

Good Morning,

I'm Mary Clement. I was your second Minister of Health, arriving 25 years ago in September, when you were celebrating your 50th anniversary. It is good to stand at this lectern once more, where I've stood so many times previously.

I had interviewed here, with some trepidation, earlier that summer of 1994. Not being familiar with ELCA theology, I'd asked my pastor, Randy Ehrhardt at West Des Moines Christian, what he thought as he'd done his internship at an ELCA church in Ft. Worth. He said I'd be fine with the theology but still I was cautious. I don't remember many questions from your search committee but I do remember that I had something like 18 questions for you, including the role of women in your congregation. You see, I was serving as president of the congregation at West Des Moines Christian. Pointing to Marilyn Warling sitting next to him, Pastor Rehfeldt said "this is our council president. Does that answer your question?" It certainly did. And so I began a journey amongst you that for me, was a wonderful place to be.

On my first day in the office, Dick Rehfeldt came in and said his wife Cathy was planning to go see charter member Kathryn Hutzell after lunch and did I wish to go along. Well sure. While at Kathryn's, there came a phone call for Cathy Rehfeldt from the church office relaying word that your much-loved Pauline Hughes had called the ambulance as her husband Bill was unresponsive and could Cathy come. And so conversation at our hostess' home switched to our need to leave. But before we could get out the door, a second call came instructing Cathy that "if the new Minister of Health is available, bring her along." And so up University we went, -- at 25 mph! To make a long story short, I rode the ambulance with Bill and stayed

with him, in Pauline's absence, as they got him settled in at the hospital. That evening I attended the church council meeting, an opportunity to see the business end of this congregation. Walking in to the meeting, I was greeted with "we heard you rode the ambulance with Bill Hughes this afternoon." And with that I seemed to hit the ground running. Keep in mind that Norm Litzner had just resigned and moved away and Dick Rehfeldt had become the solo pastor. And for the next 18 months, until Hans Lee was called, I often heard "Mary, try to lighten Dick's load." I tried as best I could. It did mean less opportunity for things such as health fairs, etc. but more opportunity for meeting the church family one on one—which admittedly was my preference in ministry.

To go back to Kathryn Hutzell for a moment: she started me off learning the history of WHLC. She told of how, nearly 50 years earlier, her husband would come home from work each day, change his clothes while she prepared what she called "a bite for him to eat." Then he went up to 66th and Carpenter to work on this church building, perhaps this very room, coming home after dark for supper with his family.

Upon my arrival here, I found out a couple of things (with the help of Chuck Safris who knew the congregation well): the first was that the congregation was grieving, first the loss of Norm Litzner as co-pastor and also the loss of a previously very active Lorraine Schachterle who had suffered a medical incident necessitating her admission to a care facility where she lived for the remainder of her life. The second thing I learned was that those original members were getting older and health issues were cropping up frequently. As a result, I stood here as lector, at the funerals of many during my 5 years here.

Much of my time was spent advocating for our members and facilitating appropriate care for them. That sometimes put me at

some odds with a doctor or two, but to me, the utmost importance was seeing that our people got whatever care was needed. Sometimes that meant shoveling snow or reattaching a down-spout on a widow's house. The work was varied and interesting and there was never a dull moment.

So where am I today? Following my retirement, my husband & I moved to Crosslake, MN, a community of about 1800, during the winter. We attend the Presbyterian church there and I volunteer as parish nurse tho limit my work to advocating and facilitating for the parishioners. We added a fellowship hall on to our building 4 years ago, doing the work ourselves. And as we did that, I often thought about how the early members of this church had built the original part of this building.

I play in a small band in Crosslake, the Last Generation tho, being in a resort community, we sometimes refer to ourselves as the "Last Resort." We entertain at area care facilities, fund-raisers, and churches.

I also am one of 3 trumpeters in the Heartland Symphony Orchestra and also serve on their board of directors.

Our family consists of a son Chris who is a Des Moines Fireman currently serving as spokesman for DSM Fire. His wife Lisa is Director of Clinical Services at Orchard place and they have a daughter Megan who will be 8 in August, and a son Ryan who was 5 last month. Our daughter Aimee, formerly a medical social worker at Iowa Methodist, is now a single parent following the untimely death of her husband David Keenan, who had been a district chief in charge of emergency services with Des Moines Fire and who, at the time of his death, was nurse manager of the emergency room at Methodist West. David had helped me design the medical

notebooks bearing this church's name. Their 2 children are son Quade, soon to be a senior at Valley, and daughter Quincey, a 7th grader at Indian Hills. Aimee has returned to work and does scheduling and payroll for the emergency departments of Methodist downtown, Methodist West, and Iowa Lutheran.

I mentioned to you how good it is to stand once again at this lectern. It was an honor to stand here to read scripture at funerals. To look out at a grieving family with whom I'd worked during trying times in their lives, and also on a congregation, surrounding that grieving church family with love and support. That was ministry on your part. And you certainly did that for me a year and a half ago following the death of my son-in-law.

I was honored to walk amongst you, to walk with you. And I thank you most sincerely for that opportunity and for the invitation to stand here today, with you once again.