

## **You Have More Talents Than You Think**

I think that Lutherans in general, and St Peter's Lutherans in particular, are exceptionally generous people. As the Care and Nurture coordinator, I have seen how many people respond when asked to help a fellow member who needs a hand. Their generosity and kindness is special in so many ways. I try to keep a list of members who can be called on short notice to provide help to people in need. Sometimes schedules preclude helping on short notice, so I try to keep a long list. Lately, my list has been getting shorter as people who were on the list move away. Please consider adding your name to that list.

Many times people think that they have few talents that would help other people in need. Maybe you think that you can't cook, or perhaps you work and have very little time to help others. I guarantee that you have more to offer to someone in need than you think. Perhaps you can visit a fellow St Peter's member in the hospital, or give someone a ride to an appointment, or pray for folks in need of prayer. Sometimes you may find yourself in a situation where your talents are very well suited, or even uniquely suited, for the situation. I can think of no better example of that than Lenny Skutnik.

I imagine that Lenny Skutnik thought of himself as a person of limited talents. While only 28 years old in 1982, he had been a house painter, meat packer, furniture plant worker, hamburger cook, and a janitor at a supermarket. He recently started a job in the mailroom at the Congressional Budget Office. He was on his way home from work in a Washington blizzard in the winter of 1982 when he got stuck in traffic near the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. The traffic was backed up because Air Florida flight 90 crashed in the Potomac River, glancing off the Bridge. Lenny went to watch the rescue efforts along with many other bystanders. While he was watching, a Park Police helicopter was trying to rescue victims from the ice-choked Potomac River in the middle of the blizzard. The terribly cold river was debilitating to the crash victims. As Lenny watched, the Park Police helicopter was pulling Priscilla Tirado from the middle of the river to the bank. Because of the staggering cold, Priscilla couldn't maintain her grip on the skid of the helicopter that was dragging her to safety. She was nearly unconscious and massively hypothermic as she lost her grip and slipped back into the river. Clearly she was going to drown and the firefighter and rescue personnel, brave people who run into burning buildings, couldn't do anything but watch. Since no one was doing anything to save her, Lenny jumped into the icy river, swam to Priscilla, and managed to pull her ashore. He had instant hypothermia and was taken to a waiting ambulance when he got to the river bank. While in the ambulance he saw a crash victim with two broken legs who was shivering and gave this person his coat. Wearing a thin shirt and dress pants, both drenched with ice water, he went to the hospital to be treated and released. Lenny Skutnik said after the rescue that he saw what needed to be done, and since no one was doing it, he did it. After a heroic rescue, Lenny disappeared into an anonymous life.

Perhaps you think you are ill-prepared to help others. I bet Lenny Skutnik thought the same thing. He found out that he did have the tools to help on the bank of an ice-choked Potomac River when even the brave were at a loss for actions. He made a

difference that can never be re-paid. Like Lenny, we should just see what needs to be done and help with what we can. Your talents will be enough for the situation that God puts you in. Please consider signing up for the care and nurture ministry. You may be uniquely suited to help, and we haven't needed anyone to jump into an icy river...so far.

(The Book of Virtues, William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, 1993)