



REMEMBERING Mary Thiessen

December 15, 1930 - March 3, 2021



Mary Thiessen was born December 15, 1930, in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, to Peter and Anna Wiens. She was the first child born in Canada to the newly immigrated family. Later the family moved to BC, first to Black Creek on Vancouver Island, then to Arnold, and then to a farm on Mt Lehman Road.

While working on her Sunday School lessons, Mary received the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. After choir practices at East Aldergrove M B Church, Mary met a handsome young man, Jacob Thiessen, and they were married March 18, 1951. They enjoyed married life together for 67 years until Jake passed away in 2018.

Together Jake and Mary established a Christian home (near the Abbotsford Airport), leading their four children, Ken, Bernie, Ruth, & Harvey, in evening Bible devotions. Later as the family grew, Mary enjoyed 9 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

The fellowship with the Ross Road Community Church continued to be a source of strength and encouragement to Mary until she needed to move to Menno Place Hospital. Mary passed away into the presence of her Saviour at noon, March 3, 2021, at the age of 90.

Reflections from Family

Ken - My memories of Mom include food, family, and friends. She was always baking something for us as we had friends over to share our large playground yard. Mom would often invite our extended family to our place which I remember as a little paradise.

Mom sent cards and cookies to me while I was away at Bible school. Later as I was

starting my family, Mom and Dad made some working visits while we were building our house in Salmon Arm.

Mom served her Lord in a few ministries, such as: personal prayer and family devotions; the church prayer chain; her specialty was writing many letters and cards packed with Bible verses to family and friends. She managed this much appreciated ministry into her 90th year. I remember Mom for her faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

Bernie - Mother would send loving cards and letters, filled with many Bible verses, to me wherever I happened to be in the world and reminders of her prayers. Mom was very supportive of my schooling and my training to be a pilot. She also supported me when I showed an interest in missions. While I was attending high school in Saskatchewan, my Mom made use of the cold winter temperatures and sent me a whole chicken. Mom did not want me to miss out on the abundance of the poultry farm. While I was away from BC so much, Mom would keep me informed of all the happenings in the church.

Mom was so welcoming and would make us feel at home after a long trip with a favorite meal of borscht and buns. It was good to know that I could phone home anytime from anywhere for an encouraging conversation with Mom.

Even when my parents were living at their last two apartments, Mom would make a delicious meal for us as we would travel a long distance to see them. It was good to see my Mom and Dad pleasantly surprised to see us as we would pop in from out of town, to surprise them and see the joyful smile on Mom's face. Once Mom and Dad were just walking out of Tabor to mail one of Mom's many letters when someone dropped me off at their door - another chance to see her beaming smile.

It was easy to tell that Mom was proud of us. She would introduce me to other people and give them a summary of my life.

About a year ago Ruth and I took Mom outside to sit in the big gazebo to observe the beautiful sky and world surrounding us. Mom seemed so content with the joy of the Lord. She really knew Jesus lived in her and knew the promise of eternal life.

Ruth - How I remember my Mother: whether at home or on a long trip Mom showed her loving care by always making sure we had enough to eat.

While we waited for a spot in a nursing home, I lived with Mom for two months after Dad passed away. It was a time of adjusting for both of us. Then when Mom lived at Menno Place for two and a half years, I had the opportunity to go with her on bus trips. She noticed all the beautiful flowers and the Christmas lights. It was fun to help Mom with games and activities. Mom really enjoyed the special meals at Menno that she didn't have to cook herself.

Mom had a loving and kind heart to others, praying for many family and friends. We all heard Mom praying out loud by herself in the mornings. She was cheerful, smiling in spite of pain. Mom's favorite Bible chapter was Psalm 23. She will be greatly missed!

Harvey - Mom was a great cook. One of her favorite meals was soup. My favorites were noodle soup and borscht. One time Grandma Wiens and Mom worked hard to make homemade noodles for soup. It was quite the noodle factory with noodles

spread out on sheets to dry. We were blessed with fresh buns to compliment the soup. Mom was frugal; with leftover cream of wheat she would serve it for dessert with preserves. We had a large root cellar where Mom stored many preserves.

Mom had a love for the Lord and it was seen in her Bible reading and prayer. While I live in Winnipeg with my family, Mom wrote many letters to us. She would put in part of a sermon she had heard and a scripture passage that was special to her. Recently Mom talked a lot about a book that discussed Psalm 23. My Mom was instrumental in praying with me to become a Christian!

Christopher - My memories of Grandma: I really appreciated all the birthday cards she sent me, my wife KariLynn & family mostly because of the Bible verses she wrote in each one. Grandma was very gentle and had a deep joy that was because of her relationship with Jesus.

The only thing Grandma asked for was pictures of the great grandchildren. Helen and Ivan enjoyed getting cards from their great grandma as well. We compiled a couple of picture albums for Grandma and Grandpa. They really enjoyed them.

Hannah - When I graduated from high school, I had saved up enough money to go visit my grandparents and other relatives in Abbotsford. My grandparents came to pick me up from the airport with a bouquet of flowers for me.

My Grandma and I spent time together in the kitchen, baking and cooking together, looking at old photos, and talking about memories from the past.

One day a group of us went out to a lake for a picnic, and not surprisingly, Grandma had a lovely lunch packed for us.

It was nice to have my grandparents, especially Grandma, to myself for that period of time. The three of us enjoyed going on walks together and played plenty of games of Rummy-O.

When I think of my Grandma, I think of a strong, determined woman who worked hard, putting others before herself. Though we did not see each other often, we still shared a lot of good times together, and I will always keep those memories in my heart.

Annie - My Grandma was very special and super loving as far as I can remember. I've always felt close to her. She loved reading Bible verses and watching the Gaithers whenever we came over as a family. One of my favorite memories was baking cookies. We baked a lot! My favorite kind was the white ones with icing and mint flavor in it. I loved that she would ask me and my sister if we wanted to lick the beaters after making whip cream. Her favorite dessert she made was Pink Delight and I enjoyed it while we played fun games like Rummy tiles. I loved the way she got excited when she listened to our stories and especially when she wanted to talk about her day. She had such a radiant glow, and I'm so thankful that I got to know her as my Grandmother. I really appreciate her willingness to teach me to bake while I was young, to cook waffles, making crafts, reading inspirational books, and being happy with simple things. Grandma like admiring the singing birds and when the sun was shining. I really loved that she had such a genuine smile and a positive attitude. It made me feel happy, too. She enjoyed looking out for everyone's needs. She rarely sat down because she enjoyed serving which is

definitely something I admired a lot about her. She had such a soft, giving heart, but she was also very brave, always praying. Every time we would talk she would make eye contact while listening and I felt heard. My Grandma was such a blessing, and I'm so grateful for her in my life.

Donna - My love for the German language stems from phrases that Grandma and Grandpa taught me as a young child, like "goodbye," "goodnight," and "I love you." When they talked about what German school was like, Grandma always told me, with a humorous smile, "when we got a question right, the teacher said "richtig, setztig!" She found that to be quite funny, which made me smile. Whenever I asked Grandpa to translate something to German, half the time he couldn't remember the translation. So he'd call Grandma over and ask her: "hey honey!" "Yes dear?" "What's the word for _____?" She'd think for a few seconds and then effortlessly give the translation. Later in high school, when I took German classes, Grandma helped me study the vocabulary, grammar, and ensured my pronunciation was correct. I could tell she really enjoyed teaching me, and after my grade 9 German year, conversing with me, auf Deutsch. She always told me I was doing a great job and bragged to friends and family about my skill in the language. A lot of my favourite hobbies were actually inspired by her, including baking. She taught me how to make snickerdoodles, cinnamon buns, pie by the yard, meat pie, and every once in a while for a treat, she would blend up some carrot juice. One of my favourite desserts of hers was Pink Delight. I made Pink Delight for the first time myself several weeks ago, and wanted so badly for her to try it and make her proud. Grandma taught me how important reading the Bible every day was. If you were ever there for breakfast, you would 100% have devotions read to you. Grandma was serious a lot of the time, so when she laughed it was hilarious to watch. She was stern but soft at the same time. She had the most caring heart I've known. She constantly made sure that everyone was satisfied with the meal she made, i.e. "have some more broccoli," or "have you had enough potatoes?" I had the sweetest, wisest, grandma ever. I will miss, and already do miss Grandma - my first German teacher, my first culinary teacher, my role model; I will never be able to practice German with her again. Never be able to say "ich liebe dich" to her like I have a hundred times. But I am thankful that I got the chance to say goodbye, and to hear the words, "I love you so much" come from her lips.

