

We are all busy, and challenged. Juggling work, activities, cooking good food, getting in quality time...but we can lead by example.

Just look at the legacy through our very own church, an invitation to church from Aunt Evelyn, mothers teaching me Sunday school, creating a follower of Jesus, who marries and her husband becomes part of the church, and we have 3 children together.

Both Jeff and I also taught Sunday school to 30-40 different children. I run our youth group which has reached 20-40 kids. And now my son, Foster is in the nursery singing songs and reading stories and the legacy continues and we bear fruit for generations to come.

Today, as we honor our mothers, let us also give thanks to God for the gift of mothers who have shaped and molded us into the people we are today.

May we cherish their love, and continue to walk in the faith that they have passed down to us. Let us strive to carry on their legacy of faith, sharing light and hope in a world in need of God's love. Happy

Mother's Day to all the amazing mothers out there! May God bless you abundantly as you continue to impact lives with your love and faith.

Praise Be to God, Amen.

“Guiding Little Hearts: A Mothers Influence in Faith”

May 12th, 2024 — Selby United Church — Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:3-7

By Rev. Mike Putnam

I have been going to this church for as long as I can remember. So long in fact I had to ask my mom, how long have I been attending Selby United Church, and she said since 1977. So I would have been 1 year old at the time, yes for as long as I can remember.

I asked my mom, what made you attend Selby United Church and not another church like Newburgh, since my dad's family had gone there. And she said that she was invited to come by Aunt Evelyn.

My parents had recently moved to Selby to farm, my grandfather was also a farmer and so was his brother-in-law who was married to my great aunt

Evelyn Storey. All of the farmers were together taking turns bringing in the corn harvest and Evelyn had said to my mom “you should take the kids to Selby United Church, they have a great Sunday school program there”

So, my mom did, and every Sunday she got my brother and myself up to go to church and I remember having lots of fun! It was so great, I got to hang out with kids that were not in my class at school, the Martin girls, Janes kids Shannon and

Jason, the South boys - John and Jeff! Now what made this Sunday school program so amazing and fun?

Did they have a special Sunday school teacher with special Sunday school teacher degrees?

Did they have major special events all of

the time?

No - they didn't, they had MOMS!

They had a group of moms who wanted their children to follow Jesus and I am going to guess

that they felt so strongly about having Sunday School for their kids they taught Sunday school and as far as I can remember made it a really fun experience. Who were these moms? Susan Jackson, Lorraine Martin, Glenda Hudgins, Donna Jackson, Pat Woodcock and Pat Chalk to name a few.

Our very own Moms guiding little hearts towards Jesus!

After Sunday school, we moved on to the youth group, those were the good old days. We had a very athletic youth group, lots of sports we played together and also had a baseball team in the church league.

After youth group we all kind of went our separate ways. I moved away to southern Ontario to work, met my husband, had a baby - Owen. Shortly after

Jeff and I decided to move closer to family to help raise the new one we were creating, and we decided to move back this way.

When we moved back home, I started to come back to church, very well welcomed with open arms and I know some of you remember Jeff and I bringing baby Owen to church.

I noticed that all of the girls that I went to Sunday School with and youth group with all had babies, just like me!

We didn't have any nursery programs, so we started a mom and tot program during church. And they all came. All the moms came with their babies. In that program we sang songs and we read stories.

Why did the moms come? Probably for many reasons but I believe that the reason we all had in common was that we wanted our children to become followers of Jesus just like us.

Our kids got older and so there was a need for us moms to step up and contribute to the Sunday school program for our kids, and so we did. Each week we took turns teaching Sunday school. Just like our moms did for us and probably our grandmothers did as well.

We had lots of kids, and our Sunday school program was quite large - 15-25 kids attending. We even brought some of the grandmas out of retirement to help teach. All because we knew the importance of being a follower of Jesus and the importance of teaching our children.

I remember sitting down with Mike and Ed at some point because I was just finding it so difficult to teach Sunday School. There were so many kids and it felt like chaos. Ed said to me "I know it seems difficult now, but these kids are going to look back at these times as their good old days". Yes Ed, you are right, these are the good old days for some of these kids" And so we continued in our chaos or what felt like chaos.

What made our Sunday school program so popular? We didn't have a special teachers, directors or event planners - Just a bunch of moms. Annette,

Andrea, Sandra, Glenda, Susan, Mallory. We were just moms and grandmothers.

Today we celebrate and honor the incredible women who have played a vital role in shaping our lives – our mothers.

When we turn to the Word of God we can see the power of a mother's faith in shaping the next generation.

In our scripture passage today, Paul writes to Timothy: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Timothy is said to have been acquainted with Scriptures since childhood. No doubt from the influence of his mother and grandmother as Paul writes.

Timothy's relationship with Paul was close. Timothy's name appears as the co-author on 2nd Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2ndThessalonians, and Philemon.

Paul wrote to the Philippians about Timothy, "I have no one like him." When Paul was in prison, he summoned his faithful friend Timothy for a last farewell.

Timothy ministered 5 New Testament churches. He accompanied Paul on most of his second journey. Quite an accomplishment.

I think that Lois and Eunice represent the countless Christian mothers and grandmothers who have diligently nurtured their children in the faith. They understood the importance of teaching children God's word at a young age. Lois

and Eunice first laid down a Faithful Foundation:

- In this passage, we see the Apostle Paul commending Timothy for the legacy of faith passed down from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. It is a reminder of the powerful influence that mothers have in nurturing and passing on their faith to their children. Mothers have the power to shape their children's spiritual journey and instill in them a love for God's Word. Lois and Eunice show the Impact of a mother's Faith:

- We can only imagine but I believed Eunice demonstrated her faith through her actions and words, passing on the truth of the Gospel to her son Timothy. She did not just teach him about God but also lived out her faith in a way that truly inspired and impacted him.

- Mothers have the unique ability to model a life of faith, showing our children what it means to trust in God, pray, hope, love, provide service, share our gifts. Through a mother's example, seeds of faith can be planted that will grow and bear fruit in their children's lives. Lois and Eunice Embraced their Role as Mothers:

- As we celebrate Mother's Day, we are also reminded of the calling and responsibility we have as mothers to nurture our children's spiritual growth. Our influence extends far beyond the present moment, shaping the future generations and impacting eternity.

- We can strive to be like Lois and Eunice, women of sincere faith who leave a legacy of love, wisdom, and devotion to God and Jesus. I don't know when I

decided I was a follower of Jesus, there was not an aha moment in Sunday School when I was like, yes this is the story. There wasn't an aha moment in the youth group when I was like, Yes this is the message this is the moment.

I really can't recall a single moment that has stood out for me, I guess I always have been. And that is because I had examples leading the way, mothers. I do know my faith has grown and grown and grown over the years of attending Selby United Church.

The holy spirit has moved through me in many ways and one of those ways is through motherhood, not just biologically but also through spiritual guidance and mentorship to my children and the children of this church by leading by example.

We can see that Eunice's influence on Timothy played a significant role in shaping his spiritual journey and leadership within the early Christian community.

Despite living in a challenging situation, where being a Christian was often met with persecution, Eunice stood firm in her beliefs and actively nurtured her son's faith.

Eunice teaches us that through our actions and devotion to our children, we can sow seeds of faith that will bear fruit for generations to come. For generations and generations to come!

Let us all, woman and men, draw inspiration from this biblical example and strive to leave a lasting legacy of love and faith for generations to come.