

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Recently, I was surprised to learn of a unknown connection that I have with St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilton. This October, my high school graduating class from Waukesha North High School is scheduled to have a joint reunion with our former classmates from Waukesha South High School. Thinking of the upcoming reunion reminded me of the last one I attended. Much of my time was spent with longtime friends whom I had known from elementary school through high school, and a few in college, too.

My friend, Sue (or Susie, as we called her when we were growing up), died from cancer shortly after the last reunion I attended. I couldn't remember the date of her death, so I looked up her obituary online. That is when I was surprised. Sue had died in 2014, and on the list of suggested places to donate monies for memorial gifts, was St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilton, Wisconsin!

My friend's full name was Susan Ristow Zewiske. We were in classes and Girl Scouts, together. She lived two blocks from my house in Waukesha, so we would spend time together in the summers. We even went to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse after high school. But I don't know what her connection was with St. Paul's Church.

Sue was a kind, thoughtful, beautiful person. She was a Christian, and her love for God was evident in her life. She was a student leader and a talented athlete. At UW-La Crosse, she majored in health and was on the track team. She worked in health administration in the Milwaukee area after completing her master's degree.

Seeing St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilton in her obituary, made me think of how many people's lives we touch during our lifetimes. It is said that we are only one or two persons removed from knowing someone in common with any given person. I am thinking Sue's connection with St. Paul's was through a relative, perhaps on her mother, Julaine (nee Summerfield) Ristow's, side of the family. I do not know. Perhaps you know.

As we recall the many people who touch our lives each and every day, may we be mindful of the many Christian persons who have played a role in shaping who we are. Yes, for many of us, our parents and other family members led the way. But there are many persons--Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School assistants, choir directors, Bible camp counselors, fellow parishoners who sat in the pew near us and encouraged us in our Christian walk, other Christians whom we know or knew in school, at work, in organizations, etc... For being a Christian believer is not something we "put on" to wear on Sunday mornings. We are Christian believers every day. May God strengthen us for our journey through life, as we demonstrate our love for God and one another.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy