# Shirley May Liira (nee Schwindt)



APRIL 6, 2020

**Shirley May Liira (nee Schwindt**), age 79, of White Rock, BC, went to be with the Lord on April 6, 2020. She was born to Rev. Ross and Bertha Schwindt in Kincardine, Ontario.

Shirley leaves behind the love of her life, best friend, and partner in over 50 years of ministry, Rev. Bert Liira, to whom she was married for fifty-six years. She is greatly missed by her three children, Lorine Moore (Steven), Mary-Louise Marcus (Glenn) and Norman Liira. She was the proud grandmother of Matthew Moore (Kasi), Nicholas Moore (Dominique), Wesley Moore, Emilee Miller (Xander), Melissa Marcus and Michelle Marcus, and the great-grandmother of Caleb, Aaron, and Jakob. She is survived by her four brothers – Wilbert, Bruce, Peter and Keith – and by her two sisters – Ruth and Marilyn.

As a pastor's child, Shirley grew up in various cities and towns within Western Ontario. An accomplished pianist, she began providing piano accompaniment for youth meetings, church services, and special events at a very early age (and never stopped!). She graduated from Teacher's College in Hamilton (ON) and taught grades 6, 7 and 8 in St. Catharines, Sault Ste. Marie and Dundas (ON).

Bert was a student at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College when he and Shirley met. They were married in Sault Ste. Marie in 1963 and moved to Dundas in 1964 to begin their years of pastoral ministry together. Over their lifetime of ministry, they pastored churches in the Eastern & Western Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia districts of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). After retiring

from full-time ministry, they continued to do interim pastoral work in various locations.

Shirley and Bert felt the call of God upon their lives, and worked steadfastly as a team throughout all of their years of pastoral ministry. Shirley became a credential holder with the PAOC in 1984, receiving her Certificate of Recognition for her years of ministry experience. She was on staff as the Minister of Music in the churches that they pastored in Orleans (ON), Sarnia (ON), and Richmond (BC).

Shirley loved the Lord with all her heart, and dedicated her life to helping others. She made an impact on countless children, youth and adults while leading children's programs, choirs for all ages, and orchestras for youth and adults. She always found time to chat with newcomers, laugh with friends, and give encouragement to those who were discouraged, making each person feel special, needed and loved. She created a loving, stable home-life for her children, even home-schooling the Liira's adopted son, Norman, for several years. She was a warm and devoted mother and a proud grandmother and great-grandmother, taking great delight in the activities and accomplishments of her children and grandchildren. Her love for her husband burned as brightly at the end of her life as it did when they were first married.

Shirley loved to read numerous newspapers, arrange music, work in her garden, refinish old furniture and make fudge for the people she loved. She was still playing the piano for occasional services and events until she became ill. Shirley took to heart the words, "Only one life, will soon be past -- only what's done for Christ will last". She spent her life helping others… it was a life well lived.

Our family would like to thank everyone who prayed for Shirley and Bert when they were both in the hospital, struggling with Covid-19. We would also like to thank the wonderful medical staff at the Abbotsford Hospital (BC) who took care of

Shirley during her last days there.

Given the Covid-19 restrictions, cremation took place in April 2020. A live Zoom memorial service will take place for the family of Shirley Liira on August 15, 2020. This memorial service will be recorded, and a link to the recording will be posted on Shirley Liira's Facebook page for friends to watch at a later date if they wish to do so.

If you so desire, donations to **ERDO – Emergency Relief & Development Overseas (PAOC)** – **https://www.erdo.ca --** would be appreciated by the family.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

# Messages of Condolence

It was always such a delight to spend time with Shirley. He joyous chatter lifted one's spirits, and her sparkling eyes showed her enthusiasm for just about everything. My condolences to Bert and the family. She will be missed bu all of us. Ruth

**— Ruth Ratz**

My family and I will always cherish the memories we shared with both Shirley and Bert (what a great team!) when they did an interim senior pastor run at Evangel in Montreal for about a year. Shirley always made people, regardless of who they were, feel dignified, special, gifted and significant. Her laughter and love of life was always bubbling over and I can still smell and taste that fudge! Thank God for the hope we have of a glorious reunion on the great Day!

**— Joe Friedland**

I will so miss my “big” sister. I enjoyed our calls to each other. She was soft spoken and her mind remembered everything; she was also encouraging at all times. At my youngest age she encouraged me in life and music. She took me to the hairdresser for my first time. I was so proud of it. She encouraged me to sing my first solo with her accompanying me in church and she said I sang really, really good. I was her junior bridesmaid, I was so proud to wear my first pair of heels. I have. Zillion wonderful memories and loved her very much. I am blessed to call her my sister. I know the whole family will miss her greatly. I send my deepest heartfelt sympathies to each one and pray God will comfort you all in your time of grief. Sending love from her little sister Marilyn and my husband Ted.

**— Marilyn Schwindt-Burmaster**

Norman. I am so sorrey man, I am so sorrey, you had to go through this. I never meet your parents, but I have seen you post pics of them, your mom she seemed like a beautiful person. Stay strong brother, need anything you call, do not hesitate for a minute.

**— Ray**

We want to express our love any sympathy to Bert and family on the passing of our dear friend Shirley.

**— Sharon Starratt**

There is no one who had a greater impact on my life than Bert & Shirley Liira. From the day they first met me, they saw something in me that no one else did and they showed me through their actions that they believed in me. Shirley loved and supported me like I was her own. She taught me to love, laugh, and live life in ways I never would have dreamed possible.

Today, I train teams around leadership. I invite people to share stories about who has influenced them and then I always take time to talk about the Liiras.

Shirley Liira lived life like few others and set the bar high on how to love unconditionally.

Thank you Shirley, and Pastor Liira, for lives well lived.

**— Rob Dale**

Bert and Shirley came to Dundas just after we and they were married, so got to know them at that time. Our first children were born within a few months of each other.

This is a challenging time for those losing loved ones. May God comfort her family with his grace and peace. Knowing that Shirley’s love for her saviour continues in His presence .

**— Julie and Tom Lumsden**

Shirley was an extraordinary servant of God. You never left her presence without feeling lighter and encouraged. Her laughter and sense of fun will long be remembered. Such an amazing wife, mother, and minister of the Gospel and music! She was always willing to share Pastor Bert ‘s and her wonderful stories of their life knowing Jesus and the difference He makes! God bless and comfort Pastor Bert and all your dear family! We love you all!!!

**— Debbie & Robin Oakley**

Shirley was, in so many ways, my rock while I was in Orleans. I will always remember her with great affection.

**— Sue Henker**

A very special lady who invested much time in our grandchildren Katy, Troy and Tyler Weatherly in the Christmas and Easter Concerts and Children's Choir at Richmond Pentecostal Church. Our love and prayers are with Bert who was my Classmate at EPBC.

**— Lorena Crocker**

In 1971, lily. and I and our two children moved to Agincourt. We attended Shepard Gospel Temple where Bert and Shirley were the pastoral team in the church. Shirley was remarkable, filled with enthusiastic and ideas and always an encourager. She brought life to any conversation and insights to issues and concerns. Lily and I will always remember her gracious and loving support for us as a family, and for my work in those days, with Youth for Christ. What a superb Christian, such an able partner in ministry and a remarkable model of Christian life. We remember her fondly. And to Bert and your family, May your many memories renew your spirit and remind you of the constant faithfulness of our Lord.

**— Brian Stiller**

Shirley was my choir leader at Richmond Pentecostal church' along with my young daughter Michelle...Shirley made Christmas a special time ...my mom was in the dramas as well...we loved her and Bert...will always be grateful for the memories.

**— Deborah Johnston**

We send our condolences to Pastor Bert Liira and all the family, and pray the comfort of the Holy Spirit in your lives. We know she is missed tremendously by all of you, as she is to us.

**— Idinha and Michele Haapamaki**

We have many fond memories of Sweet Shirley Her love of people, caring spirit and joyous laughter She was a Gem for Jesus Forever missed Always remembered
Our sincere condolences, love and prayers to Bert and his family
Hugs

**— Carl & Faye Johnson**

I met Bert and Shirley Liira in the 80s when I was at the church they pastored in Orléans Ontario when I visited for a missions meeting . Later when they came to Montreal as interim pastors at Evangel I had many opportunities to chat with Shirley at church or a nearby coffee shop; she became a great friend and I had more than my share of her famous fudge. She stayed in touch when they returned to BC. Her sense of humour and jovial ways will be missed.
Pastor Liira and the rest of the family may God continue to comfort you as you grieve her passing and miss her greatly.

**— Wendy Lashley**

I remember Bert & Shirley well as senior Interim pastor at Evangel Church in Montreal years ago.
This is where I learned to love and appreciate Shirley for all the warmth and friendship she showered on all of us. Her smile and many talents will forever be remembered. She will be missed by all.

**— Solange Brunet**

Aunt Shirley was such a kind , sweet light in this world. Her warmth was infectious and I'll never be able to have fudge again without thinking of her... condolences and love in this hard time from myself and David.

**— Stephanie Liira**

Shirley was such a great lady! She was a model pastor's wife, so kind and caring, and she always looked so nice. She was so talented, and I counted it a real privilege to be involved in music ministry with her when they pastored in Sarnia. I remember the wonderful musicals she put on, how she would sometimes go without sleep for days while she worked tirelessly on the music and the amazing props; she certainly gave it her all. I used to enjoy her old stories that involved her family and my Hord/Thirsk relatives. I will certainly miss her cards and phone calls which always included some good laughs; she certainly was a lot of fun. Rob and I were both so saddened at the news of her passing, and would like to convey our condolences to her family (who we also really enjoyed) at this difficult time.

**— Janice (Hord) Cassells**

Supper Grateful to God for Shirley. I met her in Richmond Pentecost Church as Pastor Bert Liira’s wife. At the first Women’s Ministry meeting I picked her name as my secret sister. Unbeknownst to me, she had picked my name as her secret sister! From that day on God helped us to build a beautiful forever friendship-marked with joy, laughter, God stories, tears and prayers! My life is better for knowing her here!Thank you pastor Bert and Shirley for being a blessing to so many us! In just a little while I will see her in the presence of our Saviour Jesus Christ! Until then I pray for her family whom she cherished, that God will comfort them with His Love and Peace at this time of grief.

**— Su Watson**

Our sincere condolences to Bert and all the family! May the Lord continue to comfort and hold you in His loving arms! Erikoisen rakkaat terveiset ”vanhalle ystävälle” Bertille!□ □

**— Leo & Helen Laakso**

Sending my love and prayers to Bert and your beautiful family. My Mother, Elaine, sent her condolences too

**— Mark Maves**

Our prayers and sympathies are with each of you especially at this time.
We have so many memories of Shirley. Our lives are truly blessed as Shirley and Bert poured us.
Shirley had a gift for making sure everyone was included. She used music to draw people of all ages into faith.
She could always be counted on for a smile and a cake.

**— Doug and Kim Stringer**

I had the awesome opportunity to go through my teen years with Lori . I watched her and Steve date and had a lot of laughs with Mary Louise What a wonderful family
Mrs Liira could light up a room Pastor Liira is such a wonderful man of God. Great missed.

**— Karen mcdonald**

We greatly enjoyed and appreciated Shirley's Mimii try in Music as I sang many Soolos with her accompanying me at Richmond Penticostal Church.. Sam and I certainly miss her very much. Shirley was indeed a wonderful Hand Maiden of the Lord who served the Lord with all her heart and served Him faithfully to the end. We will always fodly remember her Christmas and Easter Productions blessing thousands over the years. Pastor Bert and Shirley Liira have been one of the best Senior Pastor and wife whose ministry we enjoyed and were blessed. Our deepest condolences to Ps. Bert, Laurie & Steven and the rest of the family.
Blessings, Sam & Ranjii
Surrey, BC. Canada.

**— RANJINI ALANGARAMONEY**

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/liira-nee-schwindt-shirley-may

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