REMEMBERING

Esther Elfreda Doerksen

August 7, 1936 - August 4, 2023

Esther Elfreda Doerksen was born on August 7, 1936, to Mary (Liesch) and Peter Epp, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her formative years were spent, along with her younger brothers Peter and Eric, on a small farm in Greendale, British Columbia.

Esther met the love of her live, Leonard Doerksen, in ninth grade at the Mennonite Educational Institute. She writes in her memoirs that “by Grade Ten, Len was beginning to notice me!” Esther and Leonard were married on August 27, 1957, and they moved to Winnipeg, and then to Winkler, returning to Abbotsford in 1969.

Esther and Leonard had five children: Dorothy, Paul, Charles, Joyce and Donald. As the children grew older and began to leave home, a highlight of the year was summer vacations on Mayne Island and at Harrison Lake.

At age 48, Esther fulfilled a childhood dream, entering the Nursing program at Douglas College, in New Westminster. Upon graduation, she worked as a casual nurse at Chilliwack Hospital.

Esther had the gift of service and she shone as a hostess, first to Leonard’s Bible School students, then as a pastor’s wife, and finally through Mountain Acres Bed & Breakfast at their beautiful home on Sumas Mountain. In her later years, Esther shared her recipes, publishing “Grandma’s Cookbook – Recipes and Stories From 80 Years in the Kitchen”, and it was an instant hit with her children and grandchildren.

The center of Esther’s life has always been family, but even more importantly, her love of and her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In her last weeks on this earth, with her heart breaking at the thought of leaving her “Lennie” behind, she nevertheless with great anticipation looked forward to “going home”.

During the last weeks of her life, Esther’s husband was constantly by her side,

holding her hand, singing to her, reading to her, and finally, releasing her to go “home”. Esther died peacefully on August 4, 2023, surrounded by family, and with her husband by her side.

Esther is survived by Leonard, her husband of 66 years, and their five children, 16 grandchildren (plus grandson Matthew who passed in 2000), and 18 great grandchildren.