

Stacking the Stands by Pastor Shawn

One of the more memorable things about High School hockey was the rush of excitement I'd get stepping out on the ice on game days. The set up of most ice rinks only aided this phenomenon. You'd start your journey in the locker room. A poorly lit, brick laid room that smelt of... you know what I'll skip that part. You'd then make your way down a hallway and then you'd be there: A thin walkway through the stands that led to the ice. As you went down the walkway, crowds would start cheering. By the time you hit the ice, pure adrenaline was pumping through your veins.

The author of Hebrews understood something about the power of walking into an arena filled with a roaring crowd. Using this image, the writer paints a picture of our faith saying, "**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..."

Did you know that you are part of the "great cloud of witnesses" for the young people of our church? Did you know the interest you show in their lives is one of the primary factors in helping them run the race of faith with perseverance? You see, every young person needs an extended family of Christian adults—adults who can be a part of the cloud of witnesses that cheers them on.

Because of this, one of the primary tasks of our ministry to children must be to connect young people to their own great cloud of witnesses. This is where our new ministry initiative called "GIFT" comes in. GIFT—**Generations In Faith Together**—believes that passing on the Christian faith involves the partnership of generations (that's you), individuals (that's you), and families. It will do this by providing opportunities, "GIFT NIGHTS," for people of all ages to explore God's love for them. During these "GIFT NIGHTS," there will be plenty of occasions to come alongside young people and their families to help them in their calling of passing the faith on to the next generation. In short, during gift we are stacking the stands in favor of our young people.

I hope you will join us on this new adventure St. Paul's is taking!

<i>GIFT NIGHTS 2019-2020</i>			
My Bible <i>Wednesday Nights</i> <i>Oct. 2-16</i>	Reformation Party <i>Wednesday Night</i> <i>Oct. 23</i>	Advent <i>Wednesday Nights</i> <i>Dec. 4-18</i>	Lent <i>Wednesday Nights</i> <i>March 4-25</i>
GIFT "My Bible" nights will be chalk full of games, dramas, activities, and opportunities to learn about the Bible and how it speaks into our lives today.	On this evening we will celebrate our heritage by diving into the who, what, where, and why of the reformation.	These nights will provide a time to share the Advent rituals and traditions that have been passed down through many generations, and to make new ones.	Lenten GIFT nights will encourage generations to share their Lenten rituals and traditions as well as spend time together making resources that can be used at home during the weeks of Lent.