

Don Woods

A little bit of information about Don and his wife, Carol:

- Don and Carol were greeters at Meadowbrook. Don remarks that Carol loved that job.
- Carol and Don's ministry together began with a teenage group. After choir practice on Saturday evenings for the weekly Sunday morning singing, the teenage group would go to the basement and play Four Square.
- Don and Carol were married for 58 years. Eight years ago, Don and Carol celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a wedding re-dedication ceremony. Former MCC Pastor Joe Barth officiated the ceremony, held in MCC's student center.
- Don's favorite scripture is 1 John 4: 7&8: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."(KJV)
- Did you know that Don served in the Navy (his Dad and brothers also served in the Navy), stationed in Guam 1960 – 1962.
- Did you know that Carol's family is related to the Booths that started the Salvation Army? Carol's family lineage includes many ministers.

About the Church's History:

The Meadowbrook congregation, prior to meeting at its present location on South Duncan Road, met at the Park District Building by the fire station near John Street. Don, Carol, and family were attending Urbana Assembly at the time. Don and Carol taught Junior Church there, which included five-year-old children and up. MCC's Connections Pastor Kent Hollis was there as a young student in Don's and Carol's Junior Church class. It was because Urbana Assembly's congregation was growing and becoming very large that the Woods family started attending Meadowbrook, meeting at the former YMCA Gymnastics building on South Duncan Road. There was only the one large room, which is the present student center. The present classroom wing was not built yet. Don reports that a hole to accommodate a trampoline-like floor exists below the present floor of the youth worship center. Don, being a glazier, helped install the glass doors at the present student center. A YMCA children's vegetable garden, sponsored by actor Eddie Albert of "Green Acres", was established at the location of the present adult worship sanctuary. The garden was later relocated to Parkland College.

Miracles

Don knows that God is who He says He is. Psalm 46: 1 states: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Don recalls easily two miracles that occurred in his life:

With a family of four daughters, Don lived paycheck to paycheck in his earlier married years. With uncertainties in the economy, Don was laid off from his glazier job. He requested prayer for support with his small group at his church. There was a gentleman in his small group who was the head of the Army Corps of Engineers in Urbana. This man received two presidential citations (Reagan, Bush) because of his service. The gentleman offered personal financial support through the church to be set aside to assist Don's family. Don received a message from God when the support money was offered. Don told the gentleman, "The Lord just told me that He will take care of me, and thank you, but I can't accept the money." It was a step of faith for Don to respond in that manner. Then later, Don received a telephone call that he had work for that Monday morning in Decatur for Pittsburgh Plate Glass.

The second miracle occurred during the time Don's family attended Urbana Assembly. Don was watching television when he noticed that his daughter, Marsha, 1-1/2 years old at the time, was not moving. Don immediately called Urbana Assembly's minister Dick Foth. Dick called the Emergency Room at Carle Hospital for Don and directed him to take his daughter there. Many doctors had differing opinions for Marsha's condition, and she was placed in the children's ICU department.

When Dick Foth arrived at the hospital, he informed Don that his wife, Ruth, and his four children prayed for Marsha prior to his leaving for the hospital. Marsha remained in the ICU department, and Don's wife, Carol, remained with her. Don had to leave for work, but returned immediately after work to find Marsha's bed empty. Don expected the worst. The Emergency Room doctor informed him, "We didn't know what to do for her; she got healed by the Lord." Marsha, to this day is healthy and remembers this miracle from God.

Don's reflection:

"Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of his pasture." Psalm 100.

Don knows that by acknowledging His enduring love and faithfulness, we can enjoy intimate communion with Him and thank Him for His ongoing care. Don encourages the younger generations at Meadowbrook to seek God's direction, to walk in His paths as he has, and to assume leadership positions as directed by the Lord.

Don reflects on his time with family and on his marriage to Carol. God has been faithful in Don's past; God has been present no matter what the circumstances.

Don's dad died at age 46 from cancer. After his Dad's passing, Don gave all the money he earned to his Mom. Don's Mom was worried about Don, because he was going to work, coming home, and having no social life. At the time, Don's next-door neighbor was Carol. Don's Mom helped arrange a double date. Don, Carol, and two other individuals from the neighborhood went to the old Moose Club in downtown Champaign. Don liked Carol. When Don got off work, they would sit on her porch swing and talk. For two to three months, Don asked Carol to marry him. Carol did not say anything. Don asked the question one more time, promising that he wouldn't ask her again, "Will you marry me"? She then said, "Well, OK". Carol didn't want to tell anyone except for their church's minister, who set up a date for the marriage ceremony. Carol's father talked to the minister in his office one day, and said, "After all the time they spend together, you'd think they would get married." The minister got out his appointment book and told Carol's father the date.

Don had known Carol for 77 years. The grieving process associated with Carol's passing is a gradual one. Carol came down with dementia and passed away in June of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While in quarantine, residents and staff reported that Carol was thankful for Jesus and fervent in prayer.

"So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy." John 16: 22 refers to Jesus' prediction of his death and the loss his disciples will experience.

Don and his fellow believers know that Carol is with Jesus, and carry the hope and faith of seeing her again.

We turn from life's noisy trials to seek our ever-present Peace. He quiets the noise, healing us. "He himself is our peace." Ephesians 2: 14.