

## **Christine Wirth – Testimonial April 7, 2019**

My name is Christine Wirth. I have been a member of Allen Ave. Unitarian Church since 2017. We started coming to Allen Ave. when Joseph was about 4 years old and because we wanted to have a spiritual home for him. What we found were some very special people that became our cheerleaders as we took the step to grow our family through the foster care system. For all the support I have received here at Allen Ave., I am grateful.

I could say that my own spiritual journey began in the in the religion of my youth, there was only one dish on the menu. In fact, even though I was baptized, had communion, confirmation, and was married in a Catholic church, I surprisingly know very little about the religion. The seed was planted, however. I spent many weeks and months in my early 20's in the desert of New Mexico doing yoga and meditation and this experience grew my understanding of the human need for a spiritual connection.

My son was able to attend a Waldorf inspired Preschool and as you may know, the philosophy of a Waldorf school is to not only develop the intellectual curiosity of the child but also the spirit. I finally understood this when Joseph and I attended an Advent event at the Waldorf School that involved the children lighting a candle and walking through a labyrinth of pine boughs. As we left there, I got it. If I give Joseph and Lizzie the opportunity to work their spiritual muscle, they will move toward adulthood with an understanding of what it means to not only be connected to others but to have a connection with a Higher Power they can place their trust in whether they are celebrating good experiences or learning through tough ones.

Which leads me to my experience here at A2U2. Everyone here is free to figure out what human connection or spiritual connection means to him or her. That connection grows when you are with others that move your thinking or bring new ideas to light. That is another thing I find here.

I was able to facilitate/ host one of the house meetings and I found that the experience, while useful in information gathering and envisioning was also useful for me, because you all asked my opinion. Offering my opinion

makes me feel part of and connected. It makes me feel that my opinion matters as the church moves toward implementing many of the suggestions from members during the house meetings. I am excited to see how this church will grow and how it will actualize the vision of its members. It is a gift to be a part of this community during this important time.