

Sibley East Wall of Fame inductee publishes two books

Mary Nelson Keithahn, member of the Sibley East Wall of Fame, is simultaneously publishing two books.

Her first book for children, *Elfie: Adventures on the Midwest Frontier*, and a book of meditations, *Embracing the Light: Reflections on God's Word*, will be released this summer. Keithahn is a retired United Church of Christ minister and church educator, freelance writer, and hymn writer who lives in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Keithahn has been a prolific writer and storyteller for more than five decades. A graduate of Carleton College in Northfield and Yale Divinity School, she has written curriculum and worship resources, numerous articles for religious journals, the book and lyrics for ten multi-generational musical dramas, and over a hundred hymns. Her latest works have already garnered praise for their lyrical style and insight.

Elfie: Adventures on the Midwest Frontier, a chapter book for children, chronicles the experiences of Elfie and her extended family as they find a new life in the Midwest in the late 1800s. The stories in the book were adapted from the memoirs of Elfie May Loverin Minard and a family history written by her "double cousin," Frank Clyde Sheldon, Keithahn's grandfather.

"Elfie is a loving tribute, not only for Keithahn's close-knit family, but also to countless other families that had ancestors who settled our country," says Robin Rohwer-Franson, a retired schoolteacher. "This book will make a valuable contribution to children learning about their state history, immigration and the importance of families."

Embracing the Light is a book of scripture-based meditations and prayers that provides thoughtful reflections on Christian faith, life and mission within the framework of the liturgical and secular year, as well as insights into important life events from birth to death and issues such as peace, reconciliation and caring for one another.

"Keithahn is a poet – more specifically, a hymn writer – with the ability to say in a few well-chosen words what would take most of us many pages to articulate. Through Mary's story, we gain insight into our own faith journey," says Michael Hawn, director of the Sacred Music Program at Southern Methodist University.

Although they belong to different genres, *Elfie* and *Embracing the Light* high-

light Keithahn's passion for inspiring present and future generations to reflect on their personal journeys, the history of their families, and the ties that bind them together. Both books offer opportunities for thoughtful conversations among readers of all ages.

"My hope is that *Elfie* will encourage readers to discover and record the unique stories that are in every family's history, and that *Embracing the Light* will offer them new insights into the stories and writings of the Bible that have shaped my faith and guided my life," says Keithahn.