

VICKIE LEISHER

Member since 1953

Background

Birth Date:

April 23, 1941

Place of Birth:

Chambersburg, PA

Did You Know...

Vickie performed in the dinner theater in Hagerstown for 22 years and at the Totem Pole Playhouse for 5 years.

Favorite Hymn

Precious Lord, Take My
Hand



Vickie grew up as an only child. Her father was a machinist and her mother took care of the home. She remembers her parents being very supportive, encouraging her to get involved in things like piano, singing, and drama, as well as youth activities at FUMC. These early experiences laid the groundwork for Vickie's lifelong love of music and drama and her faithful participation in our church's music ministry.

Just before her high school graduation, Vickie fell for a young man who had graduated before her. They eloped and were soon pregnant. When her husband joined the military and was sent to Alaska, she finished her senior year through the help of a tutor who visited her home each week. Unfortunately, by the time her husband returned, they found that their relationship had faded. Looking back, Vickie says that youth and inexperience caused her a great deal of pain during that part of her life. She struggled through a divorce and the depression that followed.

But seeing her need, Vickie's parents took her in, helping to care for both her and the baby. And her parents were just two of the people who reached out to help. One of my favorite parts of Vickie's story is the long list of people who have provided love and support during the difficult seasons of her life. During those early years of motherhood, she remembers Linda Leidig sending her a card, saying she would just have to write to her if Vickie continued to refuse to answer the phone or allow anyone to come over to the house. Vickie also tells of the day her family doctor, Dr. Shapiro, showed up to tell her it was time to leave her room. The thought that the doctor was mad at her, shocked her enough to do just that—she not only left the shelter of her room that day but of her house as well.

Later, Vickie got another chance at love with Elden “Whitey” Leisher. Vickie and Whitey had known each other for most of their lives, having lived in the same neighborhood and attended school together. After high school, Whitey attended college and served in the navy before returning to Chambersburg to work at the Letterkenny Army Depot. Here, he and Vickie reconnected. They began eating lunch together, bonding over their mutual love of sports. They were soon married and bought a house near the Municipal Park, where they enjoyed living for most of their 46 years of marriage.

Whitey’s job building Patriot Missiles required him to frequently travel to Europe. Vickie remembers his absence being difficult when their boys were young, especially when he missed major events like Thanksgiving or the day their son, Allen, joined the church. But when her boys got older, Vickie began to use her extra time to serve others, helping with the Thursday Night meal and taxiing people who could no longer drive to their appointments during the day. She remembers her trips with Ana Bittinger most fondly, recalling that she had always been a little bit intimidated by Ms. Bittinger, the teacher, in school. But as they spent more time together, she found that she really enjoyed the Ana she got to know as a person.

Vickie also cared for her parents as they aged. Her dad had to go into a nursing home after his diabetes led to blindness and the amputation of one of his legs. The six years he lived there until his death completely wiped out her parents’ savings, leaving Vickie’s mother almost nothing to live on. In order to pay for his final year of life, her mother secretly sold off her insurance policies and all but shut off her heat, sleeping on the couch on the main floor because the bedrooms upstairs were too cold. Not wanting to ask for help, Vickie’s mom endured it all in silence. It wasn’t until after her father’s death that Vickie found out about the situation; she and Whitey immediately began to build an addition onto their home so that her mother could live out the remainder of her days in their care.

Vickie’s mother’s story is a powerful illustration of how much we need each other, how important it is for us to reach toward others when we need their help and healing. Vickie experienced this herself when Whitey died unexpectedly on December 4, 2013. She says at first she didn’t want to attend church because she felt overwhelmed sitting alone and was afraid to talk about what had happened. But people from the church reached out to her, helping her through a difficult season.

And above all, Vickie knows that God has always cared for her. She recalls a specific answer to her prayers after Whitey’s death. Being an only child, she had no extended family to fall back on for support. One area where she felt a great need for help was with her finances. Whitey had always taken care of them, and she felt desperately unprepared to do so on her own. Vickie remembers praying, “God, I need help. I have no other help.” It is beautiful how He answered.

Vickie was working with ROTC at Shippensburg University. One of the professors offered to look over her finances and help her with taxes for a couple of years, until she could do it herself. And a couple of years later, Larry Guise led a course called Financial Sense at FUMC. Here, Vickie said she gained an understanding of budgeting as well as confidence in her ability to manage her own money.

Vickie says “One of the best things the church can do is help people to grow.” She has experienced this growth in many different ways over the years, from first praying aloud in confirmation, to learning scripture in Disciple Bible class, to embracing authentic community in share groups. Vickie feels like she has been greatly blessed by her membership at FUMC.

And she passes her blessings on to others, especially the younger generations of her family.