

Senior Spotlight:

Dodie Fenske

If you happen to be around the church building on a Thursday morning, about 9:00 a.m. or so, you might see a woman with a rag in one hand and a pail of cleaning products in the other. That's one of our super "Spit and Shiners," Delores Fenske. Of course no one calls her Delores. We all know her as "Dodie." She's been answering to that tag since she was very young. Some very young children couldn't seem to say Delores, so went with Dodie, and that has stuck to this day. You may not have known her real name, but we all know Dodie, a beloved Senior member of our Faith Lutheran family.

Dodie is one child of God who has caught the spirit of Jesus, who said, "*I am among you as one who serves.*" Dodie knows how to serve others in a variety of ways. Besides the Spit and Shine detail, she loves to visit people. She makes her weekly rounds at Harmony River and other facilities. She monitors the health and activities of neighbors. People anticipate her appearance and love her visits. This writer knows that personally from his own encounters with those Dodie visits. She brings a caring spirit into their lives that mimics the spirit of Christ

Dodie was born in Fordville, North Dakota, west of Grand Forks, and lived there until age 17. She had eight siblings. Her father died when she was eight years old, so she needed to take on extra responsibilities. She worked in a creamery in Fordville at age 14 and loved the experience. She said her family was poor, but they didn't seem to know it. They had love in their family circle, and were close to each other.

Dodie came to Minnesota after marrying Dorn, her first husband. In Mound, Minnesota, they worked at several jobs before purchasing an apartment building, which they rented only to teachers. Later, they owned and operated a resort on Lake Mille Lacs. Unfortunately, Dorn had kidney problems that eventually necessitated dialysis. They were crushed by that trial; but Dodie turned it into an opportunity to take a 6-week course to enable her to do Dorn's dialysis at home. She did so for 11 years, when Dorn died.

Dodie and Dorn wintered in Arizona. After Dorn's death, Dodie met Arnie Fenske at a dance in Arizona. They were married in Hutchinson by Pastor Natwick. Some time after Arnie died, Dodie became a member of Faith Lutheran Church. She loves the congregation as a place where her faith is nurtured. She attends Bible studies and loves the way she feels "filled" when she comes to worship.

Dodie says her Christian lifestyle stems from significant people in her lives, beginning with her mother. She remembers going to Sunday worship as a very special time in the week, highlighted by the fact that she always changed out of the nice dress she wore to church immediately upon returning home. She had a pastor who walked a long distance to return a \$25.00 offering her father had given to the church, because he knew the family needed it more than the congregation. That made a deep impression on Dodie. She also spoke of a teacher at her school who wore "fancy" clothes. She was obviously not poor like the students, but they knew she loved them by the fact that during recess she played on the play ground with them, not worried about dirtying her nice duds. Great role models!

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As Dodie looks back on her life, she pours out her gratitude to God. Her faith has been tested over and over, and still is. Yet she can say, “God puts everything in place for me.” She adds, “I’m ready to go any time. God has a place ready for me”

Thanks, Dodie, for your simple testimony to the faithful and eternally gracious God we share.

