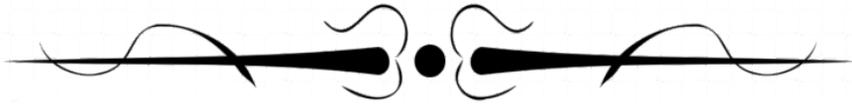


# Carol E. Nelson



*May 25, 1939 - May 22, 2021*

Loren, Barry, Bryce, family and friends, grace and peace to you from the one who lived for us, who died for us, and who now claims victory over every grave, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

We are gathered today to remember and honor the life of Carol Nelson. Carol lived a full and impactful life, with a positive spirit and a great many accomplishments. But like so many we've known and loved along the way; we wish Carol's time with us could have been just a little longer.

There's a psalm in the Bible that makes me think of Carol: Psalm 100. "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture."

Carol made a joyful noise in the world of her parents, Charles and Evelyn Lockwood. She was born on May 25, 1939. She grew up in a red brick house on a farm in the Grand Meadow area. Carol loved farm life – crops in the field, cows in the pasture, 4-H projects in the summer that often included farm animals. Those animals were like pets to her.

Carol enjoyed making music when she was growing up. She played piano and baritone and especially loved to sing. She went to school in Grand Meadow. She worshipped with her parents in Grand Meadow Lutheran Church. The church was a formative part of her faith development – baptism, Sunday School, confirmation.

Carol brought her joyful noise to Austin during her senior year of high school. Her dad got a job selling insurance with New York Life. This couldn't have been the easiest of transitions for a high school senior. Yet Carol had a positive spirit. She made friends at her new school and she made music at her new church. Sometimes she even played the organ.

After graduation, and on a blind date, no less, she met a dashing young man named Loren Nelson. They were on a double date, which went very well for Loren and Carol. Loren has occasionally commented, "I don't think they lasted nearly as long as we did." But for Carol and Loren, a fire was lit. Little did they know, but life would never be the same again.

In the fall of that year, Carol brought her joyful noise to Concordia College in Moorhead. She was a music major, at least she started out to be. This involved everything from her lovely soprano voice to her talented keyboarding skills. During college, Carol kept in touch with Loren who was at the University of Minnesota studying agriculture. Their relationship was growing stronger. They had even begun talking about a wedding.



For his part, Loren was working in food inspection in the Twin Cities. He was also serving in the army. Loren got assigned to Fort Darby in Italy. Before he was shipped off, Loren and Carol managed to fit in a wedding. In February of 1960, in Grand Meadow Lutheran Church, Loren and Carol made a joyful noise together as husband and wife.

No time for much of a honeymoon. Loren was off to Italy. Given his background and training, he worked in food inspection for the army. Carol wasn't far behind. She came with her joyful noise to teach school on the base to which Loren was assigned. Carol spoke fondly of their time in Italy and of living just a few blocks away from Sophia Lauren.

Loren and Carol returned a couple years later. Carol resumed her college career. She still loved making music and bringing a joyful noise to the Lord, but now she was at the University of Minnesota, and was zeroing in on primary school education. She worked on a Bachelor of Science degree. She had a scientific mind and greatly valued the technical side of things, a background that would serve her well later in life.

After graduation, Loren and Carol moved to Houston, Minnesota. They both taught school for a while. Loren taught Agriculture at the high school level. Carol commuted to Caledonia where she taught first grade. More joyful noise. I can only imagine the conversations as Loren and Carol came together at the end of a long day of teaching, and from their vastly different worlds. Yet they made it work.

Soon after the move to Houston, Loren got a job in public health in the city of Rochester. Perhaps, after all their moves and adventures, these two nomads were finally ready to settle down. Carol got busy making a joyful noise while teaching at Jefferson Elementary. They joined Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Carol sang in the choir and often was a soloist for weddings and funerals.

And...the joyful noise of the Nelson household was about to get noisier. Sonia was born in 1968. Then three years later came Barry. Then a year after that came Bryce. During those years, Carol stepped away from teaching and focused on being a stay-at-home mom. Truth be told, though, there was plenty of teaching to do at home. On the bachelor-of-science side of things, there was always research to do on the very best in car seats and baby strollers and what to feed the kids. Life in the family was about as full as it could be - birthday parties, holiday celebrations, and plenty of fun and silliness. Every step of the way, Carol the mom was supportive, encouraging, and full of love.

The teacher-side of Carol came through in nudging her kids to join 4-H. Among their many projects, Sonia got involved in making clothes, Barry explored electronics, and Bryce tried conservation and forestry. Carol nudged her children to take up a musical instrument. Sonia played the French horn, Barry the trumpet, and Bryce the trombone. All were involved in band.

There was a veritable cacophony of joyful noise around their household. In high school at John Marshall, they played in both concert and marching bands. Highlights of band were trips to Hawaii. After high school, positive and supportive Carol strongly encouraged her children to get a college education, which they did. Life was moving on.

As the kids were leaving home, Carol made a joyful noise as a substitute teacher. She taught at every level. She was even brave enough to sub as a band director, no easy assignment for a temporary teacher. But Carol did it, and she somehow got the bands to set aside their silliness and make some music together.

Carol took her talents to the Kid's Tree House childcare center. She eventually ended up owning and operating the place. All her music and education and technical training came together during those years. But the kids were most important. Carol was known especially for her positive spirit, her laughter, and her warm hugs.

In his book *Fully Human, Fully Alive*, author John Powell writes some poignant words: "The size of a person's world is the size of his or her heart." As we tell stories about Carol and remember her life, we're led to believe that both her world and her heart were filled to overflowing. After Carol's dad died, she looked after her mom in her later years, especially as she developed Alzheimer's. And then when Sonia was diagnosed with breast cancer, which led to surgery, chemo, and radiation, she and Loren spent countless hours looking after Sonia's children, Jonathan and Stephanie. And let's not forget Carol's love and devotion to the rest of the grandchildren too - birthday parties, family dinners, Easter egg hunts.

Sonia battled her cancer bravely for seven long years. It was incredibly hard for the entire family, but it took a particular toll on Carol. Shortly after Sonia's memorial service, Carol suffered a major stroke and heart attack. In the midst of the challenges, she worked hard to recover - exercise bikes, group therapy, walking. Carol wanted to stay connected to Loren and the family. She wanted to maintain a good quality of life. In her own positive and encouraging way, she wanted to continue to make music wherever she could.

We're going to miss Carol. We know the size of her world was big because of the size of her very big heart. But sadly, there comes a time when we need to say goodbye. As we do, we give thanks for the joyful noise that Carol made over the months and years. And we believe that Jesus meant what he said when he promised to go and prepare a place for us.

This day we entrust Carol into the loving arms of Jesus, much like the family did for Sonia eight years ago. We ask Jesus to hold both of them tightly, and to never let them go.  
Amen.

Pastor Vern Christopherson  
May 27, 2021