

## My Faith Story

I am Joanne and I would like to share: Never give up on God's assignments for you. Endurance wins the day. Our individual personal stories are valuable and important and there is no denying that; however, what we do after we engage and commit our lives to Jesus is equally important and this is where I will begin.

I gave my life to Christ, at age 34, while ironing and watching a TV program. When the program changed, since I wanted to finish what I was ironing, I left it on. A person with a similar background to mine, but indeed worse than my own life, was speaking and I thought - **if they could be changed, then so could I.**

My progress was slow. Father God knew it would take time to heal me inside. I moved back to Schuylkill County and attended a church, but not for long. A profound nudging from the Holy Spirit made me realize I was getting nothing from the sermons. What to do?

God led Michael and me to an ecumenical program through three men, music, a message and an invitation to check-out First UMC and we jumped on it.

Fast forward...The Emmaus Walk, the community and fellowship of other believers began to teach me **a whole new way to God.** I was eager to help others know this existed and would help them in their searches.

I had a built-in, captive audience in my daily workplace: the salon where I worked. My conversations changed from frivolous banter to "How are you today?" eye-to-eye, to a lot of listening, to "I'll keep you in my prayers," to "Anything I can pray for you this week?" and to "Let's pray about that right now before we start."

Some clients became so accustomed to this happening, that they would discreetly wait several yards back of me with their heads bowed. This is how I identified who were followers. Then Stephen's Ministry bumped me further down the road.

My next step on my spiritual walk came when my clients contracted serious life-threatening illnesses with an end-time in sight. My question then became **"How is it with your soul?"**

The situation I want to share with you happened recently when a friend asked me a question: "I want to know Jesus like you do." So, in a restaurant parking lot, we prayed the sinner's prayer and then I purchased a commentary on Mark's Gospel which we are now studying together. This friend has pancreatic cancer which has entered into her stomach wall. How long we have together God only knows, but I will see her again.

***"See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay everyone according to the deeds he has done." Revelation 22:12 (LB)***