



## REMEMBERING Peter Nickel

November 3, 1933 - October 27, 2022



Our dear father, Peter Nickel passed away on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at Cascade Lodge in Chilliwack, due to complications from pneumonia. It was impossible for him to breathe deeply enough to sing or to visit or to eat — some of his favourite things in the world to do. So, after being serenaded with some very nice harmonies and loving affirmations, he breathed his last.

He was alive for 88 boisterous, eventful and rewarding years. We will miss him dearly.

Left to process all of the happenings and adventures are: Frieda, his life partner of 67 years; children, Sharon (Ken), Jim (Lana), Dianne (Al), Darlene (Alan), Susan, and Jerry. Peter deeply loved his family. He and Frieda have 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Peter was predeceased by his parents, Peter and Katherina (Goertz) Nickel; brothers Henry, Abe, Dan, John, Jake and sisters Alma Klassen, Hulda Nickel, Tina Wiens; in-laws John, Selma, Albert and Lise Siebert. He leaves behind his beloved sisters-in-law, Frieda and Helen Nickel and Rosalie Siebert and many, many cousins, nephews and nieces. Bear hugs to each of you!

Peter was born in Glenbush, Saskatchewan on November 3, 1933 - a first-generation Canadian. The family moved to the Fraser Valley in his early childhood, eventually settling on a small, mixed-farm in Abbotsford, a mile from the US border. As the youngest of nine children, Peter was surrounded by siblings and cousins, and spent a great deal of time horsing around on their farm, playing scrub, kick the can, and practicing his cartwheels. But he knew how to do the chores too. He was a naturally athletic person, playing high school basketball and softball. Peter was a talented pitcher. He had a swift windmill pitch that was difficult to hit. He was a valuable member of his team well into his 40s.

Peter attended MEI for high school, where he met Frieda Siebert. After high school, he attended a year at Columbia Bible College. His and Frieda's friendship turned into an engagement, and on December 21, 1955, they had a choir sing at their wedding! He took a year of Normal School, which was a teacher training program, and soon launched his career in Port Alberni, B.C. along with his young and growing family. Peter taught in several B.C. districts in the interior before returning to the Fraser Valley. Together they rode up, down, around and through many landscapes. Sometimes they had to take the ferry. They were very busy. They had a lot of fun. They found a place in pastoral Greendale with lots of room to run around and plant a big garden. Peter and Frieda maintained a home base here until 2014 when they moved to assisted living at Hampton House, Chilliwack. As an elementary school educator, Peter explained math and science, delighted in geography, showed how to dissect a sentence, knew who was a protagonist and what was anti-climactic in a story! He knew the rules and scoring for all the team sports, memorized everyone's name and kept everyone on key for the singing of "O, Canada" and "God save the Queen" at Assemblies. Peter led choirs, encouraged recorder players, coached teams, coffeed with colleagues, drove the bus, organized hikes, guided field-trips, and filled-in for Santa Claus. All the usual, extra stuff that teachers are called upon to do! In the summer months Peter often found seasonal work- - always leaving a week or so for a family camping trip.

On the weekends, Peter was very active in his church, Greendale M.B. He and his family rarely missed a Sunday. He sang in the choir, lead congregational singing, and taught Sunday school. Their congregation was the source of many close and lasting friendships. Peter's faith in God's infinite love for humanity was nurtured in his childhood and it informed all of his choices.

Mid-week was for choir practices! Peter sang in his home church choir, the Menno Neufeld choral, and Even Song to name a few. Later there were the Harmony Singers and the smaller groups within that barbershop tradition. He serenaded many people!

One of Peter and Frieda's significant decisions was the year of the teacher exchange in Whitehorse. Both the school and the church communities welcomed them warmly there. They explored all over the place, had a great time and often recalled this outstanding time! Another highlight was the fabulous trip they took with Peter's brother, Jake and his wife, Helen spending

some summer and autumn months traveling east across Canada to the Maritime provinces, down the New England states, back across the U.S. Midwest, and up the coast to home.

Ball player, bedtime story-teller, sports fan, fixit guy, truck driver, house builder, puzzle maker, garden grower, jam maker, inventor of soups, barber-shop singer, harmony builder, soloist, team player, reader of maps, camper, adventurer, lover of God's creation, Peter would swim almost anywhere - it would refresh his body and uplift his spirit.

Our family is so grateful to all who cared for and appreciated Peter - especially, care-giver, Joan; and the wonderful, loving staffs at Hampton House and Cascade Lodge. Thank you for your senses of humour, your patience and, above all, your

kindness. Your hard work and decency are often over-looked. We appreciate you immensely. Many friends and extended family have reached out to our parents during their olden golden years, also. We love you for it. As usual, dad was ready to go before the rest of us. Once we coordinate the logistics, his kids will host a gathering that will include food, singing, and sharing - likely spring, 2023. In the meantime, we would be pleased for you to share your recollections of Peter with us. Large or small; spotty snap shots or full-blown, action-adventure stories complete with sound effects! We're happy to hear them all. We know we've missed some details.

If you wish, donations can be made to the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, or a charity of your choice. Peter was a lifelong contributor to many good causes dear to his heart.

Goodbye, Dad, and thanks for all the music!

