

THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE OF

Leslie I. Fahlsing
October 30, 1957 ~ May 3, 2026



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GATHERING

Friends, we gather today to give thanks for the life of Leslie Fahlsing, and to entrust her to the care of her creator.

We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss.

We seek God's grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow, hope, in death, resurrection.

Dying, Christ destroyed our death.

Rising, Christ restores our life.

In baptism, Leslie was sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray:

Eternal God,

we praise you for the great company of all those who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labor.

We praise you for those dear to us whom we name in our hearts before you.

Especially we praise you for Leslie, whom you have graciously received into your presence. To all of these, grant your peace.

Let perpetual light shine upon them; and help us so to believe where we have not seen, that your presence may lead us through our days, and bring us at last with them into the joy of your home not made with hands but eternal in the heavens; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“MORNING POEM” Mary Oliver

Every morning
the world
is created.
Under the orange
sticks of the sun
the heaped
ashes of the night
turn into leaves again
and fasten themselves to the high branches —
and the ponds appear
like black cloth
on which are painted islands
of summer lilies.
If it is your nature
to be happy
you will swim away along the soft trails
for hours, your imagination
alighting everywhere.
And if your spirit
carries within it
the thorn
that is heavier than lead —
if it's all you can do
to keep on trudging —
there is still
somewhere deep within you
a beast shouting that the earth
is exactly what it wanted —
each pond with its blazing lilies
is a prayer heard and answered
lavishly,
every morning,
whether or not
you have ever dared to be happy,
whether or not
you have ever dared to pray.

SHARING MEMORIES

Those gathered are invited to think of a word that speaks about Leslie - and perhaps a story to go with it.

WORD

READINGS: Genesis 1 and 2

After the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

After the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 65:17-19, 65:21-25

After the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 4:30-32

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After the reading:

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY

“THE SUMMER DAY” Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

PRAYERS

Let us pray.
Loving God, we thank you for the marvels of your creation, for the beauty and complexity and wonder of it all.
Thank you for making us in your likeness, tenderly shaping us, giving us the gifts of creativity and responsibility to tend to creation.
Thank you for the gift of Jesus, whose life, death, and resurrection are our surest sign of your care that knows no limits.
Thank you for giving us one another to care for; child, parent, spouse, cousin, friend, or neighbour.
Bless all whose work is caring for your people and your creation - medical providers and hospice workers, gardeners and naturalists.
Keep us sensitive to the needs of others and of your creation; give us the grace to respond with wisdom, generosity, and persistence.
God of us all, your love never ends.
When all else fails, you still are God.
We pray to you for one another in our need,
and for all, anywhere, who mourn with us this day.
When we doubt, give your light;
when are weak, give your strength;
when we sin, give your mercy;
in our sorrow, give your peace.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

The gathering moves together to the Circle Garden

“SLEEPING IN THE FOREST” Mary Oliver

I thought the earth
remembered me, she
took me back so tenderly, arranging
her dark skirts, her pockets
full of lichens and seeds. I slept
as never before, a stone
on the riverbed, nothing
between me and the white fire of the stars
but my thoughts, and they floated
light as moths among the branches
of the perfect trees. All night
I heard the small kingdoms breathing
around me, the insects, and the birds
who do their work in the darkness. All night
I rose and fell, as if in water, grappling
with a luminous doom. By morning
I had vanished at least a dozen times
into something better.

COMMENDATION

Eternal God, you know all things in earth and heaven.
Fill our hearts with trust in you
that, by night and by day, at all times and in all seasons,
we may without fear commit those who are dear to us
to your never-failing love, for this life and the life to come. **Amen.**

O God, all that you have given us is yours.
As first you gave Leslie to us,
now we entrust her to you.
Receive Leslie into the arms of your mercy.
Raise her up in your new creation.
Receive us also, and raise us into a new life.
Open our eyes and hearts to see your life at work in this world,
that we may share your joy in this life and in the world to come. Amen.

Praying - Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Amen

Leslie I. Fahlsing
October 30, 1957 — May 3, 2026

Leslie was born on October 30, 1957, in Seattle, WA, the daughter of Phillip I. and Gail (Greenman) Wagner. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business from Hope College in Holland, MI.

She married Roger Fahlsing in LaGrange County, IN, on June 15, 1991, and he survives.

Leslie worked as a Quality Engineer for several years before becoming a Master Gardener working for several greenhouses and nurseries. She used her gardening skills as a grower to assist in raising funds for local charities around Valparaiso.

Leslie enjoyed gardening, dancing, teaching, and learning.

Survivors include her husband, Roger Fahlsing, and her daughter, Alicia (Joe Russell) Fahlsing. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Memorials can be given to the American Cancer Society and sent to the funeral home. McGuire & Davies Funeral Home and Crematory, Monmouth, IL is in charge of the arrangements.

Christ Lutheran Church Pastor Erica Gibson-Even Saturday, May 23, 2026 1:00 p.m.
