



REMEMBERING
Maureen Klassen

January 25, 1937 - March 8, 2019



Maureen Shelagh Harvey was born on January 25, 1937 in Potters Bar, England. She was welcomed into the world by her parents, Percy and Pearl Harvey, and her sister, Margaret, who was four years old.

Maureen's parents, both Londoners, were a part of Regent Square Presbyterian Church in central London, where Maureen was baptized at six months old. Years later, Maureen's mother took the girls to the local Methodist Church, where they attended Sunday School and Sunday services morning and evening.

As a child, some of Maureen's earliest memories were of World War II and the uncertainty of life. She attended the Enfield County School for Girls and then gained admission to Royal Holloway College, an all-girls college associated with the University of London, where she not only earned a Bachelor's degree in English but also developed friendships that lasted her whole life. It was there that Maureen first heard about Mennonites and pursued her interest in this peace-loving people by joining Mennonite Voluntary Service for two summers, first in Austria and then in Germany. She also made contact with other Anabaptists at the London Mennonite Center. Through these friendships, she heard about an Anabaptist college and seminary in Goshen, Indiana, and was given a scholarship to attend, so she packed her bags and headed to America. She was thrilled to be able to learn more about the faith of early Anabaptists and modern-day Mennonites.

Soon after arriving in America, while visiting a Christian community in the inner city

of Chicago, Maureen was introduced to Herb Klassen, who had previously attended the seminary and was studying at the University of Chicago. They quickly fell in love and were married at Reba Place Fellowship in August 1959. Maureen and Herb spent their first months of marriage in the city slums where Herb had been volunteering.

In the spring of 1960, Maureen brought her husband to meet her family in England, where the couple lived and worked among Quakers and experienced a significant renewal in the Holy Spirit. There, they also had their first three children: Tanya (1960), Matthew (1962), and Steve (1964). In 1965, the family of five moved to Abbotsford, B.C., Canada, where two more children were born: Mark (1967) and Becky (1970).

In Canada, Maureen was busy raising her children but also taught English for various lengths of time at several different high schools and colleges. She also became involved in Aglow, an interdenominational women's ministry, that gave her opportunity to lead and teach with the local chapter and with the National Board.

Also during this time, Herb began to work as a Prison Chaplain and the Klassen home became a refuge for ex-inmates and various people in need, which was based at the Bread of Life community and farm on McKenzie Road in Abbotsford. Maureen stood together with Herb in this ministry and embraced the joys and risks of serving needy people.

In 1988, after their children had grown up, Maureen and Herb attended a Crossroads Discipleship Training School with Youth With A Mission in Richmond, Virginia. Following that, they served for five years with Mennonite Central Committee in Moscow, Russia, and then for another year with the Mennonite Center in Molochansk, Ukraine.

Upon returning to Canada, Maureen and Herb served for ten years as the Executive Secretaries of Logos Canada. At this stage, they sold the property at 31603 Old Yale Road to the Mark Centre and bought a house on Pender Island, where they lived for several months of the year, splitting time between there and their basement suite in the home of their daughter Becky and her family in Abbotsford.

Maureen wrote three books, two of which were co-authored with her husband Herb: *Ambassador to His People: CF Klassen and the Russian Mennonite Refugees* (1990) and *The Story of Logos Canada: Celebrating Twenty-Five Years of Ministry in the Former Soviet Union* (2014). The third book, *It Happened in Moscow: A Memoir of Discovery* (2013) was a deeper look at the life of her mother-in-law, Mary (Brieger) Klassen. Maureen was also working on two more books that remain

incomplete: a personal memoir and a study of the women around Jesus.

In December 2016, when Herb suffered a stroke that left him with certain limitations, Maureen met the challenge with strength and grace. Two years later, on December 28, 2018, Maureen's husband of fifty-nine years passed away.

It was during Herb's last days that doctors told Maureen that she needed pancreatic surgery. As she prepared for this, she grieved the loss of her closest companion and often spoke of wanting to join him in heaven. She was ready.

On Thursday, March 7, she underwent a successful surgery at Vancouver General Hospital. However, on the following day, after having breakfast with her two daughters, Maureen suffered a massive stroke and never woke up. On Friday, March 8, 2019, exactly ten weeks after Herb's death, Maureen breathed her last in this life.

Maureen is survived by her children: Tanya (and Howie) Thiessen, Matthew (and Cathlyn) Klassen, Steve (and Evy) Klassen, Mark (and Amy) Klassen, Becky (and Greg) Ouellette. Maureen and Herb have twenty beloved grandchildren: Max, Josiah (and Meagan), Jackson, Phillip, Mia, Lavender, Eric, Caleb, Ellarie, Emma, Bethany, Jadon, Alexis, Erica, Luke, Dania, Silas, Sophia, and Malakai; and two great grandchildren: Kalia and Nina.

A memorial service will be held at Bakerview Church in Abbotsford, B.C., on Friday, April 5, 2019 at 11:00 AM.

