

## My Faith Journey: "Good Morning Sunshine"

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5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Worship: Our Stories

When I wrote this I didn't know if the sun would be shining or not but secretly I was praying for the latter. I want to talk to you briefly about my faith journey which began like many of you as a child.

I wasn't a fan of the sermons as much as I was of the songs, graham crackers and apple juice. One song however stands out and that is This Little Light of Mine I'm Going to Let it Shine.

Throughout my teenage years I didn't go to church. Yet, as I became a young adult, there was someone who encouraged me to walk with God and that was my grandmother Miss Ada.

With family comes stories and mine was yet to be told. At the age of 24, after a fall down a flight of stairs I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. In the years since I have struggled with acceptance but not in my faith that tomorrow would be a better day.

Three weeks ago I came to church thinking it would be a normal day. While using the bathroom I became dizzy and ended up on the floor.

As I lay there trying to get up, I couldn't. I had very little strength. The floor is familiar place to me yet it was cold.

I found myself between consciousness and heaven. Not in the mortality sense but in the loving embrace sense that I would be ok because I wasn't alone.

I tried multiple times to make others aware I was there by knocking on the radiator and the door. Yet what I thought was loud, wasn't intense enough to be heard by others.

The more I tried to get up, the more my head fell back to the floor. I knew I needed to rest and save my strength and I begged God to help me.

I stopped fighting because I knew that church had begun and nobody would hear me. So almost two hours after I went into the bathroom I came too again and heard voices outside the door.

I still didn't have the strength to move. Eventually I made it back to the door and tapped, tapped, tapped to no avail even trying to put my fingers beneath the door.

It was then I got as far up as I could onto my knees and managed to reach my arm up to push down the door handle. I thrust my body out into the hallway where I was found.

By this point I was able to let the frustration of the event take over and sobbed. At the ER I felt alone but then Sally came in and stayed with me.

I was no longer the patient but a friend. She sat with me and we prayed together knowing that this moment, today was coming. A story I wasn't going to share yet one that is familiar in my faith journey.

Whenever I have a challenge I must face, I turn to prayer and song. After all, my name is Carol which means a joyous song. Soon I was given the name Little Miss Sunshine perhaps because of my outlook on my life. But I wanted that name to have meaning.

I've always wanted to become a teacher, a preacher, a writer but most of all I wanted to be seen as a Christian. When you walk in these church doors, for an hour or so our troubles are on the other side.

In the quiet moments, I look at these walls and notice they are a soft yellow. Perhaps it's the lighting or perhaps it was an astute paint color which was chosen instead.

Each week we come here seeking answers, acceptance and strength. As I have become older I listen to the sermon, and like you look for what speaks most to my life.

We are all on a journey, yet we are the fortunate ones because we have someone named Jesus at our side.

In those days where the leaves are all but gone from the branches and the darkness comes early, we have Jesus.

When the phone rings to tell us of new diagnoses or a lost of a love one, we have Jesus.

As we stand and sing our closing hymn and the benediction is read, we have Jesus.

But as we walk out the doors into the passageway to our lives, has he left us suddenly?

No he hasn't..... and he will not. When we have a bad day and the flood of our tears seems unrelenting, we are never alone.

When another person comes in contact with us, it is a fundamental moment to what **IS** possible.

Is your life a reflection of what can be or what is?

Does your light shine as a beacon of hope in the storm?

If not, .....it can, because I believe it so. For it is because of my journey of faith, that allows me to look past the clouds and into the face of those before me and say... sincerely..... Good Morning Sunshine.