

Blanche Kern

A little bit of information about Blanche . . .

- Blanche became a part of Meadowbrook Church ~ 1984 when its name was Champaign Assembly of God Church and was meeting at the Seventh Day Adventist Church with Pastor Larry Kasper. Soon thereafter [Nov. 1984], the church moved into the former YMCA building on Duncan Rd. Blanche's children were grown and married at the time, so Blanche's church involvement has been with adult Bible studies and events. Blanche served in planning and attending Women's Ministry events such as Women's Retreats, Women's Brunch speaker in 2019, and Champions Senior Ministry.
- Five women (whose spouses did not attend regularly) met together at the new Duncan Rd. location as a Sunday School class; a few more ladies joined; eventually they became a small group. Together these ladies joined in prayer, Bible study, and counseling as they shared family challenges with one another. With a few member changes in recent years, the original five stayed together for many years meeting until two years ago.
- Favorite hymn: "Great is Thy Faithfulness" because God is faithful. Recently, Blanche has loved listening to the Bill Gaither and company on YouTube. Their songs bless her.
- Favorite scriptures: Psalm 46 and Psalm 103. "These Psalms became very real to me when my husband was in the hospital and his kidneys were shutting down and he wasn't going to make it. These scriptures are so true. God is my refuge and strength."

A small-town Christ-centered upbringing . . .

Blanche grew up Nazarene in Olivet, IL [Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, IL originated here as a 1907 grammar school] a village of 400 people in Vermillion County. She had a wonderful childhood and has always appreciated her growing up years. Blanche recalls their school and community activities were church-centered; what the fun they had playing indoor and outdoor games with church family. The village had no drinking nor smoking regulations. Dating boys from Georgetown, the adjoining town, was looked down upon as they were not part of the Nazarene church community. After high school graduation in 1944, Blanche attended Olivet Nazarene College [began as Illinois Holiness University in Olivet moving to Bourbonnais in 1940] for one year. Charlie came home from WWII in 1946. Six months later Blanche married Charlie Kern in 1947. They had a good marriage. Charlie went to barber school in Decatur, IL and was a barber for 60 years; first, at Rantoul Air Force Base. He then barbered on University of Illinois campus; later owner of Jim's Barbershop. Charlie passed in 2008. "Charlie was never my hairdresser. He tried once, but I thought he took too much hair off." -Blanche

From Blanche's experience and perspective . . .

1. Today, many Christians "Church hop", not desiring to settle at any particular local church, but would rather hop from church to church every couple of years. Blanche never felt church hopping was the thing to do. However, once, Blanche felt God's calling to leave a church while starting to write her weekly tithe check. She believed He spoke, "Don't do that."
2. Blanche grew up with the thinking that divorce was not an option. Every marriage has things to work on. Blanche was not married to a believing husband, yet she was faithful and true to their marriage vows throughout their life together.

The family that has stayed together...

"Everyone thinks the other person's life is perfect, but it isn't so. We all go through hard things." - Blanche

At a women's retreat, Blanche shared about her son, Karl. Karl began drinking in high school. Later, his drinking led to a divorce. He didn't see his kids for four years. Drugs also became a problem for Karl. Initially, she couldn't give up on helping her son with whatever he needed. But there came a point when Blanche spoke to God, kneeling, "He's yours, I give him completely over to You, but please spare his life." It was three months after her prayer that her son came to her and said, "I'm going to rehab." Blanche knew God was in this situation. Karl had no insurance. The company he worked for paid for his rehab. Karl went through a month long 12-step program at the Pavilion in Champaign. It was a family affair as family had to attend meetings to understand and support Karl. Karl's withdrawals were intense, but God delivered him. He saw his children again about a year after completing rehab and he went back to work. May 2021 Karl will mark his 29th year of sobriety. Life has had its imperfections, but the family has stayed together all these years. Today, there is no family division from the divorces that have occurred, no bitterness nor hard feelings, including Karl's ex-wife. Only God could accomplish this.

Blanche requests prayer for Karl's son, Ryan, who is suffering from pancreatitis and a bone disease requiring a hip replacement. The pain is hard on Ryan. Ryan is 33 years old and has been sober for three years. Because of his young age, doctors have recently used an experimental approach on his hip.

To celebrate her 90th birthday, her family and church friends attended an open house with catered sandwiches after Sunday services. All four of her children attended, and to her surprise, all twenty-seven grandchildren were also present. Also attending were two nephews, one traveling from Norfolk, VA, and a brother from Minnesota. They all sang a favorite hymn for her, "How Great Thou Art" with guitar. Blanche and family are planning a 95th birthday celebration this summer (2021).

God provides...

In 2008, as Meadowbrook Church was planning a building expansion of a sanctuary, fellowship/commons area, and office, members and attendees were offered an opportunity to contribute to the building fund with a monthly pledge. Blanche knew she had lost income because of her husband's death. She said to the Lord, "As long as You provide and I have the money, I will give to the Fund." Blanche always had the money for the pledge.

Blanche's children do much by just being present for her, helping with heavier tasks, and gifting her in unexpected ways. Blanche is able to help others as well. She brings a friend, Jackie, to church as she doesn't drive. For many years of Sunday mornings, Blanche sat with her good friends Sharon and Grace. Sharon is with Jesus now, but Blanche still sits in the right front area with Grace, Jackie, and she welcomes anyone else who would like to sit with them during Sunday worship.