

Barbara Braulick testimonial

Good Morning!

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Barbara Braulick. My family and I have been members of Baker for 5 years. Prior to that we lived in a suburban community near Philadelphia, PA, members of an old Lutheran church founded in the year 1739. We came to the Midwest due to my husband's career. Although we miss certain aspects of life on the East coast, we have come to love St. Charles and its surrounding communities as well as our new church home here at Baker United Methodist Church.

Being a born and bred Methodist, it was natural for me to want to visit Baker while on our quest looking for a new church home. My husband Chip comes from a long line of Lutheran pastors and grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America., known as the ELCA. Both of us were very active members and leaders in the Lutheran church. The one thing we did struggle with was a lack of a strong music ministry. The churches that Chip and I grew up in had strong music programs and it was an essential part of what completed our faith journey each Sunday. But our church didn't have that good fortune to have that available to us. So when we moved, we looked at other churches in the area, but for us they just didn't hit the ball out of the park.....but Baker did that for us....in fact, we were late our first visit, we dashed to the balcony maybe to be inconspicuous, Jeff Hunt got up and directed the choir and as soon as the choir sang.....I cried, blowing my nose, **no longer** inconspicuous.. From that moment, I knew I was home and Chip knew his life would now continue instead in the Methodist church instead of the Lutheran church.....a side note as my husband found out 20 years later from his mother that he has Methodist roots too! So alas, all was not lost.

As a family, we were all moved by the music we heard that day and the fact this church has a very special gift that most churches do not have with its talented members, music director and organist. Johann Sebastian Bach put it quite well. He said and I quote, "*The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the Glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.*" We found that instantly. The more we witnessed, through the cherub choir, the special trios and quartets that play in brass or as wind ensembles, we knew we wanted to be part of this church and its music ministry. Our daughters Hannah and Gretchen were the first to participate under the direction of Erik Swenson with cello and flute. I took a baby step and tried Gregorian chanting and then jumped into choir with Chip following in the Men's Ensemble. This was the way that as a family we felt we could serve God best, through our voices and instruments as we

begin our church life here. And as Bach so put it, our souls were refreshed and we felt new life within us.

Our next goal is to get more involved with missions work in our community. Serving others is to serve God. As the Shakers so plainly and effectively put it, "Put your hands to work and your heart to God." It's an ideal they lived by and one we aspire to do better by, not just for ourselves, but here at Baker as a church.

Finally, to help spread the word of our church, to give it the financial strength it needs to continue to grow and be a presence here in the heart of St. Charles we need to not just be the big stone church on the hill top, but also a strong recognizable leader in the community that has much to offer our town. To help the church, we have increased our pledge this year by 33%. Like many people we too have been impacted by job loss, trying to recuperate from a financial setback, the rising prices in fuel, food and everyday living. But in this process, we also have come to understand that through tougher economic times, we really can do without a few things. It's helped us to realize that MAYBE we CAN afford more than we thought. So as a result we increased our pledge over 50% in the last two years.

We found as a family, a way to be active in the church. For us, it is music ministry, and now we are personally growing and reaching out to get involved in helping others in the community, but it may be something else for you. The church needs all of us. Try to find that one thing that speaks to you as a way to serve others and go for it.