

Thank you, Rev. David for asking me to speak today. Thank you all for coming today. The last time I spoke on Board Meeting day it was about 8 minutes. This one may be a bit longer.

As most of you know I am a Nanny. Right now, I have two charges Michael and Eydie. Michael is 5 an intelligent child that loves trains. Eydie will turn two the end of the month and is amazing. As anyone who knows me knows I love children.

About six months ago I put Eydie in her chair for lunch and their mother and I began the lunch dance for the two kids. I teared up for a moment and Nicole asked me if I was okay. I blurted out that this was about the age I began to be abused.

Now that really is something you don't want to recall with two active kids and your employer. But it was true. And I did.

So Eydie is turning two. Well not really but yes.

About a year and a half ago I wrote a post on Facebook. I didn't get a chance to finish the complete thought and it was disturbing to a few friends and family.

I was overwhelmed with the responsibility that I had accepted in regard to these beautiful children.

Let me back up a minute.

I was raised with parents with minimum income. We lived with relatives on more than one occasion. I slept on mattresses on the floor. We did have homes here and there, but my dad didn't keep up payments, so they were taken away. Before my parents divorced we moved more than 15 times.

After the divorce my mother moved us to Michigan to live with her younger brother, his wife and their daughters. Then we moved about 5 more times. My mother worked hard in a male dominated field and she was able to buy a house when I was 15.

After I moved out I moved around another 10 times including the Chicago area, North Carolina and then back up to Michigan. I needed to come home. My best friend was going to have a baby.

This really is relevant.

Sometimes I made quite good money and sometimes I didn't.

This brings me back to my current charges.

I worked in the schools as a paraprofessional but my husband and I wanted something more for my income into our bank account, so I signed up to a website for Nanny's. This was something I knew, and I could do. I met Nicole in August of 2015 and began with them that month.

They lived in Birmingham. She was bright, young, vivacious, intelligent, asked wonderful questions in the interview and appeared to love her son and informed me she was expecting another child in the spring of 2016. I was excited. I felt the connection with her and when I met Michael was just blow away.

I mean the child, a 2-year-old, explained hydraulics to me. I thought maybe I was a bit over my head in this one. But I persevered.

But what I saw, felt and came to know was that Nicole, her husband, her family loved these children, nurtured them and wanted what was good and right for them.

Simply because you are my child and I am your father. 1 John 3:1

As you suspect, they have money. Different worlds. Different quality of life. They are able to give their children what they need. They love their children. They treat their children with respect. They nurture wisely. Nicole's mom is a former teacher. Nicole and I were on the same page with discipline and reading, learning and playing. I felt right at home.

This leads me back to my facebook post.

There were so many differences between us. How I was raised, the environment I was raised in and the lack of income to provide the basic needs.

Then there were the emotional aspects that came into play.

My mother stole this from my cousin.

My grandmother gave this to me when it was another cousin's'.

They were very dear to me my life.

I felt the differences.

Who was I to be put into the position to love, nurture and guide these children when I was never loved, nurtured or guided in a positive manner?

Who was I to be chosen to lead the way for these children?

I wonder if everyone has those questions when asked to step into their own greatness.

All the children I have known, all the children I have loved and still love and still know, Erica, Brian,

Cara, Jennifer, Josh,

Jesse and Samme,

my cousins, Becky and Laura,

and now Michael and Eydie,

my step-step-grandchildren, Leilani and Eliot

and soon my step-grandson Calvin all have a piece of my heart.

All have a piece of my soul.

So, I relish the days now with Michael and Eydie.

Michael will start Kindergarten in September. Eydie will start pre-school for a few days a week in September also and I'll go down in hours. I've started my children's books so I'm putting it out there that they will take off so I will be able to spend time with Cal.

I enjoy Michael: He cracks me up. He came over and spent the night.

I love Eydie. I know she's me. I bust a gut with her and let her lead the way to what she needs.

Eydie loves to take Michael's trains and run with them, making him chase her. She then throws the trains, so he must go and get them.

Since that moment in the kitchen I have rewritten my past. I have rewoven patterns of my life when I was a child. It is sort of an overlay of how I treat Eydie and myself with love, light, positive energy and patience. I am learning to love the child I was, celebrate the life I had, have and show this child the love I have in my heart.

I'd like to leave you with this from Winnie the Pooh:

“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

Thank you.