

Good morning! You may not know me, because I tend to keep a low profile here. But that does not mean that FPCoG isn't an important part of my life. Why am I generous with FPCoG? Because FPCoG has been very generous to me!

I moved to Groton in 1989, and FPCoG was just that beautiful church on the corner of Route 40, by Lawrence Academy. But I did my own churching in other places, having grown up in the Sudbury United Methodist Church.

First Parish entered my life in a big way on a beautiful July day in 2005 when, with my father reading their vows, my beloved brother Jim "committed" to his love Tim in this very space. It was not an official marriage at that time, but it was the equivalent of such. Most of their family and friends were present, and I had the honor of hosting the reception at my house in Groton. It was an intensely joyous and important occasion for me personally, and for my family.

Church choirs have long been a part of my life, but with a nest bordering on empty, I was ready for a new church experience. So when Steve Boczenowski encouraged me to try out the First Parish choir, in 2012, I accepted. While I've sung in numerous choirs and A Capella groups in my past, I've never learned more about how to sing than I have from Shawn McCann. And just as we perfect one aspect of a piece, he finds another for us to work on! I must admit that Shawn's commitment to striving for perfection is infectious.

About a year ago, Pat Lawrence suggested that the choir get some rainbow colored stoles to unify us and display what we stand for when we sing in other places, such as we did at the New Hope Community Church in Ayer. That kicked off a project that for me was pure joy. I got to work closely with my Mom and some of the ladies from the choir and beyond to design and sew the choir stoles that are now a part of First Parish. Not only was the camaraderie around it wonderful, the project fun, and the stoles themselves beautiful, they were in effect a surprising gift of honor for my brother Jim. He reposted the Facebook picture of the choir wearing them this past Fall with the following comment: "My sister Carolyn's newly designed choir stoles lovingly embraced and modeled by the First Parish Church choir of Groton. In these hallowed walls, Tim and I tied the knot 10 years ago! Happy..."

So why am I generous with FPCoG? Because FPCoG has presented me with invaluable gifts: a peak family experience, voice lessons, a transformational project, and the opportunity to stand in awe, celebrating my place in the world, and sharing myself with an incredibly loving, open community that cares deeply about each other and the world around it. I thank you all for that.