

An Interview with Nina Farrell

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Nina Farrell, one of our newest members, shares how she came to sing with the Niskayuna Reformed Church choir. She attends church with her husband and son.

What would you like for us to know about your family?

My son loves soccer and is an active and energetic 8 year old boy. He has inherited my desire to dance and performs little skits for me each night to make me laugh. My husband is extremely funny. No one can make me laugh as hard as he does. Between the two of them our home is filled with lots of laughter and entertainment

Can you please tell us about joining the choir?

Before joining the choir I would sing at home to God. I felt so connected to spirit and so fulfilled even more than I do when praying alone. It's as if voice has power to raise

our frequency to connect with God. Joining Niskayuna Reformed Church I was so excited to find it has its own choir. With no background in music there would be safety in numbers and I could learn to sing and read music. It's been all that I hoped for and more. The winter months are so depressing but I look forward to practice and going to church on Sunday.

What else would you like for people to know about you, about music and worship?

Having an opportunity to reach many in this newsletter I want to take a moment to speak to you about invisible illness. Not every illness is visible and this can make lives of those suffering with an invisible illness easy to be discriminated against. Having symptoms that are not visible makes it hard for others to empathize. Several years ago I was diagnosed with lupus and fibromyalgia. People see me on my best days, dressed and with makeup on, while only my husband and son see the previous three days I spent in bed unable to move. Autoimmune disease makes a person susceptible to other rare diseases and cancers. For me it has taken my career, athletic hobbies, and financial stability. It's hard on the family emotionally and financially. We have worked hard at readjusting our lives to make room for these conditions to live with us. It has been a difficult transition. The choir and finding a home at Niskayuna Reformed Church has been one of the few blessings. The group is supportive and singing helps me with my cognitive struggles.

What would you like for people to know about your career and your diagnosis of lupus and fibromyalgia?

I've always worked in education. My own education transformed my life and I couldn't have done it without the care and support of my teachers. I worked many years with at risk youth in Schenectady as a counselor then the supervisor of 9 other truancy counselors. I worked in elementary schools and

eventually put together a prevention program for the Catholic Diocese to help reduce future drug use and violence for their 23 schools. I was really at the top of my career when I began feeling exhausted all the time. I had trouble having enough energy to see my friends or do the things I loved doing like ballet, yoga and hiking. Eventually three years later I got some answers and was diagnosed with lupus and fibromyalgia. The conditions have changed my life and it's hard for me to understand why a person with so much to give would now be restricted with exhaustion and pain. I'm doing my best to reshape my life. Working two days a week allows for the extra rest my body needs. Many of my athletic hobbies cause me flare ups and I'm restricted from sun light and heat. New hobbies like singing, decorating, making soap, and candles are helping to fill the gaps.