



RESIDENTS:

GRATEFUL FOR GOD'S GOOD GIFTS

*"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good."
(Genesis 1:31a).*

No one in the Bible lived "four score" or more years without fear, pain, or sorrow. It's the same today. But we can always choose whether to focus on hardship or see our woes in the context of God's providence. Meet three residents who have learned to see God's guiding hand in their lives. All are widowers who give thanks for God's good gifts of music, the great outdoors, and happy marriages.

Bryan "Bernie" VanderZouwen is a good listener, and people confide in him. Born in 1937, he grew up with an older sister and younger brother on the West Side, where his dad owned Van's Barber Styling Shop on the corner of Richmond and Alpine. Bernie graduated from Oakleigh School and Grand Rapids Christian High. "We attended Quarry Avenue Baptist Church, which was founded as Holland Baptist Church and is now known as Highland Hills Baptist," he explains.

His most significant event as a teen came from acting on a cousin's tip about a girl he should meet. "We were cruising Leonard Street as Joyce DeWitt and her friend came out of catechism from Seventh Reformed Church. I asked if they wanted a ride, they accepted, and I made sure to drop off Joyce last so I could ask her for a date that Saturday. She agreed," he recalls.

Joyce's mom wasn't thrilled that her daughter didn't even know Bernie's last

name. "But when she heard that we were going to a Youth for Christ event, she changed her tune. Joyce was 15, I was 16, and neither of us ever dated anyone else after that. It was a match made in heaven," he says.

Bernie had hoped to be sponsored by a local General Motors (GM) factory to study engineering at GM Tech. "But there were no openings, so I decided to go to Flint Institute of Barbering. My dad added a chair to his barbershop. He'd secretly hoped I'd join him, but he never pushed me. I was very shy as a kid and had a nervous stomach, so talking with customers was hard at first. But I learned to enjoy barbering very much."

Bernie and Joyce married in 1957 at Seventh Reformed, where she had started playing the organ at age



Bryan "Bernie" VanderZouwen

14. They welcomed two sons and a daughter within five years, and built a home on Webster Street NW. The family moved to Remembrance Reformed in 1974 for its fine youth programs. Joyce served as organist and Bernie served on the council. Their daughter Amy was born in 1974 as well, ten plus years after her siblings. The family enjoyed outdoor vacations all over the U.S. "There are only four states I haven't been in," he says.

Bernie and his dad worked together for about 20 years. "He cut my hair even in his late 90s, when he was living at Christian Rest Home," Bernie marvels.

Some families came to Van's for four generations. One customer regularly drove in from Kalamazoo and based a book of short stories on Bernie. Another crafted a replica of Van's, which now sits in Bernie's room. "Like pastors, counselors, and bartenders, we barbers hear a lot. You'd be amazed at what some people would tell me. I would pray for them and tell them so.

"Years ago, I remember seeing Romans 8:28: 'All things work together for good' on a tombstone. That's a pretty strong statement. 'Is it possible?' I wondered. I found out it is. Just dwelling on that verse has made me more loyal to my devotions and Bible reading," he says. He drew on God's promises in 2008, when his best friend from high school, aunt, sister and both parents died.

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FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR



Our summer newsletter features life stories of residents within our continuum of care. Their testimonies of faith encourage us in our daily walk with God. We are thankful to be part of their lives.

The Women's Service Board thanks those who collectively gave nearly \$6,700 during their recent "Bakeless Bake Sale." The service board's recent gifts to the home include Alexa devices, amplifiers

for window visits, outdoor cantilever umbrellas, a large deck box for our secure courtyard, a food processor, a resident vital signs monitor, and television streaming services. The board also covers ongoing expenses for our bird aviary. We thank the service board members for providing so many items to improve our residents' quality of life.

Thank you for your gifts in response to our May appeal for \$41,540 for information technology (IT) upgrades to maintain high quality medical records and keep them protected. We have invested in cloud-based electronic medical records, email encryption, and cybersecurity measures to protect our computer systems from malicious software, viruses, and ransomware. We also bought and subscribed to new technology and trained staff so they could help residents stay connected to families despite COVID visitation restrictions. Your support helps us protect our residents' health and privacy.

Over the past year, the State Licensing and Regulatory Affairs department conducted five surveys focused on COVID-19 infection control at the direction of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. We passed all of the surveys without any deficiencies and were complimented on doing a good job.

Throughout the pandemic, we have taken quick and specific mitigating actions to prevent and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. As this column is being written in June, the Health Center and the Assisted Living Center are still under the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) COVID restrictions. Resident visits have to be scheduled with us and are limited to up to two visitors at a time per resident. MDHHS also requires weekly COVID testing of all unvaccinated staff, as well as daily symptom screening and mask wearing for all staff and visitors. Currently, nearly all of our residents and the majority of our staff are vaccinated, which has been so helpful in reducing the risk to our residents. We have been able to resume communal dining and activity programs and are looking forward to being able to have more volunteers in our facilities again. We are so thankful that we have gone several weeks without a COVID positive test result in our residents and staff and that overall, our residents and staff have remained relatively healthy.

Please keep praying for God's blessing upon our ministry. We appreciate your faithful support!

—Todd Nyeholt

ARE YOU MAKING THIS MISTAKE WITH YOUR LIFE?

The idea of putting together—or changing—a will sounds complicated, doesn't it? After all, talking about wills means facing the fact that you won't live here forever. Some people find thinking about wills so scary that they put it off.

Fortunately, Barnabas Foundation offers **free, no-obligation help** for making a will and doing estate and tax planning. Because Edison Christian Foundation (formerly Christian Rest Home Foundation) is a member of Barnabas Foundation, you are entitled to this confidential help and information.

More than 7,000 people have already accepted the Barnabas Foundation offer to help work out a plan to provide for loved ones and give to Christian causes they love. You can read more about their experiences at www.barnabasfoundation.com.

Attorneys Steve Baker and Amy Bakker Baty, the local Barnabas Foundation representatives, have practiced law in business and estate planning. Typically, they need to meet with you just once, for only 60 to 90 minutes, to develop a free written analysis for you to bring to an attorney. They can even recommend attorneys who know how to include charity in wills and estate plans.

One of the easiest ways to remember us in your will is to

make a bequest to Edison Christian Life Services (ECLS) or Edison Christian Foundation. All you do is include our name and address and specify the bequest—a dollar amount or percentage of your estate—in your will. There's no need to tell us. We don't find out about a bequest till after a death, when an executor or lawyer contacts us. Moreover, bequests generally escape inheritance taxes.

The number and total of bequests vary greatly from year to year. From June 2020 through May 2021, three wills and bequests to ECLS totaled \$6,860, and none were made to Edison Christian Foundation. From June 2019 through May 2020, wills and bequest to ECLS and the foundation totaled \$13,729. But in 2018, we had four estate gifts totaling \$152,995. Three were to our Health Center (\$83,162) and one to Edison Christian Foundation (\$69,833). Whatever size of planned gift you can give will make an important difference.

Simply phone (888) 448-3040 and ask to speak with Steve Baker or Amy Bakker Baty. Their email addresses are sbake@barnabasfoundation.com and abaty@barnabasfoundation.com. Their office is at 601 3 Mile Road NW, Suite 200, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. For free, confidential advice on estate planning, you may also phone Todd Nyeholt at (616) 453-2475.

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* Gifts designated for Edison Christian Foundation

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Bernie retired in 2012 at age 75 so he and Joyce could travel more, including to Louisville, Kentucky, where their older son and five of their twelve grandchildren live. When Joyce got cancer in 2015, Bernie cared for her at home till her death in September 2017. “Even when my wife died, the first thought in my mind was ‘Thank you, Lord, for 60 years of a beautiful marriage,’” he says.

Bernie moved to Edison Independent Living in 2019 because of balance issues. His second son, Dan, died of cancer in 2020. He says that faith, prayer, and trust have pulled him through hard times. He still drives, so, even in the pandemic, he could see his daughters in Overisel and Zeeland and friends from his current church, First Evangelical Covenant. He’s glad that activities such as bingo, movie night, Wii bowling and golf have resumed and looks forward to seeing his two great-grandchildren, who live in Virginia near D.C., more often.

“I’ve gotten to know all the residents and staff here—lots of West Side connections. The dietitian does a good job of feeding us healthy and well-balanced meals. During COVID-19, no one could come in. It has affected residents emotionally and mentally. Sometimes I find myself in heart-wrenching conversations here. They’re also good friends for me. There’s a lot of spiritual comfort to be had in a place like this, where people are willing to share. We’re kind of like one big family,” he says.

Age hasn’t dimmed **Walter Bartusch’s** Lutheran identity, love for music, or dry sense of humor. Born in Grand Rapids in 1931, Walter says, “I was baptized, confirmed, and married at Immanuel Lutheran Church.” His father was a woodcarver for furniture companies, except during the Depression, when he tried farming and apple picking to eke out a living.

With his older sister, Walter grew up in northeast Grand Rapids. “I went through second grade at Eastern School, because, at the time, Immanuel

Lutheran School’s early grades were on the West Side. I did third through eighth grade at Immanuel; graduated from Central High School; and studied bookkeeping at Grand Rapids Junior College, now Grand Rapids Community College.

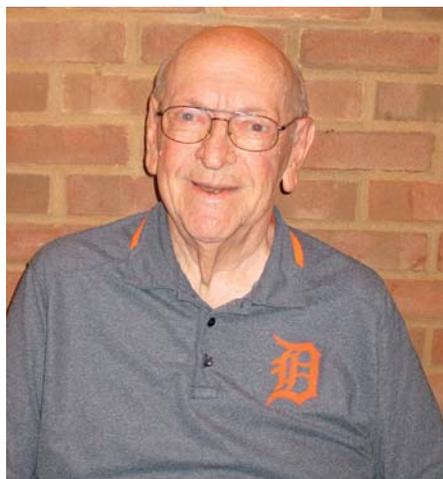
“I got called up for a physical exam during the Korean War. When I took off my glasses, I couldn’t see anything, so they classified me as 4F [unfit for armed services]. That kind of hurt. It had an effect on me,” he recalls.

Walter found solace at church and in music. Immanuel Lutheran’s choir accepted people who’d been confirmed [made public profession of faith].

“When I got confirmed in my teens, I chose Psalm 27:1 as my confirmation verse: ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?’ I joined the church choir, and, over the years, went from tenor to baritone to bass.”

Choir member Carole Trapp caught his eye. “Her family was devout and she also attended Immanuel Lutheran School, but I hadn’t noticed her before she joined choir, because she was four years younger,” he explains.

They began dating, and Walter worked his way up as a bookkeeper. “When we married in 1959, I followed the advice ‘Go west, young man.’ I moved across the Grand River, and we built a home on Charlotte Avenue NW,” he quips. Between 1962 and 1972 they welcomed a daughter and three sons.



Walter Bartusch

EDISON CHRISTIAN HEALTH CENTER

provides rehabilitation, long term and dementia care within the nursing facility.

For more information, call Linda Elders, Director of Admissions, at (616) 453-2475

or e-mail

lolders@edisonchristian.org

Their life revolved around Immanuel Lutheran Church. “We stayed in the choir. I served on the board of finances and board of elders, made house calls... ‘Pillar of the congregation,’ that was me. I was a member there for 75 years,” he says. After Carole retired as Immanuel’s church secretary, the couple joined St. James Lutheran.

Linda, the oldest child, recalls how exciting it was to go watch her dad bowl in the church league. “We played with real balls. Here in Edison Assisted Living, we just have the Wii,” Walter says.

Walter worked as a bookkeeper till age 70, mainly for mobile home accounts, such as B & R Mobile Homes and Creekside Mobile Homes, and for Lynn Francis Realty. He chuckles. “Back when I started, we still used wooden tools for work—pencils and fountain pens.” He and Carole enjoyed family summer vacations, Friday night dinners at the former Schnitzelbank Restaurant, classical music, watching their children land in careers that fit their gifts, and visiting their two grandchildren.

Linda remembers that, despite her dad’s love of classical and sacred music,

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he put the kids to bed by saying a prayer, rubbing their backs, and singing the Australian ballad "Waltzing Matilda," which begins, "Once a jolly swagman." Walter smiles. "Hey, it worked," he says.

He points to family photos above his bed and says, "That's me in the middle, looking proud." His oldest and youngest children live in Grand Rapids, and the middle two live in Valparaiso, Indiana. Linda has retired from public school teaching, and Jim works in the Kent County Sheriff's Department. Mark is an ordained Lutheran minister and teaches theology at Valparaiso University, and Brian is director of music ministries at a Lutheran church.

Walter says that Carole bravely dealt with cancer for years. "One Sunday in October 2008, during the general prayers, Carole took my hand and squeezed it. She'd never done that before. Three weeks later, she died." Walter stayed on in the family home until a fall put him in the hospital.

"When I moved to this room in 2015, I was still on a feeding tube. Now I can eat regular food. I like breakfast real fine, and all the meals are nutritionally adequate. I know everybody here, and everybody knows me. Before COVID-19, I often got rides to church. During the pandemic, the staff kept us all informed, and I enjoyed outdoor visits and backdoor visits with family. When I came down with the coronavirus, the staff took real good care of me. Since then, I've had some fatigue, confusion, and vision problems. It's harder to read and do crossword puzzles, but I can still listen to Blue Lake Public Radio." Asked about favorite songs and Bible passages, Walter says, "They all give me comfort."

Harry Brummel, born in 1925, grew up in northwest Grand Rapids, with an older cousin, Bill, whom his parents adopted. "In the earlier years, we didn't have a pump or running water, so we carried it 100 yards from my grand-

ABOUT OUR RESIDENTS

- 105 residents receive nursing care in Edison Christian Health Center.
- 30 residents receive assisted care in Edison Christian Assisted Living.
- 40 residents live independently in Edison Christian Independent Living.
- 69% of our residents are women.
- Our youngest resident is 59. Our oldest resident is a woman age 100.
- The average resident age is 85.
- Our residents come from 64 churches.
- 82% of our nursing residents receive Medicaid assistance.

parents' pump at the corner of Walker and Richmond," he recorded in a life history he wrote several years ago.

His dad was a barber and moved two barber chairs to their home after he lost his shop during the Depression. Harry spent as much time outdoors as possible with neighborhood friends. He fondly recalls a childhood of creating ball fields, golf holes, camps, and treehouses in yards and vacant lots. "My friends and I went swimming and fishing in Indian Mill Creek. Sometimes I'd catch frogs and my mother would fry them—good!"

Harry graduated from Oakleigh School and Union High, where he was a baseball pitcher. "I got my first job after high school—surface grinding torpedo parts—because Expert Tool and Die needed players for their team in the Industrial League."



Harry Brummel

In November 1943, he was drafted into the Army Air Corps. He served in the ground crew, maintaining and repairing bombers in England and Casablanca, Morocco. Harry spent his days off exploring his surroundings.

Meanwhile, Eleanor Mae Van Maldegen noticed his photo on a Richmond Reformed Church bulletin board of young men in the military. "I had known her older brother and sister, but she was only fifteen-and-a-half when I went into the service. When I returned, she had matured into a beautiful young lady," Harry writes.

They dated for a year, bought a lot on Maplerow Avenue NW, and, over the next three years, began building a house with help from Eleanor's dad and brothers. "About a year into building, we got married. We lived for two years with her parents—wonderful years with wonderful people," he writes.

Their family grew to four daughters and a son. The family enjoyed many years of camping with family and friends, including a memorable trip when 20 people slept in a cemetery tent that Harry borrowed from work.

Harry worked for the Grand Rapids Parks Department for 38 years. He started as a laborer, using a reel mower and digging graves by hand at Greenwood Cemetery. He passed the Civil Service Exam, became cemetery supervisor, and ended his career as parks maintenance supervisor. "There were three union strikes during my 38

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years with the City. During the second and third strikes, I fed monkeys and cleaned Monkey Island at the John Ball Park Zoo," he writes.

Long into retirement, Harry enjoyed camping, fishing, rockhounding with Eleanor, air travel, and visiting with their many grandchildren and great-grands. At age 86, he still golfed in two leagues. Harry and Eleanor had a heart for missions and especially treasured traveling with Richmond Reformed friends to Gaithers Praise Gatherings and two mission trips to Bolivia with His Hands.

Harry and Eleanor renewed acquaintances and made new friends when they moved to Edison Independent Living in 2015. Harry's Parkinson's Disease advanced and he broke his pelvis. Eleanor's health deteriorated. Both ended up on different wings at Edison Christian Health Center, where Harry still lives. Eleanor died in October 2019.

Looking back, Harry says he's had a wonderful life and is grateful for 70 years of marriage. He enjoys reading magazines, especially National Geographic and Reminisce, and watching the Detroit Tigers and the news on TV. He thanks the aides who've helped him do phone and window visits during the pandemic, and he recommends Ephesians 2 and "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less/On Christ, the Solid Rock, I Stand" as inspirational sources.

EDISON CHRISTIAN INDEPENDENT LIVING

Edison Christian Independent Living provides senior citizen independent living and offers meals, activities, and housekeeping services. Our residents enjoy secure, homelike comfort and Christian companionship. Studio and one-bedroom apartments are currently available.

For more information, call: (616) 453-0993
edisonchristian.org

ECHC REHAB SERVICES

Edison Christian Health Center provides excellent sub-acute rehabilitation services after surgery, injury or an illness. Our team of nurses and therapists will help you recover and return home as quickly as possible.

IN LOVING MEMORY

March 2021 – June 2021

Dolores Reynolds	March 6	age 96
Sandra VanLaan	March 9	age 82
Dolores Bour	March 10	age 89
Donald Walker	March 15	age 90
Margaretha de Wit	March 19	age 89
JoyAnn Walker	March 28	age 88
Warren Hawley	April 4	age 86
Maxine "Mick" Alberda	April 9	age 86
Jonnette Cavanaugh	April 13	age 78
Angeline Nivala	April 20	age 102
Diane Chapin	April 21	age 76
Robert Sjoerdsma	April 29	age 79
Mary Carlson	May 4	age 86
Lois "Marcia" Schaap	May 15	age 82
Jean Wysocki	May 21	age 88
Jeanette Dempsey	May 23	age 100
Elliott "Al" Bodbyl	May 23	age 87
Barbara Billings	May 28	age 94
Elizabeth Waskelis	May 31	age 97
Kathleen Dykstra	June 2	age 71
Gilbert VanderMale	June 12	age 97
Janice Kosak	June 15	age 85
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Nancy DesRocher 11 years

With our appreciation for your commitment to our residents!

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Coopersville CRC	Free Ref.
Eastmanville URC	Heritage Ref. Congregation
First Evangelical Covenant	Hope Protestant Ref.
First Netherlands Ref. Congr.	Walker URC



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Summer 2021



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