

## *SO, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT SERVING?*

One of the first things I noticed about our Church were the people serving. Every week, they smiled and greeted me with a genuineness I hadn't experienced in a long time. No matter what area of ministry they were serving in, everyone seemed to have an unexplainable joy.

As a military family with 8 moves under our belt, we've experienced a lot of Church communities. I'm sad to say that not all experiences were positive, so I was a bit skeptical at first. I wondered what made WUMC so different. More to come on that.

*Turn "What do I have to Give?" into "What do I have to Learn?"*

I had an entire list of reasons why I wasn't qualified to serve. We had just been through a really hard move. Our girls were struggling and needed much more of my focus and my time. I was busy doing the tedious all-consuming work of establishing a new life in a new town. I was running a business from home in the little time I did have. Thanks to those not so positive experiences, it had been many years since I'd set foot in a church. It all left me feeling utterly unqualified to be of service to anyone else.

My circumstances were challenging, and oftentimes messy. Life was just chaotic, so giving up time to serve didn't make sense.

Do you have your own list of "I can't because...?" If so, I want to share what I've learned while serving at our Church.

*God has our path laid out. We just have to choose to walk it.*

Let me start by saying that all those reasons I felt I couldn't serve were the exact reasons I should. Why? Because God had plans for growth in me. He knew what I needed, and who I needed, in order to overcome and thrive, and I

would only discover this more empowered version of myself in His service. He had my path laid out; I just had to push the "I can't's" aside and walk it. If you take nothing else from my story, I pray that sticks with you.

*Finding Community...God wants us to find community in His church. There will always be someone older who can lead you and someone younger you can lead.*

We are called to set an example in the way we speak, love, and act. That practice is so abundant at our Church, and it doesn't go unnoticed. Watching people give their time and energy creates a beautiful ripple effect, encouraging others to do the same, as it did me. Never underestimate the difference you are making, regardless of how small you perceive the act to be.

Getting involved allowed me to meet people who share my faith and values and who have encouraged and strengthened my walk with Christ. It's allowed me to hear and see the Gospel lived out in others. Serving through our community has opened my heart and broadened my horizons. It's given me the opportunity to become a friend, a teacher, and a student in faith. All things I didn't know I needed, but He did.

I've become involved in causes bigger than myself and I've watched it create a backdrop for God to move in mighty ways in other areas of my life. It's led to a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment, and the deepened relationships formed have been a lifeline of support and encouragement.

*Your circumstances are a Blessing not a Barrier...God is giving you a story to use for His glory and your good.*

We all go through seasons of joy, seasons of pain, seasons of survival, and seasons of peace ([Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#)). Remember all of my "I can't's"? As God walks you through each of those seasons, He is building faith in you that will point others in similar circumstances to Him. But God is not the only one that will walk with us through life. He's given us a family in our church that we can turn to for prayer, encouragement, and wisdom. Those relationships are built, nurtured, and strengthened as you serve alongside each other. God planted us in Williamsburg for a reason, just as He has you, and being willing to serve can lead you to it.

*Serving doesn't mean having all the answers.  
It means having a heart for God's people and wanting to love them.*

I hadn't been in church in years, and while my faith didn't feel rusty, walking in it around others in His house did. So, I thought, "I'll go on Sundays and that will be enough." But it wasn't. He kept calling me for more. Here's what I learned...making mistakes will happen. They happen to all of us. But it's when we are weak that God gets the most glory (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Only He can use one broken person to bring about His healing in another. And we are all broken in some way. Being vulnerable is a gift that we give to those around us. Showing up as you are and being imperfect is exactly what He calls us to do.

He doesn't want us to change who we are in order to serve; He wants to transform us as we serve.

Knowing that you're making a difference in the lives of others is a powerful source of motivation and inspiration. How blessed are we that every week at WUMC we are given the opportunity to practice putting our attention less on ourselves and more on others. In this, God weaves a beautiful relationship between both working in us and through us.

*Jesus is Love. When we love others through serving, it's not uncommon to feel a sort of 'spiritual tingle'.*

I think it's because we are hard wired to feel joy when we give. That's why the giver often feels more blessed than the receiver. Do you believe the church doesn't need you? Doing so robs you of the joys He designed for you to experience. I want to encourage you to take a chance and get involved. God will honor that step of faith and grow it into so much more!

~ Michelle Roy