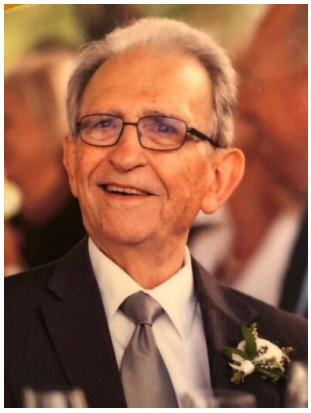

REMEMBERING

Gunther Phillip Eberhardt

December 14, 1929 - November 11, 2022

Gunther was born December 14, 1929 in the tiny village of Rolofshagen, near Grimmen, in north eastern Germany. He grew up on the farm of his parents Phillip and Anna, and was the oldest of four boys and four girls.

In 1942 at the tender age of 13 he was sent to military boarding school in the midst of the darkening storm of wartime Nazi Germany. Here, absent from the nurture and love of family his life became difficult in a very regimented atheistic environment. By March 1st of 1945 he had been drafted into the infantry as had been so many other 15 and 16 year old boys. They were sent to the Russian front which by now was on the doorstep of Stralsund, a nearby German city. Providentially their commanding officer was wise enough not to offer up these boys as senseless cannon fodder in the dying weeks of the war, but took them north to escape and be captured by the British army. First in Copenhagen, then in Kiel, northern Germany, he became a POW and by late summer of 1945 he was released into the care of a farmer's family near Braunschweig.

After 3 months of searching he found his grandmother in a village near Wolfsburg and lived with her since his hometown was now under Russian occupation. Here he learned the heartbreaking news of his mother's death along with that of two siblings. His father had also been arrested and sent to a Russian labour camp.

In 1948 he began his apprenticeship as a painter and decorator, and finished his exams in 1950. A nearby Baptist church that his grandmother took him to had a youth group and choir which Gunther joined. The Lord used youth Bible study group and singing to soften his heart for the gospel, and soon he invited Jesus into his heart and life.

He was baptized in that small Baptist church near Braunschweig, where he also

met his wife Gertrud Mueller who was a refugee with her family from West Prussian territory.(now Poland) On June 1st 1951 they were married. As refugees Gunther and Gertrud had not been able to find suitable housing in Germany and the economic opportunities in Canada beckoned the young couple. The following year they immigrated to Vancouver.

In Vancouver they found work, and were soon actively involved in the fellowship of the Ebenezer, Bethany and Immanuel Baptist churches – all mother and daughter churches of the North American Baptist conference. These congregations in South Vancouver grew quickly with the influx of German immigrants in the 1050's. Gunther was soon recruited to different choirs, various committees and leadership positions. He lead the leadership team that built Pilgrim Baptist Church in the mid 1060's and was Moderator there for many years. Their son Fred was born in 1954, and daughter Annette followed in 1958 completing the happy family.

Gunther began his career in Canada working as a painter, then home builder, and in 1961 opened a paint and decorating store on Victoria Drive. In 1975 he purchased a "Color Your World" franchise, one of the biggest paint stores in the area. He treated his customers with integrity and courtesy, meticulous in maintaining the thriving business.

At the age of 57 he retired and moved with Gertrud to Abbotsford to be close to their children and grandchildren. For quite a number of years they continued to drive to Bethany Church on Sundays where Gunther served as elder. They also spent their retirement years on many road trips throughout the US, and enjoyed regular lunches at Newlands with their close knit circle of friends. Gunther also continued his one and only hobby, SINGING!

He loved his many years with the Abbotsford Male Chorus, also singing in ensembles and choirs at Clearbrook Church which they joined in 2016.

In writing a portion of his own obituary a few years ago Gunther wrote that his testimony was "Loving Jesus and loving people". We remember that he had a Jesus fish emblem on his car and a "Jesus first" pin on the lapel of his suit jacket, but of greater importance was his sharing of the gospel at every opportunity. Some will also remember that when asked how he was doing Gunther would always answer, "Undeservedly good"! A family friend remarked this week after his passing, "Gunther was a gentle person, kind, and one who sought peace with everyone in his sphere of influence."

This godly influence that he had on his children and grandchildren is deep and enduring. He was filled with the fruit of the Spirit, in word and deed. Speaking the language of love, and encouragement, Gunther Phillip Heinrich Eberhardt leaves indelible footprints for his offspring to follow.

Thanks be to God!

He leaves behind his loving wife of 71 years Gertrud.

Son Fred and Connie Eberhardt

Daughter Annette and Ed Fast

Grandchildren:

Paul and Heidi Eberhardt

Steven and Christina Eberhardt

Carmen and Rod Hollett

Sonja and Jared Hindmarsh

Emily and Jesse Smith

Rachel and Davin Roy

Along with 19 great- grandchildren