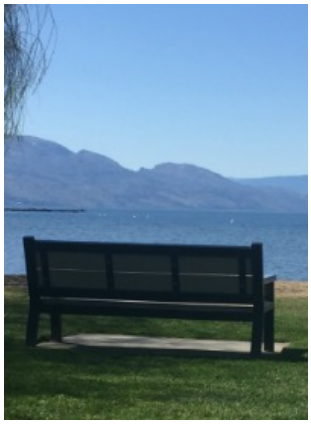

REMEMBERING

Helen Wittenberg

August 17, 1928 - April 11, 2015

Born August 17, 1928, to Peter and Agatha Schellenberg in Blumenort, Saskatchewan - the youngest of five siblings, Frank, Tina, Peter, and Jack. Helen was predeceased by all four of her siblings. Married John Wittenberg in Abbotsford on August 22, 1953.

Helen graduated from nurses' training with her RN, at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, in 1951, and went on to an almost 40-year career as a nurse, primarily at the MSA Hospital in Abbotsford and then as a home care nurse for BC Public Health. She loved her nursing career, and was dedicated to providing the very best patient-centered care possible. She made many friends during her time as a nurse, and made a difference in the lives of countless people under her care. A faithful member of the Mennonite Church since joining as a teenager in Blumenort, Helen found time during her busy career and family life to volunteer with the Pioneer Girls at Central Heights and sing in the church choir led by her husband, John. When Helen retired, she turned her energies to watercolor painting, at which she was very successful, and also volunteering at the MCC Thrift Store in Clearbrook.

Helen was dedicated to her family, and always demonstrated her values of honesty, pragmatism, hard work, and maintaining a sense of humor. A first-rate practical joker, especially on April Fool's Day, she had a great sense of humor and fun, and was always a good sport. She took a very active interest in the lives of her children, and later her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She gave unconditional love and support to her children and to John throughout her life, and welcomed her children's partners into the family with her typical blend of genuine interest and affection. She was a great cook, made sure her children all knew how to put a meal on the table, and later enjoyed many happy hours making cookies and doing crafts with her grandchildren.

Helen also was adventurous: she enthusiastically headed off to Tanzania in 1965 with three kids under ten years of age, to live in a town she'd never heard of and a country that was completely unfamiliar. John taught at Kazima Secondary School in Tabora, and she took on the task of educating her two eldest children for two years. As always, Helen was able to make many good friends and also helped make a difference in the lives of people she touched, in particular providing urgently needed medical attention on more than one occasion. Her two years in Tanzania were a highlight for her; she often fondly recalled stories of Africa and loved to see pictures of the happy times spent there.

Helen's last years were challenging: she battled cancer, heart disease, and dementia. Despite her challenges, she always greeted friends and family with a big smile. She leaves behind her husband John, daughters Ruth Wittenberg (Paul Jarman) and Judy Wittenberg (Neil Schafer), son David Wittenberg (Terri); grandchildren Brad Wittenberg (Emily) and Kimberly Ennis (Tyler), Sarah Beere (Misha Rajaratnam) and Matthew Beere (Taylor Carr); and great grandchildren Lily, Darius, and Clara Wittenberg, and Seamus Ennis.

Service will be at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church on April 22nd at 1:30 p.m.

No flowers please; instead, please consider a donation to the Abbotsford Regional Hospital Auxiliary, the Menno Home, and MCC. Many thanks to Dr. Egolf and for the wonderful care Helen received during her time in the Menno Home West 2.