

## The garden behind Barracks 13, Room 4



When Elfriede began attending Advent, she was a busy young mom raising two boys with her loving husband. The family attended regularly and she and her husband volunteered their time and talents. Elfriede has volunteered in many ways at Advent, from greeting and ushering to counting money and sewing baptismal napkins, but she seems most at home in the gardens. Elfriede was involved in the first giving garden at Advent that grew flowers to share with the residents at Steeple Point.

When Elfriede lost the love of her life, Carl, to whom she was married for 54 years, she was heartbroken. Although she had support from her two grown sons and their families, she was still living all alone in the home she and Carl had shared since 1964.

“Advent is my lifesaver since Carl passed,” Elfriede shared. She has dozens of friends at Advent that she considers family. They were there to listen to her and encourage her as she grieved her Carl. Pastor Peter, who had met with her and Carl while he was ill, was a wonderful listener and great comforter. “Pastor Peter has a way that he listens...he looks right into your soul.”

Now you will often find Elfriede outside in Advent’s Columbarium tending the plants, with the care of a master gardener, around the resting place of Carl and others. When she is done tending to the Columbarium flowers, she often walks over to the current giving gardens that are tended by community refugee families. Advent’s giving gardens give refugees an opportunity to grow their own food for their families and to sell at markets. Elfriede said she was so impressed by the gardeners, how they made use of their space and handmade tools. “I love those people! They are so nice, so giving and they work so hard.” Everything about them was so familiar to Elfriede since she spent much of her childhood in a refugee camp in Lubeck Germany where her family grew much of their food in a small garden behind their one-room home in Barracks 13, Room 4. In this tiny home Elfriede’s mom taught her that God was always with them walking beside them.

We are a congregation that prides itself on our welcoming spirit and generosity. We care for our members and visitors with love and compassion through their joys and their sorrows. Advent not only welcomes new families to church but also gives our refugee neighbors a place to grow and feel like home. Your generosity to Advent makes it possible for us to provide a space and the tools for our garden to grow. Thank you for your generosity.

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