

VARIOUS GIFTS - ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT

The Gift of Faithfulness: Laurie Moritz (1952-2005) (part 3 of 4)

When Laurie was nominated for the Board of Deacons at North Como Church, Roseville, MN, some members questioned whether Laurie, who had a cognitive disability, would be able to fulfill her responsibilities. The deacons' ministry of caring includes visiting at-home members and sensing their needs. North Como has a long tradition of welcoming and including persons with disabilities, but using Laurie's gifts as a deacon presented a new challenge to the congregation.

Laurie's mother, Marion, said that her daughter was "thrilled to be a deacon like her mother and father." It wasn't long before she found her own special niche. She participated with other deacons in serving receptions after memorial services by folding napkins and setting tables. She brought a unique gift to her service as a deacon by sending cards to people she thought might need a message of hope or cheer. Deacon Marilyn Stock said, "She picked out the most beautiful cards. She seemed to know what to send and often added a personal note to the message printed in the card." Laurie was also part of the prayer chain. Because it was difficult for her to write and pass on detailed messages, she became the person who completed the chain.

Laurie found great joy and a close community by joining the sanctuary choir. When she expressed interest in singing, choir members promised that they would provide rides home if she would learn to use the transportation system for persons with disabilities to get to the rehearsals. Learning to use Metro Mobility opened new opportunities for independence. Friends described her as "blossoming."

Laurie was a child of the church. Marion says that her daughter was "comfortable" in the church that nurtured her for over five decades. Marion recalls that when Laurie was a child, many of the children from the church lived in the Moritz' neighborhood and attended the school where Laurie received special education services. When other children teased, her church friends defended her.

According to Marion, Laurie's life was difficult at times, but "we expected her to do the things she could do. When she accepted a task, she felt that it was her responsibility to fulfill it." Marion used the word "faithful" to describe her daughter. Those at North Como who knew her best agree that Laurie was faithful until the time of her death in 2005. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Mathew 25:21 RSV)