

In loving memory of

Lena Mirtschin

18 February 1930 - 1 August 2018



Funeral Service - 8 August 2018
The Ballarat Funeral Centre

At peace with the Lord

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18 February 1930 – 1 August 2018
88 years

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At peace with the Lord

OPENING

In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

REMINDER OF BAPTISM

As we come here in our grief to farewell Lena, St Paul comforts us with these words: 'Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.' (Romans 6:3-5)

HYMN – How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

- 1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.
- 2 It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.
- 3 Dear name, the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place;
My never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.
- 4 By Thee my prayers acceptance gain,
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.
- 5 Jesus, my shepherd, guardian, friend,
My prophet, priest, and king,
My Lord, my life, my way, my end,
Accept the praise I bring.

- 6 Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.
- 7 Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

John Newton (1725-1807), alt.

OBITUARY - Read by Kaye Mirtschin and Rod Collins

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has destroyed death and brings immortal life through the gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what God has done through Lena.

The Obituary is read.

We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord for our sister Lena.

GREETING & PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, as You raised Your dear Son from the grave, keep us always faithful to Him, so that not even death itself will snatch us out of Your hand or separate us from Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PSALM 23 – Read by Pastor

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and will be forevermore. Amen.

READINGS

Hear the word of the Lord as it is written in:

Isaiah 40:31 *Jan Dillon*

Philippians 3:20,21 *David Mirtschin*

John 10:7-16 *Pastor*

After each reading the following response is said:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN – Blest be the tie that binds

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.
- 2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one,
our comforts and our cares.
- 3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.
- 4 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin we shall be free,
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.

John Fawcett 1740-1817, alt.

ADDRESS

APOSTLES' CREED

In the face of death, let us confess our faith in the living God, and say the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN – To God be the Glory

- 1 To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in!
Chorus:
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He has done!
- 2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives:
Chorus:
- 3 Great things He has taught us, great things He has done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:
Chorus:

Frances Jane van Alstyne 1820-1915

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER

Let us pray. (As we pray, respond to each prayer with the words 'Hear our prayer'.)
Almighty God, our Father, in whom we live and move and have our being: We thank you for Lena and what we have received from her. Sustain us in life and death, and let perpetual light shine on us and all your faithful people.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Be with those who mourn, comfort them in their grief, and wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Remember Lena's family. Lighten their sense of loss with your presence, and support them in their loneliness.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Help those who grieve to support each other, and draw them together in their sorrow.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Give those who are bereaved courage to face the future with confidence in your goodness and with hope in the victory of Christ over death.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Help us, when we are perplexed and troubled, to believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Be with us in our journey through life and teach us to live wisely, making the most of our time on earth.

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

As we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, prepare us all for the world to come. And when our last hour comes, support us by your power, and take us home to Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

We pray the prayer our Lord Jesus has taught us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

TRANSITIONAL BLESSING

The Lord watch over you, as you go out and as you come in †, now and forever.

Amen.

RECESSION

The Pastor and the pallbearers take their places at the coffin.

In the sure hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, we take the body of our sister in Christ to its last resting place.

Let us go in peace.

In the name of the Lord.

At the Graveside

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

We are all born weak and helpless. All lead the same short, troubled life. We grow and wither as quickly as flowers; we disappear like shadows. In the midst of life we are in death. To whom can we go for help, but to you, Lord God, though you are rightly displeased because of our sins? And yet, Lord God Almighty, most holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us from the bitterness of eternal death. You know the secrets of our hearts; mercifully hear us, most worthy judge eternal; keep us, at our last hour, in the consolation of your love.

Amen.

WORD OF COMFORT

LOWERING OF COFFIN

COMMITTAL

GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who has created, redeemed, and sanctified Lena, body and soul.

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord Jesus, remember us, and help us to pray the prayer you have taught us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord give you comfort and peace; and the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit †, be with you always.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Christ has risen.

He has risen indeed.

Go in the peace of the Lord.

Amen.

Musicians:

Kym Dillon
Jason Koris

Pallbearers:

Rod Collins
David Mirtschin
Stuart Mirtschin
Richard Koris
Mark Lennon
Luke Dillon

Officiant:

Rev Chris Raatz

Lena's family wish to thank you for your prayers, love & support at this time and for your attendance at her funeral today. Following the interment at the New Ballarat Cemetery, you are invited to St John's Lutheran Church Hall, 204a Doveton Street South, for refreshments and to share treasured memories of Lena.

Lena's Story

I was born in Penshurst in the Western District into a farming family, the second youngest of 8 children. I was baptised on 16 March 1930 by Pastor R.H. Altus at Tabor Lutheran Church, and confirmed by Pastor E.W. Wiebusch at Tabor on 17 December 1944. I lived and worked on the farm including neighbourhood duties. After 20 years, my life changed when I moved to Ballarat with my parents and disabled sister Frieda. With my assistance, several attempts were made at various locations to solve Frieda's problems but to no avail. God gave us wisdom to visit a Ballarat Doctor who advised of a government rehabilitation program at no cost at Maryport, Mount Martha. Frieda commenced this rehabilitation program in 1954. To help Frieda settle in, I worked nearby as a waitress/domestic assistant for about 3 months at Deva Hotel, Mornington.

(After 23 months of rehabilitation, Frieda became independent using callipers and forearm crutches. After this time, Frieda moved to the city into a hostel situation and via government transport, travelled to Dacomb Business College to study shorthand/typing.)

I then returned to Ballarat to look for full time work, now being 26 years of age. I went to the employment office and the only position available was a nursing assistant at St John of God Catholic Hospital, so I said "OK I'll take it". It was basic nursing domestic duties. My supervisor was a very strict disciplined nursing Nun. I enjoyed the work but after 2 weeks I was called to the Rev Mother's office and she asked me to leave. I was shocked but naive and said "OK", went back to the ward and Sister Rose said "what did she want" and I said "she wants me to leave". Sister Rose said "you stay here", off she went down the lift and then came back and said "you are not leaving, you are staying". I asked "why did she want me to leave". She said that she had a Catholic girl she wanted to place! God used this strict Catholic Nun Sister Rose to 'save me' and then to influence me to do my nursing training.

I enjoyed working there for about 12 months and Sister Rose taught me many nursing duties as they were often short staffed. St Johns was not a training school so I went across to the Ballarat Base Hospital at 26 years of age with only a Merit Certificate (higher qualifications were required). Matron said to put in my application and the Board will decide and with God's Hand again, I was accepted. So I commenced my training in April 1956 and enjoyed 8 years there, training, staffing, night supervisor and midwifery duties. I loved my nursing days and the bonds we shared.

Owing to a failed marriage, I decided to leave Ballarat and took a position as a relieving Sister with Hospital & Charities Committee Victoria. We would be sent to country Hospitals which did not have adequate staff to cover shifts. We would stay for 4 weeks and then be moved on and another Sister would replace us if they were still short staffed. I worked at 9 Hospitals in 8 months being Goroke, Minyip, Robinvale, Kerang, Swan Hill, Terang, Kilmore, Donald and Myrtleford Hospitals. When working at the Goroke Hospital, I went to an evening at the Natimuk Church where a Church worker on leave from Papua New Guinea ("PNG") presented colour slides of the work our Church was doing there. This was very interesting and a 'seed' was sown in my mind that I would like to go and work as a nurse there.

From 1957 to 1966, Frieda was in a government hostel accommodation and the time had come for her to move on to independent living. In 1966 I moved to Melbourne, obtained a bed sitter, worked at a private Psychiatric Hospital for 12 months and helped Frieda search for and purchase an accessible Unit which we both then moved into in 1967.

During 1967, I worked as a District Nurse for the Royal District Nursing Society in the Springvale area. Frieda had now settled into her Unit so in 1968 I decided to move back to Penshurst, staying with my brother on his farm and worked at the local Penshurst Hospital for 12 months. It was great to be back in home territory!

During the 12 months the thought of working in PNG became real and so I sought the application and paper work required from the Overseas Board of Missions, Adelaide even though I was now 39 and the cut off year for acceptance was 35. I still applied and on a personal interview, was told that I was accepted. God's Hand once again!

I left for PNG in January 1969 and worked there until April 1978. I was sent to Yagaum, the main Lutheran Hospital about 8 miles inland from Madang situated on the coast, being a 200 bed Hospital for New Guineans and a nursing training school for New Guinean students. The Hospital had a Theatre, Pharmacy, Xray, Pathology and all wards were staffed by doctors and nurses from Australia, Germany and America. I was there from January 1969 until October 1970 and worked in the Hospital. There were 3 to 4 small wards for expatriate mission staff flown in from outstations if they required treatment. There were about 60 expatriate staff in the mission during my time there, doctors, nurses, teachers, mechanics, pastors, office staff, field and plantation workers etc. It is a lovely tropical country, but on the coast has very high humidity being 300 feet above sea level.

In October 1970 I was transferred to Kotna, a 60 bed New Guinean Hospital in the Western Highlands about 25 miles from Mount Hagen. We were about 3,000 feet above sea level, so it was a nice clear heat like spring all the year round, except when it rained which was quite often in the wet season. On our compound, there was a Hospital, primary school, Church, Bible school and basic business school with 2 to 3 expatriate families, another Sister and myself. The other Sister worked in the Hospital with the New Guinean staff and I worked Monday to Friday with my staff going into the villages by 4 wheel drive to the baby clinics. The head man would call the mothers to assemble who were usually there when we arrived. We would give a Bible talk, nutrition talk and then weigh and examine the children, perform any treatments necessary and also antenatal care. We would usually visit 2 villages a day. It would take us 4 weeks to visit all the villages and then we would start all over again.

As PNG has 700 languages and about every 25 miles there was a different language, there was a universal language called Pidgin English, a basic vocabulary which took about 6 months to learn. Most of the people knew Pidgin English, but not some of the older folk, so our staff or a local person from the village would translate. We travelled in our Toyota 4 wheel drive on some very scary gravel mountain roads, along the sides of hills and mountains one car width with no guard rails and often many potholes and sometimes landslides would block our way. If we could not clear the road, we would walk to and attend at the clinic and then walk back home, all in a day's work in a developing country! Each day as we arrived home, we would thank God for watching over us and bringing us safely home.

A Doctor would visit us from Mount Hagen (25 miles away) once a fortnight, so we could seek her advice on all the patients we had with problems. Any emergencies that we could not manage were sent to Mount Hagen. Other than this, we did all of our own diagnosing. We had an Aidpost Orderly from training school for boys and girls who had completed a basic nursing course, do dressings for ulcers and wounds, give medicine for malaria, diarrhoea etc. and work in the Aidpost in the villages or in the Hospital.

I also worked in the Hospital at weekends and on call at night, with every second weekend off being the time to do all your personal chores and maybe go to Mount Hagen if you were lucky and had transport. The shopping was not bad in town, which had 3 supermarkets and quite a few Chinese stores.

After 2 years when I was due for my first furlough in 1971, Frieda organised for mum, dad and herself to come and visit me at Kotna. Dad was very reluctant to go on the plane, mum not so being more adventurous, but once dad was on the plane, he thoroughly enjoyed the flight and the 2 weeks the 4 of us spent visiting different parts of PNG on our way home.

"My Mother's Dream" – when my mum was a young woman, she used to enjoy reading books about the work that the missionaries were doing in PNG and they said it was a truly beautiful country. Her dream was to go there one day, but that was an impossibility at that time and the Lord moves in mysterious ways. Even though she had to wait until she was in her 80's, her dream came true when I was working there. She was able to visit me there twice and I was very happy for her that she was able to achieve her dream.

Frieda being the adventurous type visited me 3 times. As one had to walk across the tarmac and up the steps to enter the plane, they put Frieda on a fork lift and raised her to door level enabling her to enter. My dad and older brother passed away in 1976 and 1977 while I was still there and I decided to return home in April 1978.

Having been away for 9 years working in a developing country, I realised on return to Ballarat that many nursing procedures etc have changed and I would have had to complete a fairly extensive refresher course, so I decided for the time being to apply for District Nursing in Ballarat. For 17 years I worked for the Ballarat & District Nursing Service and retired in 1995 having completed 39 wonderful years in the nursing profession.

I lived with and cared for my mum for her last 17 years until she passed away in 1994 at 100 years of age. Since returning from New Guinea in 1978, I have been involved with Church life here at St John's serving on various committees each year and especially enjoyed our Ladies' fellowship group serving as President or Secretary for some years. I also was on the Hospital visiting team for our Church here and in 2006 relinquished duties from the other committees.

Some of my hobbies are travelling, gardening, swimming and line dancing. Between 1964 and 1994 with my brother Garry, I enjoyed 6 trips around different parts of Australia and in 2000 we greatly enjoyed a 6 week trip overseas to Europe to visit the home of our forefathers and also to the United Kingdom.

I also enjoyed a trip to Texas USA in 2001, to attend the wedding of a young man who I was Godmother to 25 years earlier in PNG when his family and I were working together at Kotna. It was a nice reunion for us.

I resided for many years mostly in Melbourne with Frieda assisting her with her needs, but still having my home here in Ballarat.

I really have been blessed and I thank God for his guidance for opening doors for me, using different people in many situations to help me on this interesting and adventurous pathway through life and to be able to serve others.

If I can say, through Frieda becoming disabled in 1939, both of our lives were changed and God took us both on different pathways.

Thankyou

