

Hello—We're Denny and Nancy Walters. We've been members of St. Daniel's for almost 24 years now, joining when we moved to Clarkston in 1986. We raised two children in this parish, but our son Jeff who is 28, now lives in Grand Blanc and is a member of Holy Family Church. Our daughter Jenny is 31, married to Paul Robak, and along with her three children, lives in Waterford where they are members of Our Lady of the Lakes parish. We know that their years here laid a strong foundation of faith for both of them.

We've been asked to speak to you today about stewardship. What IS "stewardship"? It begins with an understanding of God's ownership of everything: Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

All that we have is a gift from Him –our talents, our families, our possessions, our wealth, ourselves. It is up to us to "steward" or manage everything that God brings into our lives in a way that honors Him. In the Parable of the Talents found in the Gospel of Matthew, we're reminded that we are accountable to God for the ways in which we use the resources and talents we are given. To waste them is disappointing to Him.

(Nancy) It's important that we give of ourselves in THREE ways---TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE. Each of us has been gifted in some way in each of these areas. How we share these gifts with our parish community is a decision we must reach on our own after much prayerful reflection. Many of you sitting there are probably thinking "I don't have time to take on one more thing right now!" I know that feeling. We all lead extremely busy lives, but it isn't necessary to make a huge TIME commitment. When you look at the choices on the Time and Talent sheet, you'll see opportunities to volunteer for things that occur just once or require a minimal amount of time. You'll also find opportunities for activities that occur each week. It's up to you. The important thing is that you do something. I've

helped with coffee and donuts after mass, baked for funerals, and been a greeter before mass. All of these were easy to do when I was working with a very demanding schedule and each has been rewarding. But since retiring, I now have more time to give and have been involved in Scripture Study and more recently, I've been active in Christ Renews His Parish as a member of the Women's Outreach team and Team # 1. I could never have imagined the joy and blessings that would be mine because of these last two ministries. With each experience I grew spiritually and personally. Helping to put on the CRHP weekend where our women renew and deepen their relationship with Christ is certainly a privilege, but being on the team also means being part of a sisterhood of faith that is very special.

(Denny) I have been a Eucharistic Minister for many years and recently was a member of the Men's Team #1 for Christ Renews His Parish. Both have enriched my faith immensely and allowed me to make many new friends in the parish. Distributing the body of Christ each Sunday allows me to participate more fully in the mass. And although my CRHP commitment is over, the bond among the men on our team is so strong that we still meet regularly to pray together and discuss what is happening in our lives.

Prayerfully discern what TALENT God has given to you and how you can best share that with this faith community. Today's gospel told us that while we are many parts, we are all one body. Each of our parts is vital to the wellbeing of that body, the church. Our contributions, big and small, are all important. Matthew 5:16 "In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven." An added benefit to your good works and the joy that you'll receive, is that this joy is contagious. When others see your joy and your light, others will be drawn to Christ too. Besides that, you're going to have fun!

In order to operate, our parish needs our TREASURE as well. Stewardship is about giving the first fruits of our labor—not what is left over. It is planned, intentional giving with a joyous heart. One of the most memorable parables in the bible is the Widow's Gift in Luke 21, where the wealthy make offerings in the temple from their surplus, but the widow gives two coins—all she has to live on. Now, the church isn't asking us to give everything that we have. But it IS saying that some sacrifice should be involved. We, as Christians have a personal need to give. We are called to be His disciples, to do His work and build His Church. The past few years have been difficult for some and for **everybody who can**, now is the time to recommit to giving a fair percentage of your treasure. Only you will know what that is, but just as we all budget for major purchases and the monthly payments they require, our support of our parish community deserves the same.

(Nancy) When people come to the Cushing Center for a CRHP weekend, the sign on the door says "Welcome Home". St. Daniel's IS your home and it needs your loving care and support. This is Stewardship Commitment Weekend. Please get involved in our parish by completing the Time and Talent Opportunities Form. Even if you already volunteer for a ministry or service, please fill out the form since this is an annual commitment. Also, please pray about your fair share offertory gift as you complete the annual Treasure renewal form. We commit to a home mortgage and car payments; why not commit to how much we give back to God?

Remember: **We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.**

Thank you for listening and for sharing your gifts.