



## St John Lutheran Church

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### In Memoriam Carolyn Miller

#### Psalm 103

**103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 103:2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 103:4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 103:5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 103:6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.... 103:10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 103:13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 103:14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. 103:15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 103:16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 103:17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 103:18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 103:20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 103:21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 103:22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.**

It has been my high honor and privilege to have been Dean and Carolyn Miller's pastor for almost exactly the past ten years. It has been my privilege to know them and to love them...and to be loved by them as well as being able to watch them share their Christian love with all of those around them. To watch the faith our Lord has given them as a couple... and as individuals as they selflessly live their lives of Christian service... again, both as a married couple and as individuals. And you will have to forgive me referring to both Dean and Carolyn, on this day when we celebrate the life in Christ our Lord gave our sister Carolyn...but except for the time Dean and I went to the District Convention a couple of Summers back, I have never seen the two separated. For me it has always been "Dean and Carolyn" and the thought of one being away from the other seems somehow to be a violation of the laws of nature! It just doesn't compute.

So, today it is privilege to stand before and tell you about the life of faith that our Lord gave to our sister, Carolyn Miller. It is my privilege to tell you that while we grieve and shed tears of sorrow...we are not hopeless...nor are we in despair. We celebrate what our Lord has given Carolyn... the life of faith she lived... the life of love she lived...the life of reflecting all that her Lord Jesus has done for her! We celebrate her God given lion-like courage and the absolute certainty of her hope...even as she battled cancer!

You see Carolyn believed in something that the world would never believe... much less trust. She believed that her sins were forgiven. As the Psalm tells us...(the Psalm Carolyn picked for this day) She believed in the tender mercies of her Lord. She trusted that He was preparing a place just for her and all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God...that He was born of a young virgin...that He lived a perfect life...that He died the perfect death on the Cross...and that He rose from the dead to conquer, sin, death and the devil! And that He did all of this for her!

Such talk is completely alien to the world. The world would tell you that the circle of life and death is the "natural". That death is something that just happens to us because of age or disease or both. The world would tell you that fire and flood and disease and famine and war are all natural... and that such things are a result of the power of nature... or a result of the influence of man trying to exert power over another. Death, the world says, is the end result of such things... the "natural" end result of such things... and even further...the world would tell you that such death is actually necessary!

The notion of eternal life given by a transcendent, gracious, merciful and all powerful God is considered pure folly and silliness. The fact that mankind once lived in the presence of God...that we once saw Him face to face and did so without fear. That we once lived in a perfect place... a place made for us by God Himself... and that we were made in the very image of God... to have fellowship with Him eternally... that once death... and even now... death is un-natural!

That is correct my friends and never forget it! What happened to Carolyn was and is un-natural. The grief you feel today is un-natural. Death is un-natural. We were created to live forever in the presence of God. Not as spirits drifting around on the clouds in some kind of alternate ethereal existence... but as flesh and blood... body and soul human beings... that our whole being is important and our whole being has meaning... just as God created us!

Death came to us because we thought we knew more than He did... death came because we rebelled against God and with that rebellion came this thing called sin and as Scripture tells us... sin when it is full grown gives birth to death! Only death can separate the body from the soul... and only death and grief can cause the pain we feel today.

That's exactly why Jesus came to do what He did. God knows the pain you feel at losing a loved one. That's why Scripture tells us that the Son of God did not see it as an insult to become flesh and dwell among us... to die in His Flesh and Blood so that He could buy back our flesh and blood. Jesus had to pay the price in His Body so that we could be redeemed or bought back from the punishment of sin... which is eternal death! Then He rose from the grave to conquer death once and for all! And as a result... we are restored to that Garden of Eden existence of a perfect face to face relationship with our God and Lord for eternity!

You see Jesus is not dead! Death is not the end! Because of our Lord Jesus... because of His victory over death for us... today we grieve but we are not hopeless. Carolyn Miller lives!! She is with her Lord as we speak! She is right now singing with angels and Arch Angels and all the company of Heaven! "Praise the Lord O my soul, all my in most being praise His Holy Name!" That's what she is doing right now!!

Like all who believe, Carolyn Miller's faith is a Divine gift! Faith comes from above... it's come from without.. it comes from the Means of Grace that God ordains to convey His gifts of life and forgiveness. His Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper! These are the Means the Holy Spirit uses to bring us from death to life in Christ!

This is how Carolyn came to the faith... and this is how our Lord sustained His Divine faith within her all of these years. It was in her baptism that our Lord marked her and claimed Carolyn as His own... making her a very special promise. That her sins are forgiven... that she IS HIS and that HE would never leave her! That she would live with Him in His Kingdom for eternity... and that she had nothing to fear in this world because He was her Lord and Savior!

Carolyn believed this with every fiber of her being. Her life is a life devoted to her husband... her family... her church... her community... her friends... and most of all her Lord! It was no accident that she lived a life of

service and devotion to those around her. She just couldn't help it. The faith that the Lord had given her and sustained in her was part of her DNA and the Christian love she exhibited flowed out of that Divine faith.

This is why Carolyn worked to meet the wants of those in need in her community. She didn't do this for recognition or so that people would think well of her or to get "points" toward Heaven... she did this because she was serving her Lord in the process... and that is what she earnestly wanted to do! Carolyn and Dean would come to Bible class and worship every Sunday and then they would spend the rest of Sunday afternoon visiting shut-ins here in Libby or Troy. Again... this was simply a reflection of her devotion to her Lord... out of gratitude to Him... she would work to reflect His love to others!

And I think one of the things that struck me most about this Dear woman was her earnest and child-like expectation that her Lord would provide for her all good things... and that He would not fail her. It always tickled me, more than a little bit... to come into Bible Class and see Carolyn sitting next to Dean with a big grin on her face and her big brown eyes open wide in a great expectation for what she would learn that day! I mean here would be this very confident woman... a woman who knew exactly who she was... a woman who could be very assertive if she felt the need... and she would be humbly waiting, with this palpable sense of expectation of what her Lord was about to provide! The same was true when she came into the Lord's House for worship. She always trusted the Lord to give her good things... and He always did!

And now my friends, our Lord has provided the best of things for Carolyn. For now she sees her Lord and Savior face to face. She waits in earnest child-like expectation no longer...for Carolyn's faith is a reality. The Lord who loved her enough to die for her... the Lord who Promised to take her to Himself... the Lord of Life has defeated death one more time... and our sister Carolyn lives in the place the Lord has made for her!

**103:17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 103:18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 103:20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 103:21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 103:22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.** In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Amen

Rev. Eric M. Christiansen  
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