
PEARL FOREMAN

Member since 1986

Background

Birth Date:

1926

Place of Birth:

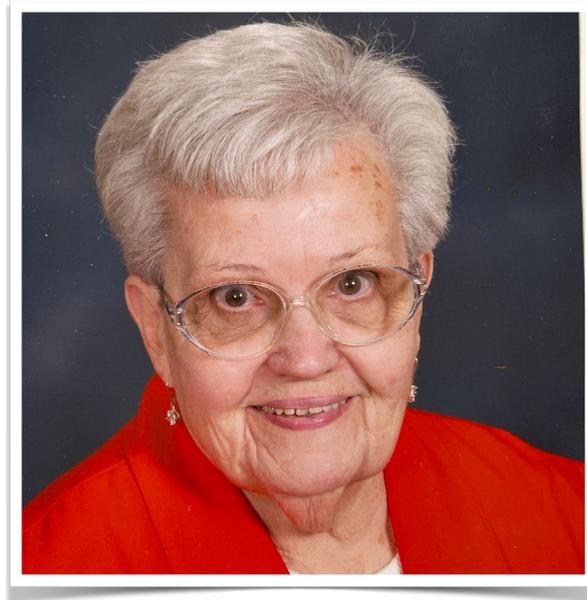
Bellwood, PA

Did You Know...

As a teenager at First United Brethren, Pearl signed an abstinence pledge, promising never to drink alcoholic beverages. It is a promise that she has kept all her life.

Favorite Hymn

Amazing Grace



Pearl says that her family has been her greatest blessing. She and Garnet had three children, Brenda, Linda, and Garnet Jr. Her children all live nearby and make sure that at least one of them visits every day. On the afternoon of our interview, Pearl had visits from both a son and a daughter, and received mail from a great-granddaughter. Raising her family is the work that Pearl is most proud of, and the obvious closeness between them is testament to the great investment of love and care that she has devoted to them over the years.

Pearl moved to Chambersburg at the age of three, when her dad transferred to a job fixing engines at the roundhouse for the Pennsylvania Railroad (Now Jim's Country Market). She remembers her dad working extremely hard at his job and saying, "If I ever make a dollar an hour, I'll have it made." But Pearl says that her family was one of the lucky ones, because her dad was at least able to keep his job during the Great Depression. She remembers the compassion that her dad showed to the other men who couldn't find work. Pearl says he was a good man and a big influence on her life.

Growing up as an only child, Pearl spent a lot of time reading. She remembers her first trip to the public library, back when it was located on the corner of 2nd and Queen Street. Her dad walked her over and helped her fill out the application, and then after that, she was allowed to go by herself. She says that she would often arrive before the library was even open. Then she would sit on the front steps, anxiously waiting to get in to borrow her next Nancy Drew book.

Pearl remembers her experiences being a teenager during WWII. One night she was watching a movie at the Capitol Theater with friends when the air raid siren went off. She remembers that she and all of her friends jumped up and took off running for their homes. Later, wanting to do something to help with the war effort, Pearl decided to enter the workforce early. By taking classes during the summer prior to her senior year, she was able to complete all of her graduation requirements by January. She then began working at the Letterkenny Army Depot, which she says they used to refer to as the Letterkenny Dump.

Pearl and Garnet were married in 1948, shortly after the end of the war. Pearl resigned from her job two years later, when their first child was on the way. And although she did return to Letterkenny later on, Pearl says, "I never got very far in my government job, because my family was always my first priority. If my family needed me I was going to be home for them." One of the ways Pearl loved her family was through food. I heard all about her wonderful cooking from her daughter, Brenda. Some favorites were stuffed meatloaf and roast turkey dinners, and, of course, her world-famous chocolate cake with peanut-butter icing

Pearl says that her faith journey has been a gradual process. She remembers attending FUMC by about the age of six, back when the church was still First United Brethren. And she also remembers her Aunt Myrtle as being very influential on her faith when she was growing up. Each summer, Pearl spent a couple of weeks with Aunt Myrtle in Bellwood, PA. She says that the two of them would attend every church event that occurred during her visits. One year, Pearl decided to be baptized there.

After Pearl and Garnet were married, the family moved to a new home in Fayetteville. While living there, Pearl attended the nearby Otterbein United Brethren, where she taught the preschool Sunday School class. But she returned to what was now called First United Methodist Church when she and Garnet moved back to Chambersburg in 1986. She joined the Alda Bower class and got involved in various ministries within the church. She helped to organize the monthly newsletter, teach youth Sunday School, serve at funerals, and cook meals for various events. And, of course, she made lots and lots of cakes.

Pearl says that prayer has always been an important part of her life and that she has relied on her faith to get through the rough times. Although Pearl has had to deal with hearing loss and various health issues, her daughter calls her a "very optimistic, glass-half-full kind of person" who never complains. Pearl briefly mentions having been extremely ill several years ago, with a health issue that required an extended stay at Hershey Medical Center, followed by months of rehabilitation at Menno Haven. But she doesn't say much about the struggle. She focuses instead on the Christmas tree that her granddaughter put up in her room at Menno Haven, and the fact that they kept that tree up not only through December but clear through until the day in March when she was finally able to move back home. Since that time, Pearl has been unable to eat solid food. I find it hard to even imagine the magnitude of her loss. Yet, Pearl laughs as she tells me, "I can still dream about food!"

Pearl's advice to younger generations is to get back to the church. Because she believes the world will be a lot better when people do. There they can hear the life-changing message of amazing grace:

*"Through many dangers, toils, and snares
We have already come
Twas Grace that brought us safe thus far
And Grace will lead us home."*