

Mary Anne Searcy

FEBRUARY 7, 2017

Anne was born in Vancouver to Reg and Dot McWilliams. She joined her sister Joan in a happy family unit. Anne graduated from Magee High School in 1952. That summer she took a job as life guard and swimming instructor at Cultus Lake Camp. There she met the camp director, George Searcy. They were married in 1953. In 2016 Anne and George celebrated their sixty-third wedding anniversary.



Their marriage was a partnership in service to the church. For four years Anne supported George as he studied at Union College. They then began their work together through congregations in Lillooet & Pemberton, Oliver, Osoyoos & Okanagan Falls followed by West Burnaby, Shaughnessy Heights, Collingwood and Dunbar Heights.

Anne was the energetic hub of the family which grew through the years. Ed was born in 1954 in Penticton, Kathy was born in Lillooet in 1958 and David followed in 1963 in Oliver. Wendy with Ed and Naryn with Dave added more blessings to this family. Anne and George now have six grandchildren (Matthew, Joel, Adrienne, Anneke, Taslyn & Stephen), and eight great grandchildren (Madison, Hannah, Nathaniel, Naomi, Emily, Bennett, Baiet & Jacob) and oh so many nephews and nieces. Anne was proud of the brood and loved to see them coming through the door. They all loved their Granny and Aunty Anne.

In the 1960's and 70's Anne became active in Christian Education in the United Church. When the New Curriculum was first introduced, Curriculum Consultants were trained to be available for leading Observation Practice Schools for teachers. Anne was among these leaders who received training. Anne and her colleagues volunteered their time and expertise for several years, leading Observation Practice Schools throughout the Lower Mainland and some on Vancouver Island. In that same period Anne was involved in the development of a Parent Participation Pre-school at West Burnaby United and a non-profit Day Care Society at Shaughnessy Heights United. Anne also sat on numerous boards including being an early member of the BC Society for Children and Youth. Her passion for the nurture and education of children led Anne back to school. In 1986 she graduated from UBC with a Bachelor of Education. In tracing the history of children's ministry in British Columbia Conference of the United Church, Mary Nicholl writes:

"It is not possible to describe children's ministry in B.C. Conference without highlighting the work of Anne Searcy, former BC Conference Minister of Education and Nurture (1982-1995). During her time on staff, many working groups met and worked on significant resources for congregations. Books and curricula were created and shared with congregations and individuals in BC Conference. Resources such as the book Ariel Goes to Church, the Whole People of God curriculum, and Seeds and Sowers were created.

During Anne's time on staff, a variety of educational events provided a high level of education and training to both lay and ordered people ministering to children and families. One such event was the Children and Youth Institute at Naramata Centre which continued after her retirement and was last held in the early 2000s.

Anne Searcy helped to shift the work with children in BC Conference and point towards a particular way of understanding this ministry. She recognized that

children have their own spiritual life. As Gaye Sharpe noted in her 2008 report to BC Conference, "A Way Forward: Children and Family Ministry in BC Conference," Anne helped congregations: recognize that we need to pay attention to the language being used in worship, adults need to honor a child's own experience of God, and we all need to find ways to nurture children's spirituality and to recognize their sense of wonder.

As a result of Anne Searcy's work, B.C. Conference has a legacy of strong ministry with children. Many younger clergy and diaconal ministers benefited from this conference ministry and possess a deep experiential basis for what intergenerational ministry and ministry with children feels and looks like. They feel confident in welcoming children, involving children in worship, providing care, and encouraging quality Christian education."

In retirement Anne and George settled into their home at Crescent Beach on the property that her parents had purchased many years before. There they became active members of Crescent United Church. In recent years Anne has been weakened by lung damage caused by a disease known as B.O.O.P. that drained her energy and restricted her activity. Anne died peacefully, surrounded by family on February 7, 2017. We are grateful for the care she has received from Dr. Nasreen Kahlil, Dr. Charles King and Dr. Michael O'Brien. We appreciate the words of peace and prayer that many have sent.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, March 18th at 2:00 pm at Crescent United Church (2756 127th Street, Surrey, BC). In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the charity of your choice.

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

Messages of Condolence

When a good and faithful servant passes into the arms of God leaving blessings and memories behind, we say Thanks be to God for the gift of Anne.

My sister Mar has great memories of having Anne as her teacher at Naramata.

Peace be with the Searcy family at this difficult time.

— **Lorraine**

To my good friend Ed and to all the family of Anne, please accept my condolences as Anne sets out on this great journey. She leaves you, and untold others, and the whole church saddened at her passing. With deep respect and gratitude for Anne, I send you greetings and my prayers for the healing, wellbeing, and peace of your hearts.

Peter Short

— **Peter Short**

Anne was dearly loved and admired by all who met her. She was an inspiration to many. I will never forget her friendliness and enthusiasm in addition to her zest for life. Anne was held in high regard by many in the UCC. May she rest in peace. My sincere condolences to the family. Reta.

— **Reta Robertson**

We have much to be grateful for. Thank you Anne for being my inspiration while struggling to keep youth ministry going.

— **Hanny Kooyman**

Anne was unfailingly warm, insightful and kind. Her legacy is rich with blessing and will be deeply cherished. Anne and all her family are in my prayers.

— **Louise Mangan**

What an interesting and beautiful obituary. I am grateful for time spent with Anne on the Education for Church Leadership committee and the Executive of the General Council Division of Ministry Personnel and Education when I served there. Her wise counsel was a gift, especially in challenging times. My sincere sympathy to all in her family.

— **Steven Chambers**

Anne was my cousin, as was Joan. Their Mother, Dorothy, and mine, Hilda, were sisters. Dorothy was the oldest Lockie child and Hilda the youngest. Because of that fact, we had a large age gap as children. Then my family moved to the U.S. when I was only 6 yrs. old. We did not know our cousins. After my father died in 1991, Anne and Joan wrote beautiful condolence letters to us. I responded and the rest is history, as they say. @ beautiful souls were now added to our lives, along with their families. We have brought grandchildren to visit George and Anne in Crescent City and Anne and I have e-mailed and talked for the last 20+ years. She was so very special. Funny, wise, strong, loving....We will feel this gap in our lives forever. May she rest in peace. She deserves that.

— **Wendy Kramer**

I got to know Anne through my work on the Children's Working Unit of BC Conference. She was knowledgeable, enthusiastic, determined and so much more. Above all, she was passionate about the care that children should receive in our churches and worked far more hours than she was paid to make sure that the United Church had the resources it needed.

Over the years, I have remembered her commitment and her care and know that the church was made richer by her work and her love.

— **Barbara Langton**

Dear George and Family:

In hearing of Anne's death, my memory goes back to years ago and working with Anne in B C Conference. She was a bundle of contagious and life giving energy, given to fresh visioning of ministry with children, firm in her convictions, so ready and willing to offer support and absolutely delightful as a partner in ministry. For me there was a 'sparkle' to Anne that was, indeed, like a 'spark' which indicated that something fresh and innovative was about to happen. I can picture her now moving quickly through the Conference office with papers in her hand, ready to advocate for the children of our church, insisting that children be given a place at the table of our common life. Truly, a person and a ministry to be celebrated.

My sympathy to you, George and to each of the members of your family,
Don Robertson

— **Don Robertson**

George, I am so sorry to hear about the loss of your wife, Anne. And Ed, for the loss of your mother. I did meet her once or twice back in the 90s. My prayers are with you and your family.

Sheila Morris, former Executive Assistant to the Principal, VST

— **Sheila Morris**

My condolences on your loss. I hope you are able to find the strength as a family to get through this difficult time.

— **Charly Ranu**

So sorry to hear about Anne. She was a wonderful women. My condolences to all the family. You are all in my prayers.

— **Shelley Jones**

Deepest condolences to George, Ed and families. Anne was a warm and wise colleague, always interested and respectful, caring and supportive. I am grateful for her part in my life, and for her contribution to the lives of so many. All

Blessings, Derek

— **Derek Evans**

It was a pleasure working with Anne on the conference children's committee. She demonstrated a positive , encouraging leadership style and she made things happen. A wonderful role model to many who worked with children and youth. Her passing is a loss to many.

— **Janie Goodwin**

I was one of Anne's colleagues for a while at BC Conference many years ago. I remember her joy, humour and bustling energy. She was a delight to work with. I send love and condolences especially to the Searcy family.

— **Bryan TEIXEIRA**

When I remember Anne, I see her smiling face, feel her effervescent energy! I have a saying on my office wall "Be the kind of woman that when your feet hit the floor each morning the devil says "Oh Crap, She's up!" Anne was the epitome of that kind of woman!

It is good to know her legacy lives on in children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. My prayers are with you, George, Ed and your extended family.

— **Elsie Manley-Casimir**

Dear Ed - My sincere condolences to you and your family on the passing of your mother. What a beautiful legacy she leaves behind after such a generous life well-lived. May your faith continue to be your consolation and eternal life your hope.

— **Louise Churchfield**

Deepest sympathy to you, George, and your family.

Sincerely, Shirley, Wendy and Donna Borelli.

— **Shirley Borelli**

Anne was a bustle of energy and a fountain of inspiration. Her vision for and commitment to Ministry with (and by) Children was indomitable. During our time together on Conference Staff in the 80's, my work with Youth and Young Adults found a ready supporter in Anne. Her example, experience, wisdom and encouragement were invaluable. I learned a lot from Anne, and we shared many moments of laughter and excitement. I cherish the memories and give thanks for the gift that she was. My condolences to George and Ed, and to all her family.

— **Gary Paterson**

Anne served on the Ministry with Children Unit of the Division of Mission in Canada and became the Chair. In that capacity, she fostered the development of the Loaves & Fishes Curriculum and the introduction of The Whole People of God. She played a key role in the involvement of children in worship and communion in the United Church and led Children at Council when General Council met in Montreal.

Anne and I led many Ministry with Children related workshops together across the country and always worked so well together. We stayed in each other's homes often and became good friends. Her commitment to her family and her work was unquestionable.

In recent years, Anne has been a role model for dealing with disability and declining health. Instead of bemoaning what she could no longer do, she accepted her current situation and enjoyed life to the full as it was given. I will miss her physical presence in my life but her spirit will never leave me. My deepest sympathy to George and all of her family to whom she has been so generous and good as they have been to her.

— **Yvonne Stewart**

My condolences to you all. Although our families didn't spend time together the way Cousin's should, I remember being so excited to have them at the same high school. I am not sure if I ever met Anne, but the sadness in losing a parent is universal. Hugs to you all.

— **Bonnie Mellor (nee Jewett)**

I was blessed to have Anne, from whom I learned many good things about ministry with and for children, as a mentor during my studies at Vancouver School of Theology. She was a blessing to children, to the church, and to her family. Our prayers for comfort go out to George, Ed, Kathy, David and their families.

— **Janice Love**

I have many happy memories of Anne and George at Cultus Lake.

Donna McTaggart

— **Donna McTaggart**

Our condolences go out to Wendy, Ed, your Dad and sister Kathy as well as all the grandchildren and great grandchildren who will really miss her.

We remember your mom from family gatherings in the early years of our marriages. She was a very special lady.

Cherish your memories and remember she will always be with you in your heart.

Love Ken & Cathy

— **Ken and Cathy McKillop**

Dear George and family

Our days at Dunbar Heights were enhanced by having you and Anne as leaders and friends. You both set the bar very high in all aspects of your life. It was a pleasure having both of you in our lives.

Fondly remembered,

Marj & Peter Gray

— **Marj and Peter Gray**

Dear Uncle George, I am really sorry to hear Aunt Anne has passed away. You two have been an awesome team steering a steady course of goodness through a sometimes difficult world. I feel very fortunate to have been part of that. It was particularly beautiful seeing her last summer full of her cheeky spark, going on about Mom not having to wash up the dishes as she 'had to practice the piano'! I am certain that spark and the waves of goodness she built up will keep resonating through her work, you and your children and all of us she helped. Big hug and all our love from the depths of Wiltshire, Nephew John

— John Comparelli

Our love and blessings to all of you with the loss of our dear Auntie Anne. She was a wonderful friend and Aunt to all of our McLaren family. Her gifts of sewing, laughter and love will always be treasured. She lives on in our hearts. Always with our love. The McLarens and Richards families.

— Allan and Betty Richards

Love and prayers to the whole family. George and Anne, you were hugely important to me as I discovered the United Church and learned new ways of being in children's ministry. Anne bubbled over with energy, passion and possibilities for children in the church. It was like trying to catch a spoonful under a waterfall. Blessings to you all.

— Linnea Good

I have such gratitude for the life of Anne. We worked together for a few years on the Children's Working Unit of BC Conference. She was a wonderful mixture of energy, determination, creativity and compassion - and was an inspiration to so many. Sending love to George and all the extended family. May you feel wrapped in the warmth of all the stories that will be shared in this time of celebrating Anne's life. Love, Ariel

— Ariel Creighton

Anne was a wonderful colleague. Her ministry in Christian Education on the BC Conference staff was not only talented and highly respected but also creative and facilitating. Her colleagues all loved her contribution to the staff team. It was a large active, committed team in her day, 13 Conference Ministers and 6 support staff, and we all knew she was the model for focus, perseverance and dedication. Anne was a wonderful friend in congregational life at Shaughnessy Heights and between our families. What fun it was to visit the Searcys and share stories about congregations and her family's children.

Anne was a gracious host - for coffee and lunch visits in her home and garden. Great memories of a great person. We extend our compassion and understanding to George, Ed, Kathy and David. Gordon and Valerie How

— Gordon and Valerie How

Dear George,

We have only just learned of Anne's death so we come late to the celebration of her life. It's hard to think of anything we could add to the tributes that others have offered. Let's see . . .there IS one more.

georgeandanne, anneandgeorge . . .for all that you each made your own contributions to the healing of people and of creation there is the witness of your life together that speaks to us today. In the course of your 63+ years you dealt with all the big things - births and graduations, deaths and failures - even manse committees! And you had such fun!

This part isn't fun. May you continue to be strengthened and led by the spirit of truth and may you know joy.

— **Ellen and Bob Smith**

I'm so sorry to hear of Anne's passing. My condolences, George, Ed , Kathy and David and to your families. I was privileged to be a colleague of Anne's in the mid 80's at BC Conference. It was a wonderful place to work and Anne's cheerful and wise presence was no small part of the reason it was wonderful. I will never forget her bustling in and out of the office carrying heavy boxes of resources for churches up and down the stairs to and from her car with such enthusiasm. I learned a lot from her wisdom in knowing where and when to push or pull back. Thank you for sharing her with the church. My prayers are with you.

— **Barbara Anderson**

BC Conference and, in particular, the BC Conference staff grieve along with you with the loss of Anne.

As the testimonies above show, Anne was well-respected and loved by her colleagues and those who worked closely with her. She was instrumental in the United Church in creating the climate and building the skills that have blossomed into a deep and meaningful ministry with children. Together with her son, Ed, she pioneered the inclusion of children in worship in a welcoming, respectful way.

Recently we in the Conference, led by Anne's proteges, have been working to reinvigorate training for leaders with children. As we planned, Anne was often in our thoughts and in our conversations, not simply as a reminder of the past but as one whose ideas, enthusiasms and aphorisms continue to encourage and guide.

Anne helped teach us all how to follow the One who said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

— Doug Goodwin

I first met Anne when she was a "mature student" at UBC. I so appreciated her wise council ... she saw life in a much different way than us 20-somethings. I remember thinking she had real "joie de vie" and loved each and every day. Our paths crossed again decades later when I arrived at Crescent United, and she was still a wise and wonderful woman. I will miss her. My thoughts and prayers with the entire family.

— Lynn Onions

As I recall Anne's commitment and creativity in her work with children and families I am reminded of how blessed we are in British Columbia Conference with the great cloud of witnesses by which we are surrounded. As with so many other colleagues who worked in the Conference Office the presence of Anne's sense of humour, her energetic style and her care for all those with whom she worked remains very present in my heart.

My thoughts and prayers will continue to be with George, Ed, Kathy and David and the extended family of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Brian Thorpe

— **Brian Thorpe**

to the Searcy family, my deepest sympathy for your loss. Anne was an amazing minister with children and their leaders. She was one of my mentors, I learned so much about how to value and affirm children and their place in the church. Her resources are still on my shelves and her voice of love and joyfilled spirit in her advocacy for children is still in my head. I thank God for Anne and the ways her vision and ministry continue to affect this United Church of ours.

— **Pamela Jeffery**

I remember Anne with great fondness, admiration and thankfulness. She was a great help to me when I took on the staff position in charge of Children and Family Ministry at West Van United in 1985. She willingly gave me time, wisdom and practical suggestions on how to move the ministry forward for children as part of the church today and not just for the future. (I also must thank Ed for his ideas on how to include children in the worship service.)

I wish you all peace at this time of loss and comfort in your faith.

Eleanor Reemeyer, West Van

— **Eleanor Reemeyer**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/searcy-mary-anne>

Printed on June 17, 2026