



“I Am Second.”

by Sue Wright

Lee Ann Zech

Have you read something somebody wrote and wished you could go face-to-face with them? Ask a few follow-up questions or share a fact seeming parallel in your histories? I'm hoping you'll soon understand that's what this bi-monthly page in *THE WEEKLY* is all about. That is, you and I stopping the folks spotlighted and engaging them in conversation. Mutually mining one another's heads and hearts for whatever nugget of reminiscence, observation, wisdom, or good laugh it takes to tap into the mother lode of treasured substance each of us is and that potential we have for becoming someone's new friend in Christ.

Lee Ann Zech is a person I've always wanted to compare notes with and thanks to a few e-mails back and forth, we've done just that, ala our computers. Bet you didn't know Lee Ann grew up in the same church with somebody else at Second. Wondering who? Think Connections!

I met Lee Ann at a William Jewell College event years ago where she works in the Advancement Office (works part-time at Chico's too—there's your plug, Lee Ann!). Then I started running into her at church on Sunday mornings when she and her husband Jerry, daughter Kelli, who's in college, and son Connor, a junior at Liberty High School, visited our services. Her warmth and presence are impossible to miss. And so, isn't it nice she and her family have become a regular fixture.

If Lee Ann's faith story sounds anything like yours as you read it here, keep in

mind, there is an element of each of us in all of us. And now, Lee Ann in her own words:

“We're all given a second chance by Jesus at one point or another during our lives,” Lee Ann begins, “and I'm no different. Some of us even need third, fourth, and fifth chances!”

Then she goes on to tell us that her faith story began long before she could claim it as her own. “My mother was raised in a southern, Southern Baptist home,” she says. “Mom's faith was formed and continually influenced by her parents, and it was natural for her to take the faith they instilled in her and pass it on to my brother and me when we came into the world. I don't remember a time when I wasn't shined-up and out the door to church on Sunday morning. It was such an integral part of my life that I was shocked when on occasion I would encounter someone my age or older who had never been inside a church. They wouldn't know any of the stories in the Bible, and I couldn't understand how that could possibly be.

“When I was the *right age*, I went forward with so many of my friends to be baptized and become an *official* member of the church. Thinking back, I had faith, but no understanding. You see, I looked at receiving Christ as another thing to check off my list. It was another rite of passage in my childhood. Everyone else was doing it so, of course, I needed to do it too—to get it out of the way.

“It wasn't until several years later, in my early teens, that I was graced with the

understanding that goes along with faith. Jesus tapped my shoulder and nudged my heart toward a more thoughtful decision to make him the Lord of my life. I rededicated my life to Him and, it was at this time I finally understood the importance of a church family; understood the need to belong to a place where you can worship with those who share your faith; share the responsibility Christ lays at our feet for spreading His Word and Love to those who so desperately need it.

“I would like to say mine was a *happily ever after* story, but it didn't quite work that way for me. I've had my share of bumps in the road, most of them wrestling matches between God and me. Even though I knew who would ultimately win, it didn't stop me from fighting! I switched religions for a while, but that wouldn't be the right fit. In the end, I have come back to that center in my soul where I always find the blessings of peace. That's when I found my home at Second Baptist, too. It's only been a couple of years now, but it feels like it's been for years—in the best and most peaceful way.

“I am embarking on a new adventure now. I am a member of the Missions Committee as well as other projects in our church. I'm so happy to be here. My *second*, second chance, has put me right where I need to be. I truly AM Second!”

Yes she is, and so are you and you and you . . .