

## Laura

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### Chapter 14 - More Socializing

A week and a half after we attended those AA meetings we were having breakfast one Sunday morning.

Laura touched my arm. "After I change you let's go to church. OK?"

I felt awkward at that idea which reminded me to wet again. "Dr. Patricia again, right? Have you found one?"

"Yes, not that far. Their website said 'open and affirming'."

"What's that mean?"

"Means they are accepting of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transsexuals."

"They said that, but do they really mean it?"

"Dr. Patricia said they do."

"Oh." Dr. Patricia must have pushed on Laura awfully hard.

This is one of those moments. "I'm glad you're the Mommy, and make these decisions."

She quickly had me in the tub, but not for long. A few beard hairs had reappeared which she shaved off with an electric razor. She diapered me and put me in new plastic panties. She had us sitting side by side on her new bench in front of her dressing table. She gave both of us a quick breast pumping and put our bras on us. Her fingernail polish was more vibrant than what she put on me. Her lipstick matched her nails, but mine was more subtle. She used little pearl earrings on herself, and the dangling turquoise ones on me. She brushed our hair with a little conditioner. Then she went to work with facial creme and a little cover up for an acne bloom on both of us.

She put me in a white blouse, a royal blue pleated skirt, and a suit jacket matching the dress. She wore a navy blue one piece dress.

“Ready, my little one?”

I backed up and looked sideways in the mirror. I would have been scared to ask a girl as good looking as I was right then out for a date. “Yeth, Mommy.”

A frown flashed across her face. Maybe I had used that role playing phrase once too often the wrong way.

The stone exterior of the church was very intimidating. They even had a stone tower at one side of the front as if sentinels were watching. As if they were watching for any heathen Mongolian hordes galloping in from Dundalk on the other side of the City.

I was sick to my stomach with fear as Laura got out of the car. “C’mon Mindy. Doctor’s orders.” My leg muscles fidgeted as I walked.

There was a mildly overweight man in a sports shirt outside the front door welcoming everyone. I felt I escaped detection getting by him without any comments about me.

A slender woman in a pants suit was inside handing out the program for the day. “I don’t remember seeing you, but I’m terrible with faces and names. Is this your first visit here? What brought you here today?”

Laura took a program. “We’re church shopping. I’m Laura and this is my partner Mindy.”

She shook Laura’s hand. “Are you in a hug mood?”

My eyes watered at that. Laura responded. “No, thanks, but Mindy might.”

I had to do something to hide my tears and my hand was too large and masculine. I accepted the hug, and she handed me a program. Out of the blue my memory worked for a change. “My voice is low; may I help with collection?”

She smiled. “Do you know how?”

“No, actually, but I’m here to participate, and it is a place to start.” My passive submissive self felt sick at the stomach all over again.

“I like your spirit. Yes. Come to the back of the sanctuary during the Lord’s Prayer. I’ll team you with an experienced person so you can just follow what they do. I’m terrible on faces and names. Your name again, please?”

“Mindy.” Her name tag said ‘Judy’.

Judy had a hand and a bulletin out for the next person.

Laura took the hint and we went inside. The sanctuary was even more official appearing than that stone exterior, and just as intimidating. The program right at the top of a page inside the cover announced they were 'open and affirming' and had a slogan. It read 'no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here'. That put tears in my eyes.

Laura had her program open and was flipping pages in a hymnal until she found the first hymn in the program.

A woman in pastoral robes was standing in front. "Welcome to Powder Falls Congregational United Church of Christ. We're glad you are here whether this is your first visit or you have been coming here all of your life."

I whimpered as silently as I could with more tears at her welcome.

Everyone stood for the first hymn, but I was so flustered I didn't try to sing. I just mouthed the words silently as I hoped they would understand. Maybe God would.

There were a few announcements and the Pastor was standing again. "Please rise. May the peace of Christ be with you all."

Most everyone responded with "and also with you". Except Laura and I didn't know that. And we also didn't know everyone moved around shaking hands with a few hugs. I was sitting at the outside end of a pew. A string of people came by wishing me "peace be with you", and most of them gave me a hug. Most of the seven had the wrong voice for the clothes they were wearing. A few of them added "you look fabulous". At first I didn't know what to say to that. "Thank you" escaped from my lips. I was better dressed than they which I told Laura later.

The sermon that day included living your life to the fullest. Not for the glory of God or anything like that. Just for yourself. I whimpered again.

Laura nudged me at the elbow at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer as a reminder. I stood up feeling way too obvious, but most people had their heads bowed. I went to the back where Judy and another person were standing. I stood with them and a fourth arrived. Judy with fingers and very low whispering tasked me with one of the two men to collect from the left side of the sanctuary.

A man who had said a reading was standing up front. When he spoke again Judy started walking down the center aisle and so did the man next to her. The man next to me did too, so I caught up. Feeling God was watching, I stood particularly erect as we arrived in front where we each received a shiny brass collection plate. I followed the man in front of me. Heading to a side wing he split to one side of the pews there, and I split to the other side. He did a finger point at me for the second pew as he handed the plate to the first row. He smiled, so I did too.

He pointed for me to take the side of the sanctuary in the main section and he took the center aisle. We both kept on smiling. The pair collecting on the other side were not smiling. I took my queue from the man I was teamed with and smiled just as big as I could. He said something in a quiet voice at the other end of a pew. So, I said “thank you” to the person nearest me in an equally quiet way.

I felt relieved I hadn’t done anything particularly embarrassing, like drop a collection plate on the floor. As we came to the back the second time there was a team of two people to take the collection plates.

Judy shook my hand. “Thank you.” The other two did too.

I couldn’t think fast enough so I said nothing and felt miserable about it.

Laura beamed at me as I sat down.

As everyone was going out and shaking the Pastor’s hand and saying how much they enjoyed the sermon, Judy was standing right behind her. Judy came to the Pastor’s side as Laura arrived at the Pastor. “This is Laura and Mindy as their first visit. May I take them to hospitality?”

Laura thanked the Pastor and said something nice. I felt miserable and glad Judy helped me escape.

Hospitality was served in a big community room. Laura accepted a cup of coffee, which I declined. Judy had a cup of something else in her hand. “Try the Deacon’s Punch. It’s non-alcoholic.” It was delicious. I wanted to have some at home, or better at the AA meeting.

Judy brought a dozen people past us, all of whom said one version or another of they were glad we had come. Maybe half of those people had voices that didn’t match their clothes. Judy hailed a pleasantly overweight guy. “Eric.” His voice matched his clothes. His name badge read ‘Eric’ and it also read ‘Welcoming’.

He was big and gentle with yet another hug, and somehow he made me tear up with that. He asked me which hymn that morning I had I liked the best, and did I have any questions. That was his job answering questions as his part of welcoming people. As we stood there someone intruded who needed a name tag. He fished a 3x5 card and a pen out of his pocket. “Write how you want your name spelled, and your handwriting is better than mine anyway.”

That little admission of a personal fault impressed me. I wanted a name tag, but thought I had better come back a few times before asking. “My voice is low. Is this place really so open and affirming.”

“You bet.” His masculine finality was powerful. He brought two young couples

past us both of whom had children with them. They too were glad Laura and I had visited this church. He stood with me as he pointed out nearly a dozen LGBT people in the room of maybe seven dozen. He never asked me who or what I was. In his kind way he was just answering my question.

The room was thinning out. A middle aged woman was in front of me and shook my hand. "Hi, I'm Karyn the Senior Pastor. I see you've had Eric welcoming you. Betcha he asked if you had any questions. But that can take time to think of any. Have any come to mind?" She wasn't wearing her pastoral robes any more that morning. Her arms came up giving me yet another hug.

Laura came to my rescue. "Your website and the bulletin listed a 'fun and vendor day'. What's that all about?"

Karyn explained that was mostly a church picnic on the lawn out back right after a Sunday service. The word 'vendor' simply meant church member volunteers who were tired of being called volunteers all the time. But there would be a few members who had their own businesses who would be having booths. One of the gay members ran a coffee shop at the Inner Harbor and donated all of the coffee for hospitality. Everybody expected the church to give him a prominent place on a 'fun and vendor day'.

Laura touched my elbow and flipped her head it was time to go. The room was thinning out anyway.

The word 'go' stuck in my head that I needed to go another way as we got into the car. But I was worried that a flood might leak onto my beautiful wool skirt and the car seat so I held it.

As we got out at home I took the moment out of Laura's sight on the other side of the car. I pushed on my skirt and diaper for assurance I was pointed down there at the center. I flooded as we went into the kitchen which took longer than walking that short distance.

Laura had me bend over the counter as she ran her hand up my skirt. I could feel her hand between my thighs. "Oh, my, you are hot and heavy. What did you do, wait until we were home?"

"Yeth, Mommy. I didn't want to damage the skirt or the car."

"Good girl. But I'm anxious to discuss something. Just sit in the chair, but pull your skirt up in back so you don't sit on it in case of leaks. Be a good girl and just wait. I'll be right back."

I heard a toilet flushing, and she returned with a breast pump. She pumped both of us quickly relieving the pressure but not completely. No matter that her breasts and I

were becoming old friends, I still enjoyed seeing her bare.

When she sat down she too drew her skirt up in back so she didn't sit on it. "You were magnificent at church. You made me proud to be your role playing Mommy. You proved you can talk with people and never say the wrong thing. I went wet and excited with the pumping just now. But this is so important this can wait just like your diaper can wait a little longer."

"What's up, Mommy?"