It has been 22 years since my lifelong buddy, Meredith Sprunger, experienced one of the most faith-building journeys of his lifetime.

It all began the day school left out in at the middle school where he taught eighth grade history near Marion, Ind.

He left school and stopped to purchase gas for his automobile. As he was walking from the car to the station to pay for purchase, he noticed a penny laying on the sidewalk in front of the entrance.

One thing about Meredith that I always appreciated was that he bent towards conserving anything in sight, rubber bands, paper clips, pencils, ball point pens and stray coins. He never passed any retrievable item of value, regardless of how meager its worth, because he believed that the “big picture” was a huge savings if he were to consider the total accumulation of recovered valuables.

But, in the summer of 1990, a faith journey began that stretched far beyond its monetary value, one that became symbolic of a high road walk of faith itself.

The day after his initial coin find, he found a coin along a forlorn street in Marion as he took his morning walk. The little inner miracle repeated itself the next morning and the next morning. He found a coin in a grocery store parking lot, at another gasoline station, while taking a walk the next morning and on his way into a ball field to watch a baseball game.

In different places, differing times during the day, under least expected circumstances, the coin would show up, all denominations from pennies to quarters, dimes and nickels.

Soon, my friend began to realize that something extraordinary was happening and so he did

what he often did when he began to sense that such a “spiritual journey” was underway. He began to keep records of his finds. He would list the date, where the coin was found, and maybe some spiritual insight he might have learned from that day’s find.

Near the end of July, there was a day when he thought the streak was going to be over. All day he carried out the day’s normal activities without a coin find. In the evening, he went out for a special summer cultural presentation. On his way back into Marion, he stopped at 11:45 p.m. to purchase gas before going home. As he was pumping gas in his car, he looked out about five feet and there it was, oh so close to him, the penny had immeasurable value because it sustained the streak.

That night, he went back to his apartment and wrote a journal insert about the value of the journey, the reach of faith it was bringing to his life and some of the rules that were a necessity in making the journey valid, rules such as not going beyond natural activities to look for a coin, not planning additional activities that might lead to the finding of a coin and the importance of all finds coming under the normal flow of daily activities.

“Don’t push things; do what is natural. Don’t go beyond the natural to invent circumstances beyond the normal flow of things. Stay with the flow and allow God to lead your life. Always stay inside the boundaries of God’s journey,” he would always say. It was a principle that I live with until this day.

Day after day, even until the final day of summer vacation, like manna in the wilderness, the coin would be provided along with inner thoughts and anecdotes that instructed him in a much higher journey of faith.

For the rest of his life, until he passed in the summer of 2008, 18 years later, he often referred to the “Summer of 1990” as a bench mark that had stretched his faith along life’s journey.

“It wasn’t the amount of money that was found,” he would say. “It was the way the coins came in succession day after day and were always found with my playing the game correctly that was the important thing.

“The summer of 1990 gave me a clearer understanding of life’s faith journey for the rest of my life, the pattern was the same, the coin journey and life’s big journey, faith lessons and all,” he said.