



### ***Meet Melinda: A Life of Faith, Service, and Community***

Melinda Dellert hails from the small community of Rural Hall, just north of Winston Salem, NC, with a population of only 1,000. Growing up in a family of faith at the Moravian Church, Melinda's early years were filled with music and community service. She began piano lessons at the age of five and often played in her church, nurturing a lifelong love for music.

Melinda's professional journey began in Winston Salem, where she worked primarily as a secretary. After moving to Lynchburg in 1976 with her husband Jim, she continued her career at a private girls' school for nine years. Many of the families she worked with have since moved into her current community, allowing her to maintain cherished connections.

Melinda and Jim met on Christmas Eve through mutual friends. Jim, a classically trained musician and pastor, brought a autoharp to a Christmas gathering, having just visited a nursing home. Their shared love for music and faith blossomed into a 36-year marriage. Together, they moved to Lynchburg, where Jim served at Westminster Presbyterian Church and later helped establish Forrest Community Church, retiring after 18 years.

Despite her childhood dreams of becoming an explorer, dancer, or musician, Melinda never expected to be a minister's wife. However, her faith and dedication to service have been constants throughout her life. She is deeply influenced by the sense of extended family within her community, finding joy and support among her neighbors.

Melinda moved into The Summit, ten years ago in June. Having worked as the secretary and receptionist to the executive director before any of the current buildings were constructed, she felt a strong connection to the place. Living in a LifeSpire community means being part of an extended family, where everyone is well-served by the administration and dining staff, and the close-knit environment fosters a sense of security and belonging.

In the coming year, Melinda hopes to continue playing the piano for worship services and in assisted living, sharing her musical talents with the community. She is proud of her ongoing service to the Lord and strives to keep a smile on her face, finding peace and certainty in her faith and family.

Melinda has been an active member of her community, serving on the church choir, resident council, and book club. She enjoys crocheting shawls to give to those in need and is always ready to lend a helping hand. Her personal motto is to stay open to new experiences and to encourage others to embrace community life without fear.

Melinda's life is a testament to the power of faith, music, and community. Her contributions to The Summit and her unwavering spirit make her a deserving recipient of the Virginia Baptist Homes Foundation Influencer Award.