Church organist celebrates 50 years of making music

BY ALLEE MEAD

Marvelou said.

Despite her hesitation, Marvelou played the organ that Sunday and hasn't stopped since. She has many of the songs memorized, but she prefers to play with the sheet music in front of her. Appropriately enough, Marvelou's favorite type of music is gospel.

Marvelou rarely misses a sermon, even those in the most extreme winters. Her husband always made sure to get her to the church, and Marvelou often felt a little guilty when she wasn't able to play.

"It's a great deal of dedication," St. Paul's pastor, the Rev. Bill Wagner, said.

On June 13, the St. Paul's congregation threw Marvelou a surprise appreciation party. Bill and the other church members had been planning to celebrate Salier's 50 years of organ playing since December.

At first, the sermon seemed like any other Sunday, with the exception of a much more packed congregation. Then everyone surprised Marvelou with a potluck dinner and a beautiful cross necklace. The congregation presented Marvelou with letters from former church members and pastors.

"It is said that music goes where words fail," a letter from former pastor the Rev. Keith Garness read. "You were faithful and you expressed your faith in your music.

Marvelou felt truly grateful for the party and for the congregation's constant support, calling the church members very loving and caring.

"I should really give them more credit for putting up with me," she laughed.

Marvelou continues to be very active in her church. Along with playing the organ, she attends every church meeting and even selects many of the hymns for the sermons.

"Every service has been meaningful," Marvelou said. "I feel very blessed that God has given me this opportunity."

Marvelou Salier, Stanton, has been organist at St. Paul's Lutheran Church northeast of Hazen for 50 years.

Marvelou's family, Clarissa, Gary, Judy and Shannon, who grew up with their mother at the church organ each Sunday, joined her in the joyful celebration.