



## RESIDENTS:

### BLESSING GOD THROUGH GOOD AND BAD

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.”*

—Psalm 103: 1-2

A long life has many benefits. Some of the most significant blessings God gives come from our relationships—from the people God has placed in our lives to love. When life becomes tough and we find ourselves in despair, kind words and prayers from a sibling, spouse, or friend remind us of God’s constant love and care. Meet three residents who have discovered God’s faithfulness and learned to bless God in all circumstances.

**Donald Engelsma** has had four life-long priorities—farming, faith, family, and friends. Born in 1923 as the third of eight children, he lived on a farm that became Engelsma Orchard. The farm was on O’Brien Road SW, in the Riverbend area of what was then Walker Township. Family lore says that when his parents bought the farm in 1920, they had to walk the cows all the way from their old farm near Reeds Lake.

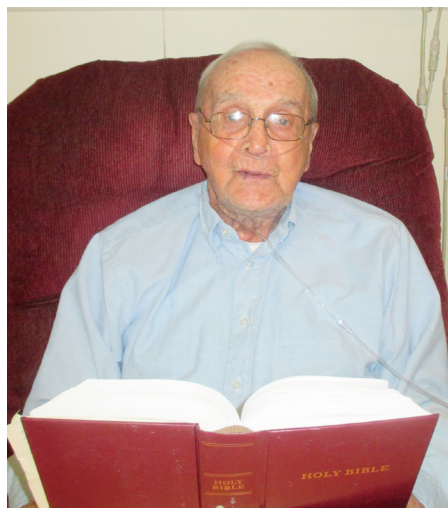
“I attended the one-room McCarthy School through eighth grade. Our parents taught us to work, work, work,” he says. They milked cows, raised hogs and crops, grew apples and pick-your-own berries, and tended a big garden. The Engelsma children often prayed for rainy days so they wouldn’t have to work. “But we always had applesauce,” he says.

Donald and his siblings still found time for fun. They hosted church youth for holiday bonfires, swam in

“cricks” and gravel pits, and played ball with neighbors. “I was a good pitcher. I could have played with the Tigers,” he says.

He enjoyed singing psalms at what is now Heritage Reformed Congregation. The church sings only psalms in worship but sings hymns at church events. When he was a boy, the church held three services each Sunday. The family came home in between to milk cows. Because times were hard, Donald and his brother Ted shared a pair of Sunday shoes.

Over decades of orchard work, Donald saw many changes. Honeycrisp and Pink Lady apples have replaced Northern Spy, Jonathan, and MacIntosh apples in popularity.



**Don Engelsma**

Spraying techniques have become more precise. His youngest sister, Barbara Koning, shares that Donald was once surprised to end up in the hospital. “He didn’t wear a mask while spraying,” she explains.

Donald and Nellie, an unmarried sister, took care of their parents till they died. They inherited the house but Nellie elected to build a modern ranch home down the road from the farm. She and Donald lived there till she went into care in 2009 and died in 2015 at age 90. Looking back, Donald says his one regret is that he never married and had children. “I like kids. Many nephews and nieces and even some neighborhood boys said I was like a second dad,” he says.

“When he went into the Navy, he had a beautiful head of hair like Elvis Presley. The girls always flocked to our house,” Barbara says. She and Donald are ten years apart and became close as adults. She has a daughter and granddaughter, Linda Allyn and Kerri Deppe, working at Edison Christian Life Services.

Except for a rehab stay at Edison Christian Health Center (EHC) after breaking his ribs in the orchard, Donald stayed living on O’Brien Road. He met friends every afternoon for coffee at the Standale McDonald’s. Last fall he fell getting out of bed. In October 2021, after a hospital stay and

*(continued on page 4)*



# 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 over \$5,000 during their recent "Bakeless Bake Sale." The service board's recent gifts to the home include Alexa devices, cardio

drumming supplies, shower bed pads, 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 telephone and internet upgrades within our facilities. Your gifts provide a way to reliably communicate with families and responsible parties and helps ensure individualized resident care and timely updates. The new VoIP (voice over internet protocol) system will reduce our overall telephone service expenses with new equipment. We appreciate your support of this project to help us quickly coordinate resident care and family communication.

Edison Christian Life Services, along with most businesses, has been increasingly challenged by the current labor market. We

are looking to hire licensed nurses—RNs and LPNs, CNAs, food service and environmental services staff. A complete up-to-date list of job openings can be found on our website [edisonchristian.org](http://edisonchristian.org) under the careers tab. Applications can be submitted online. We hope that you or someone you know will consider joining us in our ministry to our residents.

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

Todd Nyeholt

## ABOUT OUR RESIDENTS

- Edison Christian Health Center can serve 95 nursing care residents.
- Edison Christian Assisted Living can serve 30 assisted care residents.
- Edison Christian Independent Living can serve 40 independent residents.
- 70% of our residents are women.
- Our youngest resident is 60. Our oldest residents are two women aged 100 or older.
- The average resident age is 87.
- Our residents come from 64 churches.
- 79% of our nursing residents receive Medicaid assistance.

## 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 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 [barnabasfoundation.com](http://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 (ECF). 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. And 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 ECF. But in the last 12 months, we received five estate gifts to ECLS totaling \$10,535 and two estate gifts to the ECF totaling \$416,979.

The recent estate gifts to ECF were wonderful blessings for two reasons. First, our Foundation fund balance has fluctuated this year due to the volatile stock and bond markets. Second, we have many ongoing challenges—a difficult labor market, increasing costs, and the pandemic's ongoing effects on our operations.

So, while we're so thankful for past gifts, we very much still need for donors to support us in future wills and bequests. 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](mailto:sbake@barnabasfoundation.com) and [abaty@barnabasfoundation.com](mailto: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.

# MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

March 2022- June 2022

**Maxine Alberda**

Donald Alberda\*

**Randy Alberda**

Donald Alberda\*

**Roger Michael Bishop**

The Ploeg Legacy Foundation

**Harry & Helen Boersma**

The Harry & Helen Boersma Family

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\* Gifts designated for Edison Christian Foundation

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brief time at a facility he'd rather not name, Donald moved to ECHC.

"He got Covid shortly after he got here and spent two weeks 'in plastic.' He got wonderful care, likes the food, and is gaining weight in a healthy way," Barbara says. Donald's deafness prevents him from attending most activities. He uses a wheelchair and is on a low dose of oxygen for his chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

After Donald's 99th birthday in May 2022, the mayor of Walker presented him with a certificate of honor at a big gathering of family and friends. It commends him for living by the Golden Rule.

He enjoys singing along with livestreamed church services, watching Fox 17 news, and reading sermons and books mailed to him by Heritage Reformed. He treasures the song "God the Source of Joy," based on Psalm 89, and "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart..." (Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV). Barbara adds that Donald reads three chapters of the Bible each night—loud enough so staff hear him in the halls. "He is still doing his mission work," she says with a smile.

**Louise "Loekie" Bosma Boersma** was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, in 1926. Her life could fill a book. "By far the Lord has been with me, every step of the way," she says. "My father was a Frisian, the last of 13 children. He was a skilled painter who did stained glass and gilded whole rooms inside chapels and churches. My mother was a lovely woman and was a skilled seamstress working on 5th Avenue in New York City. I loved both of them, and they loved me, but they couldn't get along. In December 1929, we moved to America for a fresh start."

They joined her father's family in New Jersey. "It was the Great Depression, and adults were jumping out of windows. On our block in Paterson, we had German, Dutch, Jewish, and Polish kids all playing together in the streets and learning English. One night we heard a man playing an accordion and singing children's Christian songs. He sat us under a streetlight and told

us the story of Jesus. I had never heard of Jesus. My father had been put out of a Reformed church because he didn't believe babies are conceived in sin. My mother had left the Catholic church because of a small issue," she explains.

But her dad's family remained Reformed. One aunt sent money from California with instructions on where to buy a children's Bible storybook for Loekie. Another aunt and uncle invited her to Sunday school. Her dad said he'd drop her off but she'd have to walk home. On her way home was a storefront church where she could read the Bible and Christian literature.

"I was an outsider in Sunday school, but I always learned the memory verse that we received on a card. One week we were assigned to learn all of Psalm 23. I said, 'I can't do that. We don't have a Bible at home.' So the Sunday school superintendent found one for me. I was so proud of that Bible!"

Her parents divorced when she was 11. She lived with her father because her mother had to support herself as a live-in maid. During several moves, Loekie focused on studying, practicing piano, and finding rides to church.

Both parents remarried. Rutgers University offered her a 4-year scholarship, but she couldn't afford the room and board. "Then my stepmother told me about Calvin College, her alma mater. By living with a private family and doing housework and childcare, I



**Loekie Boersma**

## EDISON CHRISTIAN ASSISTED LIVING

Edison Christian Assisted Living encourages residents to maintain independence while acknowledging that assistance may be needed in the activities of daily living. Assistance is available to help residents with bathing, dressing, taking medications, and other daily activities. Our support and services help our residents to live life fully. Assisted living apartments are currently available.

**For more information  
and a tour, call:  
(616) 453-0993  
[edisonchristian.org](http://edisonchristian.org)**

could afford Calvin. My first class was advanced algebra. We sat in alphabetical order. I said hi to the boy next to me, and he blushed," she says.

That shy boy was Henry Boersma, one of 11 children. When he signed up for the U.S. Army Air Corps, an older brother said, "You have to date at least once before you go into service." Henry invited Loekie to two hymn sings in the month before he left. She and he exchanged letters for the next two years. Meanwhile, Henry's older sister tracked down the girl her brother had dared to ask out and started inviting Loekie to big Sunday dinners.

"If my parents hadn't moved to America, I wouldn't have learned about Jesus. If they hadn't divorced, I wouldn't have learned about Calvin from my stepmother and wouldn't have met Henry," Loekie says.

Henry gave her a diamond when she graduated from Calvin with a biology degree, but her parents expected her to return to New Jersey. She assayed

*(continued on page 6)*



## MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS *(continued from page 3)*

### **Ralph Koll**

Charlene DeMaagd

### **Janice Kosak**

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Gloria Yff

**Total Memorial Gifts ... \$19,046**

*\* Gifts designated for Edison Christian Foundation*

penicillin in a New York pharmaceutical lab and even had an assistant. Several months later, Henry rode the bus from Michigan to New Jersey—in a whole leg cast because he'd broken his leg playing softball. "He said, 'We're engaged. You're coming back to Michigan with me.' We got married on June 3, 1948."

Loekie describes her married life in three phases and sees God at work in each one. She got a lab job with the State of Michigan, where she met Pearl Kendrick, Grace Eldering, and Loney Gordon, who had developed the whooping cough vaccine in Grand Rapids. "I did tests for marriage licenses until I was too pregnant to reach the microscope."

She and Henry had their first of eight children before he graduated from Calvin and went to work in a General Motors lab. "He was very perceptive, observant, and attentive to detail," she says. They raised their children in Tallmadge Township and went to Walker CRC. The kids attended Walker Christian School and Calvin Christian High. Later the Boersmas switched to West Leonard CRC, Seventh Reformed, and Tallmadge Community Church.

"Those were wonderful years of big family meals, picnicking, swimming, and outdoor fun. Our older children were so interested in nature that I'd stay up late with insect, bird, and other guidebooks to answer their questions," Loekie says.

Tragedy struck when their son Albert was killed in a car crash at age 20. "Al was a gentleman, a good driver, the apple of everyone's eye. When the police pulled into our driveway, I said, 'Praise the Lord. He gave us Al for 20 years to enjoy.' The driver who'd driven into Al's path had a heart attack after the crash. Henry and I went to visit him in the hospital. I hugged his wife, Henry shook the man's hand, and I kissed his cheek and said, 'I know it was the Lord's will, and I don't want you to suffer.'"

When the youngest Boersma, Irene, entered first grade, Loekie enrolled

in a med tech course. She worked for 20 "event-filled years" at Butterworth Hospital. Henry retired in 1980 and Loekie in 1989.

"We spent the next 25 years as volunteer reference writers for Tallmadge Township. We'd get boxes of loose papers. I would put them in order and index them. We bought a motorhome so we could travel. Once we went to Jamestown, Virginia, to research its founder," she says. In 2014 the Grand Rapids Historical Society honored them with the Albert Baxter Award. [Find the 80+ libraries with their works by entering "Henry Boersma" and "Loekie Boersma" at [www.worldcat.org/identities](http://www.worldcat.org/identities).]

Henry died in 2018 from intestinal disease. Because of cognitive and mobility issues, Loekie moved to Edison Christian Assisted Living in November 2021. "Covid was here the first two weeks, so I couldn't leave my room. Since then I've been the life of the party here. I like to hug, pray with, and sing with my new friends."

**Ken Bishop** was born in a Grand Rapids hospital on March 4, 1929—his dad's birthday. "My birth came with various health issues for my mom, so I was an only child," Ken says. His dad was an upholsterer, and his mom took in cleaning. "They worked hard to pay my tuition at Baxter Christian, Seymour Christian, and Grand Rapids Christian High," he adds.



**Ken Bishop**

## 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 and a tour, call:**  
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His parents almost lost him a month after they moved from Sherman Street to Alger Heights. "Our new garage doors slid sideways on a metal rail. My bedroom faced the garage. Lightning hit the garage rail. I heard the dog yelp and die. Lightning came in through my open window, dislodged a globe over my iron bedframe, and blew out the kitchen sink strainer. It was pretty scary. God must have had something special in mind to protect me," Ken muses.

He enjoyed playing sports and making friends. He met his wife, Jeanné Boluyt, during his junior year. "We got married at East Leonard CRC, where four generations of her family attended. With no siblings, I hadn't learned how to argue, kiss, and make up. It was hard on my wife till I did learn," Ken says.

Describing himself and Jeanné as "not college material," Ken worked three years as a "grease monkey" in the City garage. Next he hired on as a brick layer's apprentice. When work was slow, his boss advised him to seek side jobs. Eventually he started a brick laying business with two friends, Marv

*(continued on page 7)*

Westmaas and Jack Olree. “Jack was my wife’s uncle even though we were the same age,” he explains.

When it came time to baptize the first of their three children, Jeanné’s dad suggested that Ken make profession of faith. “I’d attended Christian schools and learned the Heidelberg Catechism at Sherman Street CRC, but it hadn’t meant much to me till then,” Ken says.

When he became a deacon, he was alarmed to observe that council members took turns praying at meetings. “My parents were faithful church goers. But my mom was raised Catholic, and I never heard her pray. My dad only prayed the Lord’s Prayer at daily family devotions.

“So I asked my wife’s great uncle, who was on council at the time, how to pray. He told me, ‘Don’t pay attention to who’s listening. Just focus on God.’ That helped, but I vowed to make sure our kids grew up learning to pray during family devotions.”

The Bishops raised their son and two daughters in a house they built on Sweet Street NE. They went to East Leonard CRC, and the kids attended Creston Christian and Grand Rapids Christian High. Meanwhile, Bishop, Olree, and Westmaas grew to 60 employees. Ken left after 23 years when he realized that his son, Dave, wanted to be a counselor, not a bricklayer.

“Jeanné and I had construction experience so we bought an abandoned car wash at Fuller Ave NE and Leonard NE. We turned it into Dairy Dip, an ice cream store. After retiring, we bought a motorhome and volunteered for the CRC’s disaster relief agency,” he says.

All three kids married and settled in or near Grand Rapids. Dave and Colleen had three kids and four grandchildren.

“Family is so important to me. We’ve had so much fun getting together for holidays, birthdays, and other activities,” he says.

As time passed, Jeanné lost her ability to swallow. Visiting nurses helped Ken care for her at home till she died in 2016. Ken stayed active at East Leonard CRC, even taking in a homeless Bible study member.

“Last fall quite a number of us got the Covid at a funeral for a church organist. I now have long Covid, which affects my walking and memory. Since moving to Edison Christian Independent Living in early 2022, life has been very good. I like the fellowship, the food is good, and I get regular physical therapy. Most afternoons I watch a TV evangelist with Shirl Olree, Jack’s widow, who lives here too,” Ken says.

Marv Westmaas visits weekly and says, “Ken is one of the most patient and accepting people I know. He can be happy in any circumstance.”

Asked for life advice, Ken says, “Keep your nose clean. Be faithful to your calling as a Christian and to your church. The song ‘Because He Lives’ is a great comfort. God is always good and perfect. I look forward to meeting God face to face.”

### YOUR NEXT JOB?

*“Helpful staff and friendly residents...  
a calling from the Lord...  
like working with family...  
upbeat and positive...  
better than my last job.”*

That’s how new and long-term employees describe working at Edison Christian Life Services.

We’d love for you to join our caring staff.

### IN LOVING MEMORY

March 2022 – June 2022

William Hadsell	March 2	age 76
Donald Haak	March 8	age 82
Charles Schroedter	March 14	age 74
Bertha Grzybowski	March 28	age 91
Donald Frederick	March 28	age 74
Alice Weller	April 8	age 93
Eva Gordon	April 14	age 92
David Kiliszewski	April 20	age 81
Rosalie “Gay” Walter	April 26	age 85
Elizabeth Cooper	April 29	age 99
Ardeth Baker	May 5	age 97
Mary Ciucci	May 10	age 78
Katherine Faasse	June 6	age 97
Thressa Evertse	June 22	age 97
David Kasprzak	June 23	age 84
Marlene Lemmink	June 23	age 85

### GIFTS RECEIVED IN HONOR OF

March 2022 – June 2022

In honor of... **Ken Koll** from Merlin Vis

In honor of... **Dorothy Koll** from Jon & Joyce VanderBee

### CONTRIBUTING CHURCHES

March 2022 – June 2022

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Heritage Ref. Congregation West Leonard St. CRC  
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EDISON CHRISTIAN  
LIFE SERVICES

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022



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