'm writing a book at the moment whose main character, a woman named Summer, is discovering as I flesh out her spiritual side that our lives aren't a line of dot-to-dots we puzzle out to some end in the road where we're either gathered up into heaven or pushed to our fiery deaths; our lives are a circle, symmetrical and unbroken as all eternity, "God's child and forever I am."

Summer senses as she experiences joy and loss in her life that once God created the earth and set it into motion, each of us is more or less free to find our own way. There are, of course, dramatic exceptions, times when God has definitely intervened in our history to move us along as individuals or as a people, the most crucial of those exceptions being God sending Jesus to be our Savior and Perfect Example. Perfect because even people flawed as we can follow His model for doing what's right in the world.

Like me, Summer will yearn, struggle even, to feel Christ's presence in her daily life, in her hours of prayer especially, which she is the first to admit are often too much about "please" and not enough about "thank you." Around the time the shy little freckle-faced girl she is – and I was also, growing up – begins to wonder if Jesus may be too busy – or is it she who is too busy – for the two of them to make a meaningful connection, she comes to understand that instead of God being distracted from her with more pressing matters, God-In-Three has graced her with a rather designer group of Talkers to walk her along the sometimes slinky route home to Him, folks who nurture her in both real time (the present) and as memory bytes from unforgettable conversations or books she has read – the Bible, for instance. Whether these are folks alive or folks gone before her, they stay on to help Summer battle the Crashers who thrive on stealing what is most like Jesus in all of us.

My Mom and Dad were my first Talkers, and, in the course of that esteemed assignment, walked me up the stairs into Mt. Washington Baptist Church in Independence where I soon became a Sunbeam.

My Mom was a Star around church – president of the WMU and Sunday School teacher – while my Dad in those

early days of our family was mostly just a church tag-along. Looking back, I feel sincerely proud of him, though. I watched my Dad get baptized while I was still a kid, and after that – and despite the face he had a terrible stutter and couldn't read even the shortest Bible verse aloud – accept a job he COULD do at church without speaking a word: keep the records for his Sunday School department so they could be posted with the others on the little wooden board that hung in the sanctuary.

Our pastor at Mt. Washington, Dr. Loren Goings, BROTHER Goings to everyone who knew him, had a countenance and a message that were magnetic and, to this day, make him one of my Walkers Extraordinaire. By the time I was nine years old, I was ready to run down the aisle and into his arms to proclaim that I accepted Jesus as my Savior, but because I was so bashful, it would take a revival and a visiting evangelist, a Dr. Delozier, to tweak the courage in me to do it. On the Sunday I finally went forward, I not only made my profession of faith, but was, that same day, baptized and served communion. It seemed, to a tomboy like me, I'd scored a triple hit.

With Jesus and His team of caring voices pouring themselves into my consciousness, you might assume I could never lose my direction; but the truth is, I have from time to time. Among a list of poor choices, I married too young and ended up in a divorce. The devil of any divorce is in the details, and that includes mine. On the upside of these missteps, I have felt God's healing forgiveness melt my shame and, in turn, grow me in a state only someone redeemed as I can fully appreciate: a permanent state of humility. As a result, I promise you I am one of the least judgmental and most open-minded persons you will ever meet.

In 1976, I married Dick Wright, Old Hon of my columns, grandfather, human candy dispenser, two-dollar ATM man, and perennial anchor of the balcony at Second Baptist. People have told us we make an odd couple, and, frankly, we have to agree. In what counts most, however, we see eye to eye. We love God, we love each other, and we love and are loved back by an amazing array of family and friends.

I began my faith story by suggesting that it seems to Summer, and to me, our Shepherd Savior, though watchful, listening, and ready, doesn't regularly mess in our lives

unless He is invited. Jesus doesn't cause an earthquake to punish us or those we might think deserve his punishment; he doesn't make us sick to get our attention. When, however, the Almighty does choose to intervene, to build on our strengths and make us more complete as persons, such acts of God are impossible to miss. Like God sending a doctor to me whose counsel when I was having trouble sleeping was that I should get up whenever I was wide awake in the night and do something I had always wanted to do. Two years and many pre-dawn mornings at my word-processor later, *The Christmas Path*, my first book, was sitting on bookstore shelves in cities everywhere.

When I told Mother one day that *The Christmas Path*, which is just retelling Jesus' birth in Jerusalem, had sold 40,000 copies, she was ecstatic. "Just think," she exclaimed. "You've shared *The Plan of Salvation* with 40,000 people!"

Dear Mom, she was always really big into "The Plan of Salvation!" That's why I'm still surprised that when she was dying, she asked me to review it with her. "But, Mom," I said, "you know *The Plan* better than I do." "I know," she answered, "but I want you to go over it with me

anyway." She asked the same favor of Pam Pratt, her hospice chaplain, when she came to visit. When Pam looked a bit confused by Mom's old-fashioned terminology, Mom asked me to find Pam one of the tracts she had carried to share with anyone willing to read it. I found one in the top drawer of the dresser in her bedroom.

And so, as I remember that moment, that truly sacred moment between my Mom and me, and reciting for her John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," "I offer these three symbols of my enduring faith: a copy of *The Christmas Path* and these two very precious bookmarks that keep my place: Mom's trusty *Plan of Salvation* and this individual report slip from Sunday School at Mt. Washington I found among my Dad's things after he died.

Reflecting on the past and looking into the future, I have to smile as I think how, in the moonlight of my years, "Jesus (still) wants me for a Sunbeam," Okay, make that a deacon. Whichever, I am honored to travel in His service and yours as I start my sweet slide home. Like Summer says – and I – "Praise God, the trip is round!"

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