

Darlene Marie (Larson) Matz was born in Cass Lake, Minnesota on April 30, 1949, to Vernon and Alice Larson. She grew up in Bena, MN and attended the local elementary school. She attended Junior and Senior high school in Cass Lake, graduating in 1967. She attended Concordia College in St. Paul, MN and received a BA in Christian Education in 1973. There, she met her future husband, Curt. They married on April 10, 1971, in Comstock Park, Michigan and celebrated their 52nd anniversary on April 10, 2023.

Darlene passed away on April 25, 2023, at Providence Hospital in Anchorage. She is survived by her husband Curtis of Fairbanks, sons David (Jenn) and Dan, both of Fairbanks, and by grandchildren Rebekah, Jonathon, and Benjamin of Fairbanks as well as by several honorary grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, Vernon and Alice.

Darlene and her family lived in Washington, Minnesota, New York, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Alaska. She was a very faithful supporter of her husband's ministry, as a Director of Youth and Education and later as a pastor. She received great joy from leading volunteer Vacation Bible School teams to northern Manitoba for nine summers with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots, assisting in a rural highway ministry in Alaska, being a nanny for two Irish doctors, serving as a Synodically Authorized Minister and sharing a ministry with her husband for eight years in rural congregations in northwestern Minnesota, and especially while serving as a Presbyterian Lay Pastor in the village of Kaktovik, Alaska.

Darlene enjoyed traveling, reading cozy mysteries, growing flowers, and knitting hats to give away. She appreciated contacts with people of other cultures and learning from them. She sought to learn new things throughout her life and thoroughly enjoyed the years she spent living in Alaska. She was very compassionate, proved by her countless deeds over the years to provide aid to those less fortunate than herself.

Gifts to a charity of the giver's choice are preferred over flowers.

Interment will be at a later date in Deer River, MN.

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## Darlene Marie (Larson) Matz



April 30, 1949 – April 25, 2023

Lord of Life Lutheran Church

North Pole, Alaska

Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

Officiating Minister  
Pastor Rich Mauer

Pianist  
Kari Hughes

In this service we seek to honor Darlene and what her life of service to Christ has meant to so many people, rejoice and give thanks for the gifts God gave to the world through her, and commit her into the care and keeping of that God who was with her throughout her life.

*OPENING PRAYERS:*

Leader: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation. God comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

L: When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by Baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **C: Thanks be to God.**

*HYMN: "Be Thou My Vision"* ELW #793  
One of Darlene's favorite hymns that guided her life.

**ALL: O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today our sister Darlene. We thank you for giving her to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage here on earth. In your boundless compassion, console all who now mourn her passing. Give us your aid, so that we may see in death the gate to eternal life. Send us your Spirit that we may continue our own course here on earth in confidence until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before us; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*REMEMBRANCES OF DARLENE*

*SPECIAL MUSIC: "Day By Day"* Wendy Tinkelenberg  
Remembrance of God's presence at all times – even when suffering – something Darlene strongly recognized especially during the last months of her life.

*LORD'S PRAYER (Traditional)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

*HYMN: "Bind Us Together"* WOV #748  
Another of Darlene's favorite hymns which celebrates the unity we share together in Christ.

*COMMENDATION:*

L: Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we now commend your servant Darlene. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive her into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **C: Amen.**

L: Let us go forth in peace trusting that the one who accompanied Darlene throughout her life and beyond accompanies us as well. **C: In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*HYMN: "Thine Is The Glory"* ELW #376  
A celebration of Christ's resurrection and ours.

Thanks to all who came this day to honor Darlene's memory and to all who participated in this service. We especially thank Darlene's colleagues in ministry – Bishop Shelley Wickstrom, Matt Tinkelenberg, Steve Reed, Dustin Lenz, John Holz, and Rich Mauer for their leadership of this service.

A light lunch is available in the fellowship hall following the service.

*SCRIPTURE READINGS:*

The first three of these readings - along with several others - were read to Darlene during her final days.

*ROMANS 6:1-11*

Darlene was baptized when she was 5 years old. She and her mother were baptized on the same day. Darlene regularly spoke of what that meant to her and of the changes that had taken place in her life as a result of her baptism. Her only regret was that she had to be lifted up by an adult to be held over the baptismal font rather than being able to reach it on her own.

*PSALM 121*

Darlene's favorite Psalm. Especially meaningful in her last days as the two rooms she was in at Providence Hospital in Anchorage had great views of the Chugach mountains and to me as I experienced several spectacular views of Denali when I returned to Fairbanks following her death.

*REVELATION 21:1-6*

Expresses the peace and the freedom from pain and suffering that has come to Darlene through the healing presence of God. Also a reminder to us that God continues to be at work in our lives and our world as God carries out God's ongoing work of "making all things new."

*MATTHEW 28:16-20*

The words of Christ that influenced many of the decisions Darlene made during her life and a reminder of Christ's presence with her - and us - in all circumstances.

*HYMN: "Oh For A Thousand Tongues To Sing"*

ELW #886

Darlene attended the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis. One of the highlights of that assembly for her was the adoption of the Full Communion agreement with the United Methodist Church, not knowing what God had in store for the future when we would later be affiliated with New Hope Methodist Presbyterian Church. This hymn was sung at the conclusion of that vote.

*MESSAGE:* ELCA Alaska Synod Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

*SPECIAL MUSIC: "On Eagle's Wings"*

Bekah and Jonathan Matz, Grandchildren

Darlene grew up in the Chippewa National Forest in northern Minnesota. When she was a child, the bald eagle population in the US was threatened because of the presence of DDT.

At that time this forest contained one of the largest remaining populations of breeding pairs of eagles. Darlene's family knew of the location of several nests known only to residents of the area and not shared with outsiders. Her family regularly visited these sites and I was privileged to be included in that when Darlene and I first began developing a serious relationship. The Biblical passages concerning eagles were especially meaningful to her.

L: God has made us God's people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith - the faith in which Darlene lived and died.

*APOSTLES CREED*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*PRAYERS:* Each petition ends "Lord in your mercy," please respond: **hear our prayer.**



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