

## **Celebration of the life of Betsy Smith (May 26, 1935 – July 8, 2024)**

Isaiah 35:1-4, 8-10; Psalm 91; 1Corinthians 13:1-13; John 14:1-6 || The Reverend Amy Whitcomb Slemmer, Esq. || Saturday, September 7, 2024 || St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Hanover, MA 02339

*Happy from now on are those who die in the Lord! So it is, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors. AMEN*

I am honored to be with you this morning to celebrate the life of Betsy Smith. To give thanks for the investment of time and her dedication to the life of our parish community. Both as Reverend Claude's wife – which brought with it some distinct responsibilities, discomforts and privileges, and also as a member of St. Andrew's in her own right – not as our Priest-in-Charge's plus-one, but as an accomplished musician, choir member and teacher. Who loved to travel, was a skilled lay eucharistic minister and who found comfort in this sanctuary during her lifetime. It is a privilege for us to be able to offer the same comfort and reassurance to one another as we give thanks for Betsy's life.

I imagine some of you have joined us this morning, undoubtedly as a result of the love of music that Betsy fostered in you. I know others remember her mastery of the organ and her voice as a member of the choir. Perhaps for you, her voice continues to echo in this historic sanctuary.

What a gift it is that Betsy planned this service – and thanks to her daughter Sarah we have worked to be as faithful to her planning as possible. The choice of readings and hymns are those that meant a great deal to Betsy and reflect her own dance with the divine and her understanding of the love of God – both her love for God -- and God's redeeming and invincible love for her.

How many times must Besty have heard the reading from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians with its poetic reflection on the nature of Love. It is a favorite for Episcopal weddings. Reminding us of the gift of love as patient, kind, not envious or boastful arrogant or rude. Love is not only wonderful, but it is eternal. When we have the pleasure of hearing these passages from Corinthians at a funeral service like this morning's

we remember that the gift of Love is of God and God is Love - "when the complete comes, the partial comes to an end.....but love abides" Love continues. Betsy's love of the Lord is face to face, and our love and grief at her dying will continue to evolve.

Our promise, is the promise of new life, where Betsy is whole and her full and very best self, united with God and ALL the company of heaven.

Betsy made an indelible mark on St. Andrew's, and as the newest Rector, it is my deepest honor to give thanks for her work and ministry, as it is part of what has brought this remarkable parish to this point. And this parish owes a debt of gratitude to Betsy and her family for the investment of time and love and ministry that has flourished here.

To Betsy's children: Sarah, Lisa, Jennifer and David and all of the family members present - Thank you for loaning us your parents and grandparents. For allowing us to use some of their time and attention that might otherwise have been spent with you. We are grateful to you, for today's celebration of Betsy's life, as well as the opportunity to thank you and to invite you to know part of what Betsy and Claude's life and legacy has become, in the lives that they touched at St. Andrew's and at the community that they upheld. As we now uphold and celebrate them in their eternal walk with Christ.

Amen+

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**Words of Remembrance by Grandson Tim Harding**

Good morning

Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to say a few words about my grandmother, or Mutti as she was affectionately known, but have admittedly struggled with the best way to express proper remembrances. There is just so much to say about Mutti – a talented artist and musician, caring mother and doting grandmother, extremely well educated, which for a woman of her time was an incredible achievement, and a world traveler. But above all else when I think of my grandmother I always come back to one thing – her endless capacity for love. Love of God, love of music, and of course, love of family.

Given today's setting, it does feel appropriate to start with her love of God. Mutti was a devout Christian. Beyond her weekly church appearances, she regularly attended faith-based lectures and seminars, headlined by the annual Christian Scientists meeting in New York City, to which we got to tag along from time to time. As an aside, this event was a highlight for my mother in particular, as she got to spend all day walking around Manhattan in the August heat trying to wrangle anywhere between 2 and 4 children and nephews who were, on a basically constant basis, fighting and arguing with each other. I for one always enjoyed the trip into the city, and fondly remember one year, on the ride home, watching my Uncle Dave eat a Triple Whopper from Burger King in about two and a half bites, which as a 9 year old boy I thought was pretty cool. You are likely unsurprised to learn that my Grandmother found that particular act revolting.

Beyond churchgoing itself, Mutti was the embodiment of the teachings of God. She urged kindness and empathy, and preached the Golden Rule, especially to us as kids, regularly leaning on the teachings of the Bible when giving us lessons after we misbehaved, which for some of us was a regular occurrence. She loved the natural world and all of God's creatures, imparting on us a deep respect for the earth and everything, and everyone, that existed on it.

Of her many loves, perhaps most famous was Mutti's love of music. An incredibly talented musician, she played the organ here at St. Andrew's every Sunday and was a beloved piano teacher to many young students in Norwell and Hanover. She encouraged all of us in our musical endeavors, despite, at least in my brother's and my case, her extraordinary talent not quite making it all the way down to us. Upon any visit to my grandparents house, you were sure to be met by beautiful, classical music as soon as you walked in the door. Regardless of the composer, or the orchestra, you could count on something wonderful and moving and my grandmother knowing every note and the history behind the composition. Mutti loved to share her love of music with the family, starting a tradition of bringing her grandchildren to the Nutcracker every holiday season, which for a few years while I was in college evolved into the Handel and Haydn Society's Baroque Christmas at the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This love of music is shared by her children and grandchildren, and though some of our preferred genres are shall we say not quite her cup of tea, she was always supportive as long as music was in our lives.

And of course, Mutti loved her family and spending time with us in any manner possible. Traveling, in particular, was a favorite, especially spending every August at Treetop in Cornwall with her children, and eventually, grandchildren. Days would be spent together at the lake or

playing tennis or at the family's farm up the road, and evenings spent together reading and playing games around the fireplace, rumikub and boggle being the preferred entertainment. And while ski adventures out west with Matthew and Nathan, Martha's Vineyard weeks with my brother and me, and road trips to Louisville to see Jonathan and Isabel were obvious highlights, she was just as happy to spend an afternoon in Norwell with family whenever she could get it. Mutti so dearly loved spending time with her family and was always looking forward to the next cookout, holiday, day at the beach, or quiet afternoon spent together. In her later years when Mutti would call me, and after a few minutes the conversation would inevitably turn to Nathan and Lauren's beautiful daughter Brooklyn, who Mutti would gush over. She was just so happy to have a great granddaughter and loved her so dearly. And for me it was so comforting to know that even as the rest of her body faded, that endless capacity for love never wavered.

It is of course impossible to quantify love, but I always felt that above all my grandmother loved my grandfather more than anything. And so when you leave here today, I'd encourage you not to leave in sadness but in celebration that she has gone home to him, and that their love, for each other and for all of us, will endure for eternity.

Thank you