



## Beloved, Love the Children.

### Written Testimonial – “The Love of Children”

This week’s theme in our annual Stewardship Campaign is “**The love of Children**”. As I reflect on this theme, it is easy to see how First Congregational Church exemplifies a love for children. From our strong history of Church School, Confirmation and youth music programs, renting space to the Port Pre-School (which my husband, Ryan, and I both attended!) to our support in the creation of the Lighthouse Ecumenical Youth Ministry and other community efforts such as Advocates and Family Promise, it is clear that our church recognizes the importance and love for children.

These programs all had a hand in my personal journey to become a member of the church. My husband and I were married at First Congregational in 1998. After our wedding, we chose to become members after witnessing the family-friendly and welcoming environment at church. We knew that someday we wanted to start a family and wanted to have the church as an ongoing part of our family life.

Before we had kids, I volunteered to teach Church School, which gave me a great introduction to wrangling a room full of kids and also gave me a chance to meet other families. I continued with Church School on and off until my own children completed the Confirmation program. I am proud that Courtney and Connor have grown up feeling that they are a part of our church community. Even when our attendance waned during our “sports heavy” years with dance, soccer, and hockey, we all knew that church was a “no judgment” safe place and we would be welcomed back when our busy lives allowed.

I am proud to belong to a church community that so clearly shows its love for children. I hope that you will join me in supporting these extremely important programs by considering a pledge to our annual Stewardship Campaign. If you are able, consider a small increase over last year’s pledge. Without your generosity, we will not be able to continue to support these efforts for our children. I hope that one day these programs are still available for my grandkids - I would love for them to have the same experiences my children and husband had in their youth.

Yours in peace,

Jodi Cowen  
Stewardship Committee Member

