

Memories of Eve Kristiansen, FPCP member

Eve Kristiansen will be forever in my memory as a dedicated member of the Executive Planning Council, the leadership group formed when our church built the Social Hall addition in 1967-1968. (And she was the only woman in the group.) With a mission to expand our facilities, the Executive Planning Council led us through every aspect of the building program: the many hours of planning, the issuance of the written building plan, the fundraising (Operation Expansion), the supervision of the actual construction, and they kept the membership informed every step of the way until the new building was dedicated. The Council inspired us with their motto: "God has no hands but ours to do His building. God has no money but ours to use for building His Church."

In 2018, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the dedication of the additions. We recalled again the Executive Planning Council's understanding of their mission to do Christ's work in God's world.

And now, in 2020, always remember Eve when you step into the addition to our Presbyterian Church: the Social Hall, the kitchen, the church office, the bathrooms, the Library, the Pastor's Study, and the expanded space for our Community Nursery School. Thank Eve and the entire Executive Planning Council for reaching out to the Church's membership and to the community, with new facilities to be used then and for the future.

Eve brought the same dedication to so many of her projects in the church. She was a wonderful example to all of us.

-- Janet Selleck Rust

What I remember about Eve was her kindness, giving of herself to others, and her delicious food. When I was growing up there was a group of families -- the Kristiansen's, Levele's, Mattern's and the Wirz's, all members of the church -- who got together a couple times a year. In particular, I remember all the New Year's Eve celebrations. There were about 14 of us children if there were no babysitters. We were put to bed wherever we could find space, and the adults would party until the New Year rang in. Every year, the one thing Eve would make was her famous herring salad. Herring was for good luck for the new year. I thought it was delicious! I'm sure there were other things she made for the party, but that was my favorite.

Years later, after I was married, Eve continued to celebrate New Year's, and Bill and I were always welcome to come . . . good food, good company, and lots of fun. She always worked at and baked for our church's Harvest Sale every November. Her brownies and cakes never lasted on our tables for very long. Eve was a blessing and a well loved member of our church and we appreciate all her hard work and dedication!

-- Jean Wirz Duncan

Eve was renowned as an incredible baker. She was the go-to person for cakes for any occasion. She would make a person their favorite cake. They were not only delicious, but also cleverly decorated, and personalized for the person or occasion. She was also a mega baker for the Harvest Sales. Many people probably do not know that she had a very small kitchen, which not only served her well for baking but also for cooking for five children! A funny story about the Harvest Sale: Eve's son Karl loved her brownies—but mostly he loved the corner pieces. The brownies were done in large sheet pans, but Eve would not allow him to take the corner pieces before the sale. He had to come to the sale to purchase his brownies—and other things as well!

I valued Eve's friendship. I admired her strength, independence, loyalty, and giving spirit. She was generous with her time and knowledge (but kept many of her favorite recipes a secret!) She did so much for others. She loved the out-of-doors and had beautiful flower beds. The family used to camp. She had a canoe that she brought to at least one of the church's outdoor services and picnics at the Garrison Fish & Game Club for others to use.

She was an interesting person with a wide range of interests -- a reader, and a huge fan of opera. Her love of opera, particularly Wagner operas, was from childhood. Her father listened on Sundays and instilled that love in her. She was an only child and very close to her extended family. Eve had an incredible memory and joyfully and lovingly related stories from her childhood with great detail. She also kept in touch with childhood friends throughout her life.

Attending concerts, having dinner, just spending time with Eve were always a treat. In her later years, I was privileged to be able to help her small ways—though gaining her trust to accept help was a process. We began having morning coffee when I brought Charlie, her dog, home from morning walks. It was a special time for me, reminding me of what is most important in life. . . I am grateful to have known her and learned from her.

-- Susan Jordan

Eve-Ann Kristiansen memories, cont'd. . .

Eve was my best friend for over 30 years. She was full of fun and energy. Although she was 20 years older than me she was always up for doing something fun. I could call her up and suggest we do something on the spur of the moment and most of the time we were off. We traveled all over the East Coast. Acadia Park in Maine was one of our favorite trips. She was also part of the group that went to Athens, Greece, and Turkey in 1999. Many of the same people went to Italy twice and Eve was there with us enjoying the sights and "another pile of rocks." That was her name for the Greek and Roman ruins. With her daughter Kathy and her wife Ally, we went to Germany. She had always wanted to visit where her family immigrated. We had a wonderful two weeks.

Eve was the elder in charge of Congregational Life at the church. I succeeded her. During that time we would try and plan activities for each month of the year. Some of the activities were progressive dinners, game night with potlucks, once a month luncheons. . . We also visited local attractions like Brotherhood Winery, Boscobel, Vanderbilt Mansion, Roosevelt's House, etc. We also attended classical music performances. Eve is responsible for my love of opera. We went to many performances at the Metropolitan.

Eve was also a major baker for the annual Harvest Sale. She always made a huge amount of brownies and at least a couple of cheese cakes. Her almond poppy seed cakes were usually sold before we opened the doors. She always made me one for my birthday.

Eve always had dogs. She had Wednesday when I first met her. She was a medium sized hound who would sing if you started singing. Eve was a terrific person and cared very much for her family, friends, and church. We would sit for hours talking about our lives. . . I miss her every day, just like I miss my mom.

-- Renee Cruikshank

Renee also sent pictures of some of the cakes that Eve made over the years. Two of her favorites: The first cake, welcoming former pastor Rev. Leslie Mott, and the second, which bade farewell to former pastor Dr. Bob White. Renee says: "I also like the fish ones!"

