



TESTIMONIAL

A Still, Small Voice proclaimed, "Rejoice!" by Paul, Rejoicing Spirits Volunteer

Sometime during the summer of 2003, I heard about a new type of service that was going to be held at St. Paul's -- a special service designed for people with special needs. I remember St. Paul's Player's discussing donating some proceeds to support this service, Worship & Music Committee being asked if they could help, announcements at church, but at some point I understood that my daughter, Paula, had something to do with the development of the program (called "Rejoicing Spirits") and my wife, Linda, was going to volunteer to participate.

And me? Well, I knew myself well enough to know that I couldn't possibly relate to our special guests. Wouldn't they and I be very different from one another? What would I say? How would I react? But my daughter and my wife were involved, and I thought, maybe, just maybe I might - uh - join them? Maybe.

Then I stopped thinking and just listened. From somewhere a still, small voice said, "Paul, you've got to do this." "Why?" I answered. "Because you're afraid," said the voice. And so I reluctantly volunteered.

I was to be parking lot attendant. Good. I would worry about cars and their drivers, and not so much about our visitors.

Then Malcolm arrived. He got out of the car, walked up to me, touched my shoulder, and said, "Let me see your ID!" Then it hit me, I wasn't parking cars -- I was the first greeter! I was our guest's first impression! For a moment, I panicked. Then I realized that I had a name tag. "Here," I said to Malcolm, pointing to my tag, "where's **your** ID?" He shot me an impish smile and moved on into the church.

Since then, I have come to recognize many of our Rejoicers, their faces, if not their names. Franklin leading us in the Lord's Prayer (forgive us our DEBTS), Kristie introducing me to her boyfriend, Kathy's enthusiastic greeting (and her prayers for friends and family), and Malcolm in his Santa Claus hat. I look forward to each Rejoicing Spirits Service.

Our guests greet, hand out bulletins, and lead us in song and prayer. And when I read one of the bulletins from a Rejoicing Spirits service, I see that it is not really different from the other bulletins our church hands out.

And so I've learned that our guests and I are not really so different one from the other at all. If they are special, they are special in ways that all God's children are special. I see them for what they CAN do and not what they CAN'T. Isn't this how we are to see everyone? And isn't this how we would like to be seen ourselves? After all, there are things I can do and things I can't do, just like everyone else.

The lessons we learn from special people are lessons we can apply to our relationships with everyone. We are truly one body in Christ!

Thank you, Lord, for Your still, small Voice.



Paul (right) standing with a Rejoicer who made P. realize we're not so different after all.

Note: the names of our Rejoicers were changed to preserve their privacy.