

11. RETIREMENT

After I retired in 1977 I played golf at least once a week in season with a group of other retirees at the Legion course and broadened my sphere of acquaintances. On many weekends I substituted for vacationing pastors conducting services. In the fall of this year I had my second hip replacement at Marshfield Clinic with the hope that this would take care of my problem.

On our 40th wedding anniversary in 1977 Gloria presented us with an IOU for a trip to Hawaii the following spring. So in February of 1978 she had two of her friends join us and Edna's brother and sister-in-law for a 10-day trip. This again was a most enjoyable experience. We went to the islands of Oahu, Hawaii and Maui. At that time I was quite dependent on a cane already. One day the cane broke as I got off a bus near our motel. So my brother-in-law made a bus trip to the big shopping center to get me a new cane, which still serves well when I need it. Even with a cane I managed to get in a round of golf on a course on Maui and Hawaii. On our return trip we had a day's stopover at Phoenix and made a tour of the city while Gloria and her friends played golf. In this instance again, we have a fine series of slides to help us relive this travelogue.

In the fall of 1978 I took a course in tax preparation with H & R Block, something I could do despite my limited mobility. So I had a part-time job with that firm for the 1979 tax season. Even though Edna continued at her job with Prange's, we did take time off for a trip of a couple weeks into Florida. Again the next season I took the refresher course with H& R Block and held a part-time job with them through the 1980 tax season. But again we took time out to spend a couple weeks in Florida. This time Gloria and her friend JoAnn accompanied us as they had done the previous winter. While in Florida we did visit neighbors of ours and ended up making a reservation for a month the following winter.

During my first year of retirement Gloria had us look for a place up north that she could buy as a summer retreat. After looking at several possibilities, we found one that was quite reasonable and was just being completed by a young couple from Neenah. It was two-storied and shaped like a barn with a hip roof. The living area was on the lower level with a kitchen in one corner and a bath back of it. The upstairs was completely open for sleeping space. So we put four single beds up there and Gloria bought a davenport-bed for the living area, enabling us to comfortably sleep six people. We spent as much time as we could in this cozy cottage each summer and even in early fall. The little 17-acre lake, 65 steps down from the cottage, had a dock from which we could catch a nice mess of perch or other pan fish. After a year or so Gloria had the deck enlarged and added a bench for more comfortable fishing. She herself went out in the boat which came with the cottage to try fishing in other parts of the lake.

The cottage had a wood burning heater in the corner opposite the kitchen but it also had electric baseboard heating that was thermostatically controlled. Being well insulated, it could have been used the year round. With the cottage she bought the empty lot to the south. Each spring we had plenty leaves to clean up to have a fairly neat yard around. Besides, there were usually a few fallen trees in the two lots that could be used for firewood after being cut up. Feeling a need for storage space, about the second summer Gloria bought two ready cut sheds 8 X 8 to make an 8 X 16 building in case a boat was to be stored. Roger helped us put that together on one of his visits. After it was completed, we could also store some of our good firewood to keep it dry. In late October we usually drained the water for about 6 months and shut everything off, since we wouldn't be using it anyway.

For several seasons we caught quite a few perch out of the small lake. On one longer weekend Gloria invited members of her ball team to

spend a day or two there, either in her cottage or in tents. When some of them had caught a number of fish, I taught them how to filet them. This paid off when Gloria and two of her friends spent most of the Labor Day weekend there. When they returned on Monday, I asked whether they had caught any fish. One of them replied, "We sure did. We caught 125." Then after hesitating a moment she added, "And they're all fileted." We kept them frozen until Thursday when they and other of their family members came over for a tasty fish fry.

About ten miles from this cottage a new golf course, called Timber Ridge, was developed. At first just 9 holes were completed. That's where we went to play a number of times. When the second nine was completed a year or so later, Gloria and Edna bought a lot in the development to be assured of a club membership later on. From that time on we have played that 18 hole course regularly, especially joining the Sunset League there.

About a year or so after my second hip replacement, I began to have less and less mobility. I couldn't stoop to tie my shoes and gradually lost the ability for other movements. In fact, already early in 1978 I was quite dependent on a cane. When I checked back with the Marshfield surgeon, the x-rays showed no problem. For reasonable comfort the doubling of a pain reliever was prescribed, which I never did do but endured the pain and discomfort.

As time went on conditions kept on deteriorating and I was getting more and more out of shape. Then a lady whom I had baptized at Green Bay years earlier took a special interest in my problem. She was a physical therapist and also served as organist at the Minoqua church. She encouraged me to have my problem analyzed by an orthopedic surgeon in Woodruff whom she regarded highly. I did not act on her suggestion immediately. Several months later she mentioned it again and urged me to register for an arthritis clinic that this surgeon was conducting with a friend of his from Milwaukee, who served as orthopedic surgeon for the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team. This I did. When I related my experience

to them, they first wanted x-rays. These were taken at the Woodruff Hospital next door. When I returned with them, they in less than a minute both said, "We see your problem. Both prostheses have loosened and are sinking into your thigh bone. The only solution is to have the surgery redone." So the Woodruff surgeon (Anast) advised going back to the Marshfield surgeon. But we also arranged for a private consultation with him. Both agreed on the need for a second replacement. So we obtained a third opinion from a surgeon at Wausau. He agreed as well. But where should we go? We counseled with the boys and decided to go to the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minn. Since the Marshfield surgeon had offered to make an appointment for us there, if that was our decision, we phoned him and requested that he make an appointment with a surgeon there who had longer experience with hip replacements. Via this process the earliest appointment available was for Dec. 8, 1980.

So we drove to Rochester the night before. This surgeon too agreed on the need for a second replacement and thoroughly explained the hazards involved. When we asked that the first surgery be scheduled, he had an opening the following Monday, Dec. 15. So we spent most of the week there going through other required examinations preparatory to surgery. By the end of Thursday everything had been cleared for the surgery on Monday. So Edna and I returned home for the weekend and Gloria drove us back on Sunday to check in at the hospital later that day to stay with Edna through the surgery. The next day the surgery took longer than anticipated, because the socket had to be replaced as well as the prosthesis with the steel ball. But all went well. After 12 days of healing and therapy I could go home for a couple of weeks before the replacement of the other hip was scheduled on January 8.

For the trip back to Wausau, Roger's had come north for the weekend after Christmas. So he and Edna made the trip to Rochester in good shape. But an ice storm moved in behind them from the northeast. As a result for more than half of the return trip travel was quite treacherous, especially east of Tomah until Hy. 51. For quite a distance one had to keep the

right wheels off the pavement to prevent sliding around. On Hy. 51 the road had been sanded or salted to break the slippery track. We were happy to get home for more than one reason.

For the surgery on January 8 Gloria again took time off to stay through the surgery. This time all went well with only the replacement of the prosthesis with the ball cemented into the thigh bone. This time the prosthesis was twice the length of the first replacement. After a day or so Edna returned home with Gloria to await word of my release again about 12 days later. This time the homebound trip went more smoothly. The surgeon had given me the parts of the earlier surgery that were replaced. Later I framed them and can easily display them to interested people.

For at least six weeks I was to use crutches to get around in the house. After this period I was to return to Mayo's for a post-operative exam. There I was released to head for Florida for the month of March, where we had a reservation at Gulf Terrace in Destin. For the trip down, our friends, the Corl's, accompanied us and did most of the driving. They shared our two bedroom condo for 10 days and returned home via bus. While there I could take daily walks with my cane and could gradually return to normal walking. For the final 10 days, Gloria and her friend Joann came down to share our rented quarters and then did most of the driving on the way home. Walking steadily returned to normal so that I could hang up my cane on May 5. There it has stayed for the entire 12 years up to the present when I am writing this. The past year or two the lower thigh muscles seem to be affected by arthritis. At least the stiffness and soreness fluctuates with the changes in atmospheric pressure. After a slow start each day it usually loosens up. Besides, in correspondence with a surgeon at Mayo's, he gave me an exercise that is aimed at strengthening the muscles in that area and this has seemed to keep them from weakening further.

After my hip replacements in early 1981 the surgeon stated, "You can play all the golf you want, but use a cart. Make the replacements last as long as you can." As a result, any golf we have played has been with a motorized cart.

Then for our golden wedding Gloria graciously surprised us with her gift of an electric cart. This we have enjoyed greatly each season since 1987.

After enjoying Gloria's cottage on Miller Lake for 8 years we were asked to check on what kind of place might be available on the Timber Ridge golf course. After complying with this request during the week, Gloria came north on Saturday to see what was available. In the process at looking at possible locations, the realtor showed her the home that had served as a sales office, which was still for sale. In the course of their conversation the prospect became especially attractive since the realtor felt the seller would take her cottage as a down payment at a figure she felt she could get for it. Besides, the 3-bedroom home was being sold completely furnished. So the offer was made and two days later was accepted by the former owners now living in Arkansas. Therefore, late in May of 1985 we could move in next to Hole No. 4 of the golf course. This convenient location to recreation in a pleasant surrounding we've enjoyed since then for about 6 months each year.

Even before my retirement we began to spend 1 - 3 weeks each winter in sunny Florida. This continued after retirement with Gloria sharing some of the trips on her vacation time. One winter we had tried the Biloxi, Miss. area, but ran into a rainy spell that prompted us to cut it short and then stopping in central Miss. to play a round of golf on our way home.

In the winter of 1980 we visited friends in Florida and did some exploring for the future on our way back to the north. The result was the rental of a condo in Gulf Terrace for March of 1981. This was in the village of Destin along the gulf in the Panhandle as indicated earlier, but with no direct access to the gulf. It was there that we spent the time recuperating from my hip surgeries.

While there we arranged for another condo rental for the 1982 season. This was for two months in a four-building development about 9 miles east of Destin, called Beach House. This was right on the gulf with its white sand beach.

While here we joined the Snowbird group and participated in their weekly meetings and some other activities, which included several golf events. It was also while here that Edna got started at painting. This began with simple water color and later led to oil painting and other types. Ever since, she has enjoyed this kind of creative activity and has completed some fine paintings.

For the 1983 season we again arranged for a unit in Beach House but this time for 3 months. For this season we got one of the one-bedroom units as compared with the two-bedrooms unit of the previous years. Again, we participated in the Snowbird program of activity, playing some golf, and Edna expanded her painting ability.

For the 1984 winter season we were the first to rent a 2-bedroom unit for 3 months in a new building about 1/4 mile east of Beach House called Mainsail. This was a very pleasant location on the gulf. Since this development was only partially completed we could watch the construction procedure of the next portion. While here we made a trip to central Florida to visit friends. On the way back we stopped at a couple possible locations for the next season. We were especially intrigued by a retirement village at Spring Hill along the west side of central Florida, called Timber Pines.

Although most of the homes in Timber Pines were privately owned and owner occupied, there were a few that were owned by people not yet retired that could be rented. For 1985 we were able to rent one of those homes for a 3-month stay. Here golfing privileges were included in the rental and the club house offered other opportunities for activity. There was a woodworking room, where I could use the tools for projects, and a craft room where Edna could expand her painting skills with lessons from an experienced art teacher from Maine. Even shopping was convenient for basics, since there was a shopping center off the entrance lane, making travel on the busy four-lane highway 19 unnecessary. On our way back north we stopped over at Roger's in Illinois and made a trip by air to Amherst, Colo. for their congregation's 75th anniversary. It was a

delight getting back to that community and visiting with old acquaintances and friends.

While at Timber Pines that season, we became acquainted with a Lutheran couple from Michigan who were renting their home to friends. Since their friends were not planning to be back for the 1986 season we were able to rent their home for the season at a little more reasonable rate. They had originally come from Germany and still had a pronounced German accent, but they were a delight to deal with. Their home was beautifully furnished and bordered on a man-made lake where fish were abundant. One day even an otter appeared on the shore and drew a lot of attention. That season Edna continued her lessons in painting while I went to a class in ceramics once a week, where I made a variety of gift items, including three smaller-sized nativity sets.

For the winter of 1987 we had made no advance arrangements and were going to try a place in central Texas, which a friend had invited us to use. However, about the time we were to leave, Edna developed a health problem and ended up having surgery, a hysterectomy. Thus our winter was spent in Wausau, while she recuperated and we completed our plans for celebrating our golden wedding the latter part of May.

To celebrate our golden anniversary on Memorial Day Sunday, when all of the family could gather to be with us, we first gathered at a photographer's studio for a family portrait. Then we attended the 10:30 service at Trinity church. Following this, we shared a dinner at the American Legion hall with about 30 people. By 2:00 p.m. we again gathered at the church for a thanksgiving service. This was followed by a reception in the church parlors until 5 p.m. From there we moved to our home, where close relatives and friends were invited for a lunch and fellowship to conclude the day.

For the winter season of 1988 we again were able to rent a home at Timber Pines in Florida. This time we chose to stay there from December through February. Our activities continued along similar lines as on previous stays in this lovely and expanding retirement

development. For March our plan was to travel west to Texas, visiting friends along the way and spending several weeks at the vacation development we had hoped to try a year earlier. However, I developed a sinus infection that left me feeling miserable. So after two days in Texas, we decided to head for home.

On our way home from Texas we stopped at Hot Springs Village, Arkansas and got acquainted with that development. For the month of January of 1989 we rented a home there and could have stayed longer. But we learned that many of the year-round residents travel or go farther south during January and February. We did not enjoy our stay there in January and decided to head back to Wausau.

In the winter of 1990 we stayed in Wausau and were blessed with a mild winter. We did complete several quilts that had been waiting for this for quite a few years.

For 1991 we had a chance to rent a place in Timber Pines again, but our offer to rent for 3 months was turned down in favor of someone else who would stay for 4 months or longer. As a result, we again wintered at home in Wausau and kept ourselves busy as best we could. Edna's activity was limited because of a bout with eczema on her hands for about 4 months.

For 1992 we again spent the winter in Wausau and kept occupied with painting and woodworking and other activities. We can't do any interior painting or similar maintenance because the odors create a problem for Edna's sensitive nose and allergies.

In general, in retirement I have managed to keep busy with house maintenance and yard work in the summer season at both our Wausau home and the home near Minocqua. At least this was the case until I reached 80 and movement became more limited again. So for the past two summers we hired a boy to mow the lawn in Wausau as needed. During the colder season I pursued my hobby of working with wood, either marquetry (wood inlaying) or craft work. I must have completed over 100 creches (nativity barns) of various designs and made of various materials. Most of these were sold through the

"Talent Shop", an outlet for products of senior citizens. I also completed up to two dozen plant stands out of oak that I had once received as a gift.

In between I find time for reading biographies and condensed books, as well as the latest periodicals and magazines. In 1990 I completed a month's devotions for "Portals of Prayer" that appeared in the May 1991 issue. TV is not especially attractive except for news casts and some sporting events. I still accept assignments to substitute for pastors on vacation or are absent for other reasons. They may be only a few in number each season, but I keep trying as long as I feel able to serve acceptably.

Several years ago Edna began making greetings cards with her water painting or pen and ink techniques. For one Christmas she made over 50 of them. In the fall of 1992 she taught a class in this subject at the Senior Center for four weeks and also one for two weeks at the YWCA. Now in early 1993, as this bit of history is being finalized, she taught another class at the YWCA for four weeks and has a class scheduled in March at the Senior Center for four weeks again. In addition late in 1992 she completed an order for about 80 cards of varying designs that Gloria gathered from associates at work, that were selected from her notebook of samples. Early in 1993 Gloria again brought home another order for 86 cards that she completed in February. This type of activity helps the winters seem to pass by more rapidly.

Thus, we are both thankful that the Lord enables us to continue these activities and to sustain these interests despite the smaller health problems that crop up as time goes on. In general, the Lord has been good to us and graciously cared for us through our four score and more years. To Him be all praise and glory!