

Helen Dianne Wagner

DECEMBER 17, 2011

We don't fully realize or appreciate what we have until it's gone. This can be said of my mother. Helen Dianne Wagner born in 1951 at Mission Memorial Hospital and died on Saturday, December 17, 2011 at Abbotsford Regional Hospital.

She was the youngest child of seven from Gerhard and Susanna Janzen. Her siblings from oldest to youngest are George who married Martha, Mary who married Al, Abe who married Nettie, Susan who married John, Anne (who ascended to Heaven in 1999) and was married to Henry, and David (who ascended to Heaven in 1971). There was a 20-year age difference between George Janzen, the eldest child, and my mom Helen, the youngest.

Mom grew sentimental and held important things dear and close to her heart. Her bible is tattered and worn, as a well-used bible should be. She received it from a friend in 1991 and it is full of highlighting and underlining. One verse that keeps coming up is Romans 8:1 which reads "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus".... I believe it spoke to mom's life. The road of her life was winding and filled with potholes. As tough as it was, it never slowed her down or made her give up. She persevered.

One of mom's favourite poems was one entitled "Footprints". I remember buying a framed copy as a gift. She had it hung near the front door for many years and it's



still there. The poem was printed on a beautiful photograph depicting footprints on a sandy ocean beach, the bright morning sun peering from behind the silhouette of a jagged rocky cliff. I think she liked it because it characterizes so many of our lives, and it characterized hers. The Lord carried her through her troublesome times.

Mom was baptized around the age of 20, about 1970. I was baptized at the age of 30 on November 7, 2004. Mom was so proud of my decision and public proclamation for Jesus Christ. Mom has been the greatest influence in my life by her example and encouragement. Without her I surely would have strayed further off course or languished in apathy.

One of the last photos I could find of mom was taken on October 31, 2011. That was about one week before she was admitted to the hospital. I have pored over thousands of photos this past week and some of the most painful ones to view are the most recent photographs. The more recent the photo, the more painful it is. It feels like she just slipped through my fingers. If only I could have closed my grasp more quickly and strongly she would still be here.

The last six weeks of her life were in the hospital with a brief, hours-long respite that ended with her re-admission. We knew her condition was serious in nature but we expected her to recover enough to return home. She received many visitors and even more prayers to which she expressed thanks. At times, she did not have the strength to eat. Sometimes she struggled to speak. Other times she was able to sit up and take short walks, have conversations, and laugh. I was lulled into a false sense of security. Mom was going to be fine. Now she's more than fine, but I'm still sad and I miss her.

Mom... aged 60 years, definitely not long enough, but I'm grateful to God for sharing 37 of them with her. I look forward to our Heavenly reunion and celebration. Mom was full of the joy of life, hope for the future and love... love for

her family, her friends, her neighbours, and for God.

This spring we will plant a tree in her honour to serve as a living memory.

I'll leave you now with three of the most important things mom taught me: Put your faith in Jesus Christ alone, pray to God often, and give of yourself earnestly.

I'm still learning.

I love you, mom.

Thank-you all.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence at the family's online memorial register.

Messages of Condolence

Helen was a good friend of mine. She was transparent.

I liked her openness. I am sorry that I will have to wait until heaven to see her again.

God's strength and also the joy of heaven go with you continually .

— **Catalina Gutknecht**

I miss Helen a lot. Her regular phone calls are not there any more. I look at the phone and wait but it doesn't ring. We chatted nearly every day. Would have been good to get together more but she also had many friends to "coffee" with, with I'm so glad for. I so much appreciate the lessons she taught me about love - to do it unconditionally. She did it so naturally - one of her many gifts.

TO THE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN: We pray for the Lord's peace and continued trust in Him to see you through this difficult time. Don't hesitate to shed tears as you remember the time you had with Mom and Grandma.

— S. Borne

Today, I reflect on the time that I was so fortunate to have spent with Helen. She was like a second mom to me growing up. When I needed her, she was always there with comforting open arms. I will always remember her laughter & her teaching me about Jesus. She also was an avid baker and I was always eager to learn from her and watch her precision when it came to details in her seemingly effortless work. One of the greatest joys I do treasure the most was her unconditional love for me and for others. She showed her love for her children on her sleeve! Kristina & Rob you are my family always and forever, even though we don't see each other often, it is always like just picking up where we left off last! That is and will always remain a very special bond to me! I am grateful for the time I was able to share with Helen. Thank you Jesus for your precious gift of love, for without it, I might not be where I am at today in life!

— Renee Allard



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/wagner-helen-dianne>

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