

## MY NAME IS KARL



SUSAN GIESECKE

*After 15 years of 'a tugging of the heart', the author has shared the story of Karl, and the people he loved along with the people who loved him. You will find his view of life unique and inspiring.*

## My Name is Karl

By Susan Giesecke

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Print ISBN: 978-1-64719-116-0

Epub ISBN: 978-1-64719-117-7

Mobi ISBN: 978-1-64719-118-4

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Book cover designed by Bede Van Dyke

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2020

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Giesecke, Susan

My Name is Karl by Susan Giesecke

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020921331

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*Susan Giesecke*

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# Introduction

What does it mean to be human? In our age of technology and gene splicing, philosophers and geneticists alike ponder the uniqueness of each human being.

The gift of a child is an extraordinary event. Often taken for granted, only in retrospect can we appreciate how the combination and interaction of genetics, environment, and events create an individual. I often say the challenge of raising a child is humbling because you don't know for thirty years if you are doing it right. And sometimes there is no right.

Two questions come to mind as I share this very personal story. Why? And why now?

For the past fifteen years there has been a tugging in my heart to share Karl's story. Not so much his story, as the story of those who loved him and were in turn loved by him. I felt our family was stronger and more compassionate because of him.

There is a peace that comes from answering the tugging of the heart; a resolution and completion. On the flip side, there is that hope that a reader here and there will smile or say, "I understand."

And there is a maturity in letting the story out, allowing it to stretch wings and fly.

As President Joe Biden said in July 2016, “Trust me, there will come a day when you think of your loved family member, a smile will cross your face before the tear runs down your cheek.”

## **Sunday Morning, February 21, 2010**

Sunday was Karl's favorite day because it meant church, hand bells, ushering and "holding" the door as congregational members went in and out of the Fellowship Hall following worship service.

Karl was the "mascot" of Holy Cross, deemed so by Gene Fogt, his personal friend and long-standing pastor. Everybody knew and loved Karl. He had been baptized and confirmed at Holy Cross. He'd challenged the Sunday School teachers, volunteered at Vacation Bible School and worked in the Food Pantry.

Karl lived with us, his parents, on the second story of our home. We wanted him to maintain his independence, but still be available for meals, maintain a schedule, and have family support.

So, when he came down the stairs on that Sunday morning complaining he had a headache, I knew it was true. Every other Sunday, he was the first up reminding the rest of the family it was Sunday!

This was not the first headache Karl had had. About six times a year he experienced headaches, so we had developed a routine: a bed was made on the couch so we could be close and we began a regimen of medication.



All day he rested, drinking an Ensure Plus or two, but not showing any signs of getting better. Even this was not unusual because sometimes it would take two to three days for him to come around.

The operative word was *patience*.

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