

Dear Saints,

What an incredible summer of Ecclesiastes 3 "change of seasons" in life and faith! Together we experience the roller coaster of highs and lows within our personal and communal lives. Continuity and Change guide the shape of our witness and faith journeys. We are challenged to give thanks for the roots of foundation and identity from years past, and to embrace new opportunities to create shared experiences worth remembering in blessing the future.

On staff, Debbie Pett and I have become vintage fixtures of this congregation's ministries and administration. We are delighted to welcome Sue Ellen Grudt as our Minister of Music, initiating a new era of shared worship, inspiration, and fellowship. She has a rich background of traditional and contemporary worship as a life-long Lutheran, having resources from other denominations in music ministries in her portfolio, and is actually an ordained pastor from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (LSTC). Her husband, Rich, is pastor at Trinity United Lutheran Church in Waukegan. Sue Ellen's first Sunday with our congregation was July 17th, and I encourage you to get to know her and demonstrate your witness and support!

It was wonderful to participate in Spring Grove's 4th of July parade, and I deeply appreciate the 33 people able to ride on the float, the thorough restoration work of our trailer in preparation, and the resources to develop the Star Wars theme: "May His force be with you!"

My family got the news of my mother Delphine's death on June 20th. It took several days to coordinate the memorial date of July 11th at Elim Lutheran Church in Scandia, Minnesota, where my parents retired in 1987. Our Council leadership was kind in announcing the next Sunday how All Saints would be sending a floral bouquet for memorial, and a number of you chose to contribute in support. I took a photo of the lovely flowers next to Delphine's cremains. Thank you for the beautiful cards and memorials given in her memory. She was at All Saints in June 2015, and was given a beautiful prayer blanket of cardinals by our church women. Some of our members have even visited her in Gold Canyon, Arizona, where she was actively involved as a mission developer, charter member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Bible Study leader and choir member. They placed her blue choir robe and 3 white roses on her sanctuary chair the Sunday after she died. Delphine was active in church ministry her entire life in every community she's lived, including Saskatchewan, Ontario, Texas, Kansas, Illinois, South Dakota, Minnesota, Florida and Arizona.

My siblings' request was for me to prepare the Memorial Service, choosing verses of seven hymns and 4 brief Scripture readings, but for me to simply be son and brother in my role. Diane and I each read one lesson. Pastor Scott commented on the enthusiastic hymn singing by the Anderson clan and 150 in attendance. To honor Delphine's present congregation in Gold Canyon, our family will schedule another memorial in winter months when their snowbird members return.

There have been a number of inspirational memories acknowledged in the cards you and other have sent, which we treasure. Let me share one written by a childhood friend of my mother's in Saskatchewan, which I read at our WELCA's last meeting. I hope it inspires all women in their nurture of families and community.

*Carol wrote: "It is heavy heart that I replay. The weight develops with age; most likely because we grasp the true meaning of the passing of an entire generation, along with the death of those we love. And admire.*

*Delphine was a delightful spirit, filled with grace that thrives in selve's inner peace. There was a joy about her, not just quick to laugh, but a joy that lingers in the eyes a long while after the smile decides to rest.*

*She had a Swedish colony-girl upbringing; whose life was church and home; where respect and hard work came just as easily as breathing; an amazing contrast to much of today's world, where disrespect and entitlement have often become a family-benchmark.*

*Delphine was wholesome. She was also a physically beautiful woman, with lush hair and full lips, and an engaging charm; all of those characteristics loyal to her throughout her entire life. Her inner beauty and outer beauty were an inseparable team.*

*Mothers die. But they leave with each human being, the memory of a spoon stirring, a soft song in the duskiness of an early bedtime, a touch on a forehead damp with fever. A proud look. Pursed lips at noisy chewing.*

*Mother teach. Mothers love unconditionally. Mothers give life. And mother gives you memories that last forever. Bring a memory ever so often ... and smile."*

When my family leaves on summer vacation, it will be my first up to the cabin when my Mom won't be physically present. As I reflect on my father's death over ten years ago, I confess I still feel his presence in my life ... so I trust the same will be true for my mother in the years ahead. Life won't be

the same in the future ... but the same God is holding us whatever is still to come. Saint Paul wrote in Romans 14:8 - "Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord." I've learned that while people die, relationships continue to live ... not only in past memories, but in living dynamics of the present, and ultimately in the future. The Communion of Saints exists in God's hands, heart and mind ... because His presence and Kingdom is eternal. Praise be to God!

Meanwhile ... embrace the seasons as the Lord grants, imperfect as we may be, confident in His purposes in being perfectly loved brothers and sister in Christ. My prayerful hope is when the Lord calls each of us home, there will be some legacies of blessing left behind ... to bring a smile among those who remember our journeys.

Love & blessings, Pastor Nathan and the Anderson family

