



Joy M. Gerig Eulogy

We are gathered today to celebrate the life of Joy M. Gerig.

We may each have known her in a different capacity -- as sister, aunt, cousin, teacher, mentor or friend; but we all loved her!

Joy was the second daughter born to Jacob and Alice (Carnahan) Gerig in Auburn, Indiana. When she was 4 years old, she knelt at her father's knee and asked Jesus to live in

her heart. From her early beginnings, her deeply religious family took her to their church services where she participated from the time she was a child. She sang her first solo "I May Be a Light for Him," at age 5 and was leading youth meetings when only twelve years of age.

Joy often said, "I realize how grateful I am for parents and family who have given me a beautiful and deeply religious heritage ... an understanding of the necessity of honest work ... an appreciation for eternal values, and a respect for the dignity of all, not just a favored few."

Two years after graduation from Spencerville High School in 1943, Joy attended the St. Louis Institute of Music for three summer terms.

Each fall, she returned to Fort Wayne where she taught piano at the Castle Music Studios and studied at Fort Wayne Bible College, graduating in 1952 from the standard Bible diploma course.

Joy served her Lord in the field of Christian education nearly all of her life, beginning at the Hopewell United Brethren in Christ Church near Auburn, where she served as Christian Education Director and Associate Pastor from 1953-1959. Whether Joy was working with youth or children in a variety of churches, or as a camp director at the North Ohio Conference Campground, or as a church musician; she deeply invested her life into the lives of many young people who are today's church leaders.

Continuing her education, Joy earned the Bachelor of Religious Education degree from Fort Wayne Bible College in 1966; her Master of Science degree from St. Francis University, Fort Wayne, 1977.

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In 1959, Joy began working at Fort Wayne Bible College, serving as

secretary to several administrators, as assistant to the dean of women, and as Bethany Hall dorm supervisor to thirty-four young women.

The next year, she became the acting director of Christian service while continuing as Bethany Hall supervisor. Two years later, she became the college's first full-time Christian Service Director.

In this director's position, she met with every student who attended the college. She patiently gave much time to counseling students in their decisions relating to vocations, personal problems and spiritual growth. Today hundreds of alumni serving around the world credit Joy's mentoring as a significant force in their Christian lives.

Dick Baxter teamed with Joy for 21 of the 30 years she served as Christian Service Director. As a result of their strong leadership in developing the FWBC Christian service program, other Bible colleges viewed the department as a model and came to Joy and Dick for advice for improving their own programs.

In 1980, Joy was instrumental in forming the Association of Christian Service Personnel (ACSP), a national professional organization for Christian Service Directors, and she hosted their first biennial conference in Fort Wayne. That same year, she was elected as the first Vice President and five years later she was elected as President. Under Joy's leadership, the membership grew from 44 members to over 100 members representing 75 colleges. Joy also led numerous workshops at the annual conferences of the American Association of Bible Colleges.

In retirement, Joy was never really "retired." She continued to share her growing relationship with God by leading Bible studies, presenting workshops for churches and women's retreats, and mentoring college students. She organized a monthly luncheon for the women of her senior community, and led monthly sing-alongs for the residents at Ossian Health and Rehabilitation center.

At the conclusion of a retirement celebration, Joy reflected, "My prayer for many years has been to learn to know God better, and share that learning with others. I never dreamed of the ways God would answer and give me the satisfaction of a full life. I am not afraid of the future, for my faith and trust has only increased over these years. Praise the Lord."

If Joy could speak to us today, I know she would say to all of us, "Thank you for blessing my life with your friendship and love. God's peace go with you day by day. I'll see you soon."

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