

# McCabe United Methodist Church

## Our Legacy

II Timothy 1:1-7: May 25, 2014 (Memorial Weekend)

Pastor Rick Fossum

In my hometown newspaper last week, I saw the obituary for Bruce Moen. Mr. Moen, as I called him, was my math teacher in high school. I wasn't the best math student in the world, but it wasn't Mr. Moen's fault. He was a good teacher. I learned quite a bit from Mr. Moen and it wasn't just math. He showed us patience and he did it with a sense of humor.

You might say, that patience was Mr. Moen's legacy to me.

A legacy is something that we receive from someone else . . . usually from someone who has died, but not always. The legacy could be money or property, but a legacy could also be values and morals, ethics and faith, and even our opinions and politics.

I had a pastor once in Hillsboro who was also my friend. His name was Tom. His personal life was a mess. He made more than his fair share of mistakes. Yet, I'll always be grateful to Tom. Thanks to Tom, he put a spark into my faith. He helped me to see that God was alive and well in the world and was always with me. Through Tom, I gained a new understanding of God in Jesus Christ. It was his legacy to me.

Who helped you become the person you are today? Who taught you the principles that you stand on? Who gave birth to your faith? Where did you learn the importance of sharing or playing fairly or telling the truth or being kind?

I could tell you about Miss Howard, about my parents, my grandparents, about the different teachers and coaches I've had. They all helped me grow into the man that I am today. It was their legacies to me.

Legacies are handed down to us by our parents and grandparents, our teachers and neighbors, our friends and many others. They all have a hand in making you, you and me, me.

I think this was what Paul was saying to Timothy in our scripture reading today. He was talking about Timothy's faith and how he got that

faith. Paul said, **“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.”**

Paul was talking about legacies. Timothy’s faith, like a lot of us, was handed down to him by his grandmother and by his mother. Does that sound familiar? It was part of their legacy to Timothy. Thanks to them, Timothy received their faith, built on it and made it stronger.

The Bible is full of men and women who passed down their legacies to us. From the book of Ruth, we learned the value of loyalty. Ruth said to her mother-in-law, Naomi, **“Where you go, I will go. Your people will be my people. Your home, my home. Your God, my God.”**

From the prophets of the Old Testament, we learned that God uses people, people like the prophets and people like us, to carry God’s message into the world.

From the Apostles, we learned the value of following Jesus and obeying him and relying on him.

From Jesus, we learned about love and grace and forgiveness. From Jesus, we learned about life and how he wants us to live and how he wants us to treat others.

Legacies. You and I owe a debt of gratitude to many people for their help in building us into the men and women that we are today.

It’s our turn now. We’re passing our legacies down to our children . . . the children in our families, the children of this church, the children who live next door to us and those who don’t. We have little eyes watching our every move and little ears listening to our every word. Our children are learning from us. We are helping them grow.

McCabe Church is in the legacy business. It’s part of our mission to pass on the stories and the values and the morals of Jesus Christ to all people who walk through our doors, especially the younger ones. From the day this church was organized back in 1883, we’ve been passing down legacies from one generation to the next. We’ve been helping to build God’s people.

Through our worship services, through our Sunday Schools, through our fellowship, through our Bible studies, through our many and varied ministries, through our witness and examples, we've been helping people not only to believe in Jesus Christ, but also to live like him. Legacies.

On this Memorial Day weekend, we remember and honor all the men and women who have died in military service for this country. From our War of Independence to our Civil War, from our World Wars to Korea, from Vietnam to Iraqi and to Afghanistan, we take time every year to give thanks to the men and women for their ultimate sacrifice and for the legacy they bravely passed down to us. A legacy which values freedom and liberty, a legacy which cherishes peace and justice for all. Without them, our lives and our country would be radically different today. Legacies.

In a few minutes, we will remember the twenty-four names who have died during this past year. Their names are listed in our bulletins. Most, were a part of this church. Some you knew. Some of these names touched your lives directly. Some helped you to grow. Each one, in their own unique and special way, left a legacy.

Take a moment and think about all the people who helped make you into the person you are today. Where did your faith come from? Your curiosity? Your integrity? Your determination? Your positive outlook on life? Your stubbornness? Your compassion? Your generosity? Your sense of humor? You owe them your gratitude.

The question for us is this: What will be our legacy? What are we leaving behind?

Marion Mill was born in Hungary to a wealthy and powerful family. She became a movie actress and married the famous movie director Otto Preminger.

The couple moved to Hollywood where Marion found the life of fame and fortune too much for her. Soon, her life started to spiral downward. Preminger divorced her.

Marion returned to Europe and met Albert Schweitzer. Albert was a medical doctor and a musician who had given up his "good" life in order to

help people living in Africa. Through Albert Schweitzer, Marion discovered what was missing from her life.

She wrote an autobiography called *All I Ever Wanted Was Everything*. In her book, she wrote, “I **couldn’t get *the everything* in life I wanted until I learned to give up everything.**”

In her obituary, she had written, “**Albert Schweitzer said there are two classes of people in this world— the helpers and the non-helpers. I am a helper.**”

Do you see how a legacy works? A legacy is far more than just a name we call churches and schools. A legacy is what people pass down to others.

Albert Schweitzer left Marion Mill a legacy . . . a legacy of helping others. Without him, she might never have discovered that part of herself.

What kind of legacy will you and I leave behind? What kind of lessons are we passing down to our children and grandchildren? What kind of examples are we setting for the young people watching us today?