



# Elaine Taylor

## Life Story

Elaine Taylor was a woman who devoted her life to doing the Lord's work, affecting so many lives directly and indirectly by her example. Elaine was a remarkable woman, with vibrancy and love and many other gifts the Lord gave her. These gifts she so graciously shared with all who knew her.

Elaine's story began on a spring day in 1947, in the rolling farmland of Lincoln, Michigan. Those were times of celebration in this country, as our soldiers returned home victorious from World War II. On April 26, 1947, Stanley and Rose Barber had even more to celebrate, with the birth of a beautiful baby girl, a daughter they named Elaine.

Elaine was one of eventually 11 children in the large family, who initially lived on a farm in Lincoln. Her parents were devout Christian people, who were saved before Elaine was born, so she was raised with the church as her second home. Elaine was saved at the age of five in Sunday school and was very active in her church youth groups.

The family moved to Paw Paw. Elaine remembered all of them out in the fields picking produce to sell at the local markets. After a busy day of working with her family her parents would treat them to an ice cream cone and a dip in Maple Lake in Paw Paw

Elaine attended Paw Paw Schools, but she much preferred her church youth groups to school activities. She was a bright young woman with a love of learning, so after graduating from Paw Paw High School in 1965, she headed off to Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana, to study elementary education.

Elaine was very active at Bethel, singing in the choir and working both on-campus and off to help pay her way thru college. She loved it there, and found more than an education at Bethel.

One day she met a handsome young man named Wayne Taylor, while they were in the lunch line together. They hit it off, and soon went on their first date. Elaine thought he was "boring," but Wayne survived that first impression, and they soon fell in love. The couple was married on June 7, 1969, at Open Bible Baptist Church in Gobles, Michigan, just after she graduated from Bethel.

The newlyweds went to Gatlinburg, Tennessee for their honeymoon, before settling into a new life together in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Elaine began teaching at Chime Street Elementary School, while Wayne worked at Youth for Christ. She served as a volunteer staff member with Kalamazoo YFC for several years working with high school girls.

After four years of teaching, Elaine "retired" to raise a family and before they left Kalamazoo they were proud parents of their first son Daniel. She moved to Winona Lake Indiana where Wayne attended Grace Theological Seminary. Soon thereafter Christy and Stephen joined the family. She and Wayne hosted

several young men in their home for a few years in a discipleship setting. Elaine became a “second mother” to a number of young men and women. She lived in Miami, FL for three years as she and Wayne assisted in two church ministries. Tim was born and their family was completed.

In 1985, the family returned to the Kalamazoo area, where Elaine became very active in the Lawton Evangelical Mennonite Church, starting Praise Team Worship ministries, Awana children’s program and many women’s ministries.

In 2002, Wayne and Elaine started micro- loan ministries to national pastors’ wives with Partners In Evangelism, which helped many families in Kenya and Uganda in Africa. They traveled to both countries to see the effects of their cottage businesses, and saw the positive impact the added income had on the pastors’ families.

Elaine and Wayne loved to travel, and saw so many incredible places over the years. They visited more than 20 countries; she loved to visit new cultures, to learn new things, and to see the Lord’s work around the world.

Elaine was such a vibrant, outgoing woman, who never missed a good party. She was truly a “party animal,” and often organized get-togethers and retreats for her family and friends. She especially loved getting together with her four “zany” sisters, when plenty of laughs would be had!

She was the kind of positive, optimistic person people were drawn to, with a magnetic personality and a contagious laugh. She loved people, and they loved her, too.

Elaine especially adored her grandchildren, and felt so blessed when they arrived. She truly cherished the time she spent with them, reading them books or surprising them with gifts. Elaine always had a special place in her heart for children.

Later in life, Elaine’s health sadly began to fail her. She underwent two years of treatments, never losing hope, heart or strength. Though she was failing physically, inwardly she was being renewed day by day, through her love of the Lord.

Elaine went home to be with her Savior on Thursday, December 27, 2007.

Elaine was a wonderful woman, who lived a wonderful life, a life so full of family and faith in the Lord. She was a brilliant, beautiful woman, vibrant and vivacious, who always volunteered her time, her faith, and her love. Elaine was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend, who devoted her life to her family and her faith, a faith that lives on today in all who knew her. She will be greatly missed.

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that his all surpassing power is from God and not from us. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” — II Corinthians 4:7, 16-18

Members of her family include her husband Wayne with whom she was united in marriage June 7, 1969, four children; Dan Taylor of Portage, Christy (Josh) Axe of Mattawan, Stephen (Jen) Taylor of Kalamazoo and Tim (Kim) Taylor of Lansing, seven grandchildren; Jacob Davis, Brandon Taylor, Christine Taylor, Kylee Taylor, Kennedy Axe, Hayden Axe and Reece Axe, her parents; Stanley and Rose Barber of Paw Paw, ten brothers and sisters; David (Marilyn) Barber of Gobles, Bob (Sandy) Barber of FL, Dale (Jim) Ray of Gobles, Paul (Marilyn) Barber of Grand Junction, Tim (Kim) Barber of Gobles, Cindy (Greg) Straka of Mattawan, Steve (Sue) Barber Lawton, Sharon (Joe) George of

Mattawan, Rosanne (Steve) Adams of Gobles and Phillip (Angie) Barber of CA, several nieces and nephews. Friends will be received Friday from 2:00-5:00 PM and 6:00-8:00 PM and Saturday from 9:00-11:00 AM at the Lawton Evangelical Mennonite Church 425 S. Nursery St Lawton where A Celebration of Life Service will be held Saturday at 11:00 AM. Lunch will follow in the church Fellowship Hall. Interment Almena Cemetery. Please visit Elaine's memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com) where you can share a favorite memory or photo or sign the guest book. Memorials may be directed to Partners in Evangelism International (ministering to national pastors) 5518 West Diversey Ave Chicago, IL 60639.