

One summer day when I was 9 years old, my mother came home with a carload of kids. Although it wasn't really clear where she got them, I was overjoyed as they were around my age - and two of them were girls! As it turned out, my new friends were the Malmgren kids, whose parents had made the radical decision to sell their house and relocate their young family across town so they could launch a retreat center.

My parents, Anthony and Maryann Ciabattini, had met Chris and Angie through the Charismatic Renewal and were early supporters of Jesus House. My mom was a long-time board member and attended the weekly prayer meetings, retreats and many other Jesus House events. My dad, known as Butch, spent hours helping to renovate the house and cooked many meals, particularly spaghetti dinners featuring his famous garlic bread. Both of my parents have gone to be with the Lord and soon after my mom's passing two years ago, the Jesus House kitchen was dedicated to their memory.

Jesus House and the Malmgren family were a central part of my upbringing and greatly impacted me in myriad ways. Angie and Chris were my parents' dearest friends and have been an aunt and uncle to me. They spiritually mentored me not only directly, as they do for so many, but also through their living example, seeking the Lord's face every day, for every decision, and serving as a channel of His peace.

Attending many dinners, gatherings and high school youth group meetings and retreats there, I considered Jesus House a second home. The seeds of faith planted there have taken root and germinated throughout my adult life and now have the opportunity to bloom as my husband and I prepare to launch Sabbath House, a retreat center on our farm in northern Baltimore County, Maryland.

While there is much work ahead of us, we are assured that God is lighting our path. When our neighbors decided to sell, I asked Chris and Angie to intercede for us before we even toured the house. Angie shared their discernment process, and that if after praying she and Chris are aligned, they see that as an invitation to take the next step. So, Dave and I prayed and put the whole idea in the Lord's hands. We take what we agree to be each next right step and leave the outcomes to Him.

We have some administrative issues to address and repairs to make and so hold our plans loosely, seeking God's will for the property and ministry. This relieves us of the burdens of striving and controlling, and instead we get to walk in freedom and faith. We have a beautiful

team of fellow believers who have joined us on this journey. It is a joy to witness the vision unfolding and our prayer is that it will be a sanctuary - a place for rest, renewal, refuge and relationship. Hm, that sounds familiar, doesn't it?

In Christ,

Diann Churchill