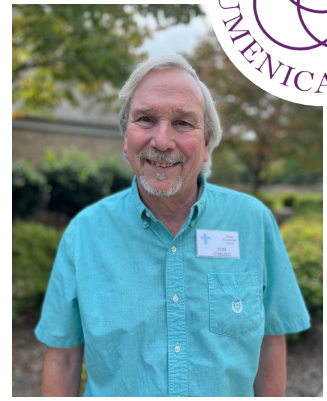




# TEMPLE TALK

from Tom Curling

**THIS TEMPLE TALK WAS SHARED DURING WORSHIP  
ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2024**



I am Tom Curling and I am happy share my Temple Talk pertaining to what draws me and others in the congregation to be a part of this parish and to support it with my attendance, involvement and financial support.

My faith journey has followed a path that prepared me for a place like Trinity. I grew up in a family that attended church regularly. My parents were involved in committees, clubs and events at Wesley Methodist Church in Vienna VA. I attended the Sunday school, vacation bible schools, participated in youth group and worshipped regularly. I will say that we NEVER had VBS like what is created and supported here, though. My parents instilled in me that participation was more than an opportunity, it was a requirement. They taught me that you weren't allowed to just observe and reap the benefit of whatever was going on. There is an obligation to be a part of community and to share in the efforts.

While stepping away from a faith or church community in college and young adulthood, I found my way back and became active in many faith-filled communities that shaped my understanding of God's love. Through teaching, engaging in worship, and participating in a transformative Cursillo experience, I discovered a deeper faith and a supportive community that reinforced my belief that God is always with me. Ultimately, these experiences helped me fully embrace my faith and trust in God's presence in my life.

When arriving to Smith Mountain Lake in 2001. I knew I needed to get involved. (Thanks mom and dad.) And I needed to find a church. I only visited TEP and joined in 2003. My first memories of TEP and the parishioners was that it was an outreach-based church full of highly intelligent and motivated people. They were very welcoming and eager to "get you involved". I was also impressed with Gary's preaching and teaching. I always like hearing the word and it's meaning in the time it was written and then its message for us today. I attended services and started looking for something to do. Ministry of Service interested me because it was a conglomeration of outreach organizations. I attended as an interested unaffiliated participant in the quarterly meetings. Then it happened, Cheryl Morrison basically told me that I was taking over as moderator of MOS and she was retiring from it. And there you go, I have held that role since 2006.

I still work full time and have not been able to be physically involved in the many weekday events and volunteer activities. So, I have looked elsewhere for my involvement. I currently serve on the safety team's early Sunday shift. I help the very talented folks on Alter Guild, I sing with the folk group, I love and am honored to read scripture and serve communion and I am also part of the stream team providing live and recorded coverage of the 10:30 service. All of those are Sunday activities that I can't make any excuse to not volunteer for if I enjoy them. I have also served a stent on Parish Council. That was a fantastic experience where I learned so much about the uniqueness of TEP and the organization of it. I really appreciate that TEP's mission is driven by the parishioners with the pastors and staff supporting and guiding those efforts.

As I read through our Stewardship ministry initiatives, they are not anything new. They continue the efforts that have been going on all the years I have been here. I am happy that our focus remains on the community and the world in efforts that have been started by and driven by our fellow parishioners. My hope is that these efforts will thrive and that new efforts originated by new voices to come will help us continue to grow and serve all whom God loves.