



...Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles...

— Isaiah 40:31 (NRSV)

A FAITHLETTER FOR UNITED METHODISTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THEM
Summer 2012 — Final Edition

Jo D'Archangelis
July 1, 1940 – August 6, 2012

It is with deep regret that we must inform you that after 22 years this will be the final edition of WINGS. After several months of illness and fighting a valiant battle, our Founder and Editor has gone home to be with the Lord.

WINGS has a mailing list of 850, both US mail and E-WINGS, scattered from Puerto Rico, Eastern US, Western US, Hawaii and Guam. We know that she has touched many lives throughout the years and her ministry will certainly be missed.

WINGS was founded and produced by Jo in 1990 as a "Newsletter for, by, and about Physically-Challenged United Methodists in the California-Pacific Annual Conference." The last volume was published in the Spring of 2012. In one of the volumes, Jo coined the acronym "PHUMPS," Physically Handicapped United Methodist Persons. Four editions were mailed yearly, and included an editorial note from Jo entitled "From Where I Sit." Following is the one from the Spring of 1991 issue which speaks to two things necessary to get through life and may be helpful as we try to cope with her death:

"There are two things necessary to getting through life (three things if you count Sara Lee chocolate fudge brownies): faith in God and a sense of humor. I'm not sure how faith works. But it seems to me that a sense of humor works in two different ways: first, it kind of soothes and smooths the edges during rough times and, second, it jars me out of those "Sloughs of Despond" I tend to collapse into from time to time. That something could be both soothing and jarring is contradictory I know, but that's the essence of a lot of humor—putting things together that really don't fit logically, emotionally or what-have-you.

In the movie "Steel Magnolias" a group of women friends support and sustain each other through the ups and downs of life with good-natured banter and, in some cases, sharply-barbed zingers. At the funeral of a young wife and mother who has died after being in a coma, her mother expresses grief, rage and bewilderment at what has happened. At the height of her emotional outburst one of her friends suggests that she punch "Wheeze" (another friend and veritable crab apple of a woman) if it would help to make her feel better. The preposterousness of the suggestion breaks the tension and the mother can't help smiling in spite of her tears.

Some people are uncomfortable with humor in this kind of situation and can't see what's funny about death, illness, bigotry, sexism, or—disability. Strangely enough, it's usually the people who have to deal with death, illness, bigotry, sexism, or disability on a daily basis who appreciate such humor, whereas others find it shocking or offensive. And if the purveyors of the jokes are themselves members of an "alienated" community, we in the same community often appreciate it even more because we know where they are "coming from."

When the humor is aimed at society's distorted perceptions of the disabled, for example, I usually laugh and nod my head in agreement with the ridiculousness of it all: "Yeah, that's the way it is." When the humor is aimed at the distorted perceptions we the disabled have of ourselves, it jostles me loose from my self-pity and pretensions. Either way, it helps me survive with my sanity more or less intact (some people who know me may be doubtful about this). But, of course, none of this would be possible without a sense of humor in the first place . . ."

A memorial service for Jo has been scheduled for Saturday, September 15, 2012, at 2:00 PM in the Fallbrook United Methodist Church located at 1844 Winterhaven Road, Fallbrook, California, with a reception to follow. Jo was a member and active participant in the Fallbrook United Methodist Church for many years. If anyone is interested in sharing a few thoughts or remembrances at the service, please let her sister, Jill, know at her email address below.

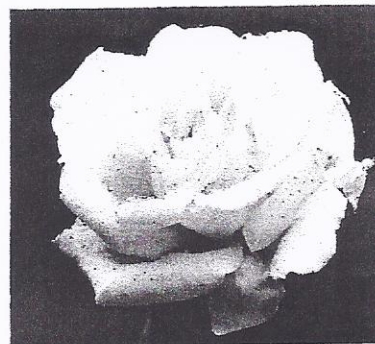
Jo is survived by her sister Jill and family and any condolences would be welcome either by US mail or email.



Jo D'Archangelis

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The Rose Beyond the Wall

Near a shady wall a rose once grew,
Budded and blossomed in God's free light,
Watered and fed by the morning dew,
Shedding its sweetness day and night.

As it grew and blossomed fair and tall,
Slowly rising to loftier height,
It came to a crevice in the wall
Through which there shone a beam of light.

Onward it crept with added strength
With never a thought of fear or pride,
It followed the light through the crevice's length
And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view
Were found the same as they were before,
And it lost itself in beauties new
Breathing its fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve
And make our courage faint and fall?
Nay! Let us faith and hope receive--
The rose still grows beyond the wall,

Scattering fragrance far and wide
Just as it did in days of yore,
Just as it did on the other side,
Just as it will forevermore.