

A funeral sermon for Louise Young, 13 February 2021
Deacon Judith Crossett
Diocese of Iowa

When I came to Trinity 40 years ago, Louise was already a faithful member, a Sunday School teacher, a member of the choir, and had been all of these and more for years. It was a privilege to know her all these years. She was memorable; she had so many gifts, and she was always ready to offer and share them.

She was gifted in music and loved to share that gift. She played clarinet in community bands and for community theater pit orchestras; she sang in community choirs as well. She loved to sing, and really loved singing a good, high descant. Fortunately, she stayed in the alto section where she helped less experienced singers—I was one—stay on pitch and keep the beat. Clearly, in fact, she could keep two different tempos in mind at once: one year she'd been instructed to do some knee exercise that involved extending and flexing her knee while seated. Of course, she did so faithfully and diligently, as she did all things, including during choir practice. Her tempo was always steady, but sometimes different from the beat of what we were rehearsing. I asked her, once, if she could match the music because I was getting so confused. She laughed, not only because it was funny, but also with delight that she could help someone else.

Helping others was so much a part of her nature. She helped by teaching Sunday School; younger children adored her. She helped with the Outreach Committee, often bringing needs to our attention in the days when we had money we could use to help individuals. She helped the choir with pronouncing German with goodwill and patience for our errors. She helped with the annual used booksale for Shelter House as long as she was physically able. She helped as an overnight host when we did overflow winter shelter before the new ShelterHouse was built, and she had a gift for engaging those guests in conversation.

Louise was also a person who knew a lot, and was very certain in her knowledge. She knew a lot about music, a lot about politics, a lot about everything she'd ever studied, but most of all, she knew the Bible and she knew Jesus. Her certainty about some things could make conversation difficult at times, but no one could deny the depth and certainty of her faith. In nothing was she more sure of right and wrong than in her faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior.

Her faith, her trust in God, her belief in Jesus Christ, was a part of everything she did. Was there a guest or a newcomer? Louise would seek them out, greet them, take an interest in them, welcome them. Was there a problem—an illness, a hardship, a lost item? Louise would pray for all these things. Was there what most of us might call luck? Louise would thank the mercy and generosity of God. She did not refuse help; she knew that God works through human minds and hands and hearts, through rides to choir, through medicine, through the willingness of many to be generous and she saw that generosity as following Jesus. She occasionally was discouraged—at her physical limitations, at hardships in her life—but the only times you ever heard her swear, it would be “oh, fudge!” The knowledge she gloried in—and shared—was that she was a child of God, she was saved by Jesus Christ, and that she had absolute trust in his goodness and mercy.

Louise knew absolutely that our bodies, afflicted with illness and suffering, are wasting away so that our inner nature is being renewed and prepared for eternal glory. She knew, absolutely, that even though she was in her earthly body for 85 years and she was away from the Lord while in her earthly tent, she knew that she walked by her faith which was sure and unwavering. She knew that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, and she never ceased to live in her assurance of the abundance of that steadfast love. She knew absolutely that she saw the Son in her love for Jesus and that she would have eternal life and be raised up on the last day.

The living example of that faith is what Louise has left us, along with so many memories of kindness and generosity and humor and love for us. She would have us all have the same faith she did, remembering that her faith can be our faith, too. What keeps us from this kind of love and faith in God? We would walk by faith and not by sight, but we see and are distracted by things in this life. Louise was an example to us that the things of this world need not keep you from that complete love and faith. She had—and has—many things to teach us, not all of which we wish to learn. For Louise, and for us, God has the last word:

Jesus, in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest,
who art, with God the Father, and Spirit, ever blest.

AMEN.