

Zion Lutheran Member “Spotlight” – Don Palmquist

By Ken Picking



When the Zion Lutheran Men’s “Lunch Bunch” moved its monthly meal to the Wooster Elks, Don Palmquist distinguished himself with a regular order of his favorite beverage.

“I’ll have a cold glass of Wayne County’s best milk,” Don says.

Now when he arrives at the Elks, usually a tall glass of milk is on its way to the table before he orders.

When Don Palmquist arrives, The Milkman has Cometh. His Nissan Rogue bears the front vanity plate, “MEGALC,” the trade name for a patented energy supplement for high-producing cows, invented by Don and a colleague, patented by The Ohio State University.

Cow’s milk, literally, has flowed through the entire life story of Donald Leonard Palmquist, who celebrates his 90th birthday July 2.

Don, son of first generation immigrants from Sweden and Norway, grew up on the family dairy farm in Silverton, Ore. “Mom was the best milker. Me, not so much,” Don says. “As kids, we would not eat our morning cereal until Pops brought in warm milk from the morning milking.”

After earning a degree in dairy science from Oregon State University, and completing graduate studies at University of California, Don served 33 years on the faculty of Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, The Ohio State University.

“I always figured I would go back to Oregon and fish, but I never made it out of Wooster,” says Don, who raised two adopted children with wife Susie and attended Salem Lutheran Church, Madisonburg, for 50 years.

“I had been thinking about Zion for years,” says Don, who joined in 2022. “I knew it had more to offer. Salem started losing members, so the time had come. It was tough to leave because of our family history there, but I never have found a Lutheran church as interactive as Zion. I love it here.”

Don calls himself a “summer person” so he always looks forward to his annual winter escape from Ohio to Santiago, Chile, to visit his companion Maria Sol de la Merced Morales Silva, retired from Animal Production Department of the University of Chile Veterinary School.

When Don visits the grocery and walks the dairy aisle, he is not happy seeing the many milk substitutes.

“Almond and all the other vegetable derivatives are not milk. They do not possess the nutritional properties of milk,” he says. “The dairy industry has fought hard to eliminate the piracy of the name.”

Today’s youth do not drink milk like in Don’s generation, he says. “We work hard to keep people educated the nutritional value of milk in their diet.”

Other than traveling to Chile, Don has designed a simple lifestyle after living alone in Wooster for over 30 years. "The deer won the battle with my garden," he says.

Any advice for those who live by themselves?

"Learn to cook," says Don. "I'm not a good cook. If I try something adventurous, I am usually on the phone to Sol for help."

You can be sure whatever meal Don whips together, he enjoys it with a cold glass of his favorite.