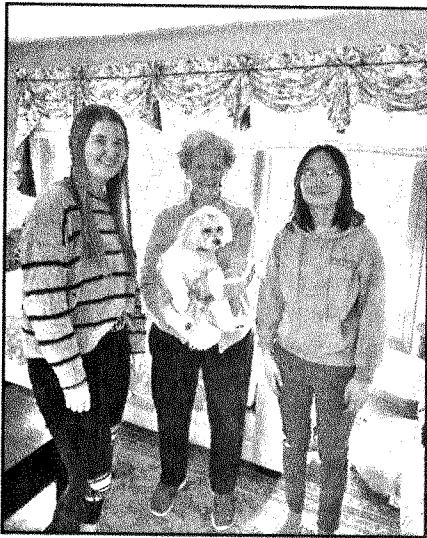


TRUST THAT THE LORD WILL LEAD YOU

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[Editors note: Students at Unity Christian High School recently had the opportunity to interview people in the community to hear and record their stories. Teacher Janie Van Dyke selected a few for publication, which will be released over the next few weeks.]

Under the floral curtains, the west-facing windows allow light to shine through

in the afternoon. Wooden furniture accompanies several white couches; potted green plants add brightness and liveliness to the sunlit living room. A silver-haired lady sits on a cushioned couch with her back facing the window. She is wearing a comfortable tracksuit and petting her adorable dog Molly. When she lifts up her head, her eyes meet the beam on the ceiling that connects to another room—a framed wooden plank with beveled edges hangs there. On the plank, the capitalized word “BELIEVE” is bolded in big font, with the Bible verse Hebrews 11:1 King James Version underneath the word. The verse reads: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The elderly lady is Tress Anema Jacobsma, and she shares the house with her husband, Harlyn Jacobsma. Although Tress now lives in a cozy home, she didn’t grow up in a similar environment, but she kept Hebrews 11:1 in mind. She trusted the Lord through hardships, and God prepared a road for her.

Tress was born on May 7, 1944, in Hawarden. Growing up in the fifties, Tress’s family didn’t have much money, but she and her siblings didn’t necessarily realize that they were poor. Like many other people at the time, Tress’s parents had gone through the Great Depression, so they were cautious about spending money and didn’t spare a penny on things they didn’t need. The family always grew a garden and canned vegetables for winters. They were used to living like that and didn’t complain about the lack of material things. Other kids Tress hung out with didn’t have more than her family. The concept of “rich people” wasn’t familiar to them then because most people were in the same boat. The simple life she had as a child shaped her to work hard and be responsible.

Tress started high school, and little did she know that she would be meeting her future husband. In the first semester, Tress and Harlyn were in the same Bible class, and Harlyn sat behind Tress in the classroom. Every day before lunch, the teacher would ask the students to share their favorite Bible verses. One day, Tress stood up and said that her favorite verse was Hebrews 11:1. She memorized all of Hebrews 11 from King James Version to graduate from Sanborn Christian School—her grade school. The passage was still fresh in her memory, so that verse came out of her mouth. There and then, Harlyn Jacobsma was impressed

their hardworking spirits. Tress was very helpful in her family, especially when her mom was in the hospital in Sioux City for an entire summer. At the time, she was 16, and her older siblings were out of the house, so she took care of the six younger brothers and a sister. It was a very busy summer for Tress. One of her sisters was one year old, and one brother was two years old, which was challenging to handle. She cooked meals for the family and did all the laundry. She also kept her brothers’ shirts ironed and good-looking. After Mrs. Anema got back from the hospital, Mr. Anema took Tress to a store to buy a new dress and shoes as a reward for all her hard work. Tress thought it was a nice thing that her dad did. The family appreciated Tress’s efforts and witnessed how a young girl took up the family responsibilities.

Another important event happened that same summer. Towards the end of August, the summer heat hadn’t faded away yet. A friend set up Tress and Harlyn’s first date one night. The friend called Tress and Harlyn respectively to go out together. They drove around, hung out, and went to drive-ups. After that night, Harlyn started to call Tress to hang out more often.

Unlike modern conceptions, Christian families in Tress’s time thought going to the movies was not appropriate; there were also other taboos like playing cards and dancing. Tress was a responsible girl and didn’t usually break the rules except for one afternoon. She was babysitting her younger siblings in the house when Harlyn came and suggested sneaking out. Tress turned to her brother, who was only two years younger than she was, and asked him to take care of the rest of the siblings for a while. Tress and Harlyn went to the movie theater. They walked into the screening room, and in the movie scene, a house was on fire. Without speaking a word, both of them stood up and walked out. Tress doesn’t remember what was going through her mind when this happened, but it’s not too difficult to imagine—the house on fire on the screen seemed like a warning sign that they shouldn’t have sneaked out of the house or gone to the movie. This experience was one of the rare times when Tress was having a rebellious moment.

After two years of dating, Tress and Harlyn got engaged in July of 1963. Proposals back then weren’t as elaborate as the current day ones, but the heart is all that matters. Harlyn simply proposed to Tress in his car. Six months later, they got married on January 3, 1964. They are now reaching almost 60 years of marriage, and their relationship has been stable and happy.

Even though Tress Jacobsma had hardships in life, she believed in the Lord, and the Lord provided for her. Throughout the past decades, Harlyn remarked many times that Tress impressed him with her favorite Bible verse way back in freshman year, which built the foundation for their love story. Tress’s upbringing shaped her to be a resilient and responsible person. As a result, she was able to keep the house when her mom was in the hospital. And that led Harlyn’s mom to have a good impression of her. God had planned out everything, regardless of what humans have seen.

One day in recent years, Harlyn came home from the Tress’s house. He was surprised to find a framed wooden plank hanging on the wall. On the plank, the capitalized word “BELIEVE” was bolded in big font, with the Bible verse Hebrews 11:1 King James Version underneath the word. The verse reads: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Harlyn was impressed by Tress’s faith and the way she lived her life. He realized that Tress’s faith was the foundation of their relationship and the reason they were able to overcome so many hardships together.

