

**A Service of Thanksgiving
for the Life of
The Reverend Doctor William Alcock Sturgess
1925 - 2023**



**Friday, May 12, 2023 – 11:00am
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
1585 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M4T 1Z9**

Clergy

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes
The Rev. Fred Demaray

Organist

William Maddox
BMus, FTCL, FCAM

**The Reverend Dr. William Alcock Sturgess Memorial
Order of Service**

*All who are able are invited to stand

Preludes

***Opening Sentences**

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes

***Hymn 588 And Can it Be? (Sagina)**

*And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

*'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.*

*He left his Father's throne above –
so free, so infinite his grace –
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
for, O my God, it found out me!*

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.*

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.*

Invocation

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and
the glory, forever and ever. Amen*

Poem – *The Road Not Taken*

Robert Frost

read by Tyler Cullen, Great Grandson, Ottawa

Scripture - Psalm 23

Romans 8:31-39

Ministry Connections

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes

*Hymn 664 *How sweet the name of Jesus sounds* (St. Peter)

*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear.*

*It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary rest.*

*Dear name! the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury filled
with boundless stores of grace.*

*Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.*

*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.*

*Till then I would thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of thy name
refresh my soul in death.*

Family Memories

Sean Cullen, Grandson, Edmonton

Scripture - Isaiah 43: 1-7

Colossians 1: 9-14

John 14 (selected verses)

Homily

The Rev. Fred Demaray

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Rev. Fred Demaray

Hymn 621 - Dear Lord and Father of mankind (Repton)

*Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise.*

*In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.*

*O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!*

*Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.*

*Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm.*

Benediction

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes

Postlude

Pallbearers - Paul Seiler
Peter Cullen

*A reception will be held in the Friendship Room immediately following the service.
The family look forward to receiving your greetings.*

*A Service of Interment will take place at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery following
the reception.*

Interment will be conducted by William's niece, the Rev. Doctor Anne Simmonds

The Reverend Dr. William Alcock Sturgess

1925 – 2023

It is with celebration of a life well-lived that we announce the peaceful passing of William Sturgess (formerly of Toronto) at 97 years of age after a brief hospitalization. He was the beloved husband of Mary (Simmonds) Sturgess who preceded him in death in 2020. As loving father of Carol (Paul) Seiler of Seattle, Gwen (Peter) Cullen of Kanata and Barbara (Richard) Bergstrom of Edmonton, he remained in touch with technology, enjoying his digital books, current events, and FaceTime contacts. Carol and Barbara were able to be with him just two weeks before he died, and Gwen and Peter were present in the last hours, having been key care partners for William and Mary during the past 13 years.

William (Bill) was one of the last living Canadian Veterans of WW2. On his 90th birthday he visited the beaches of Normandy with Barbara. He remembered vividly his training and it was just a week prior to deployment when the war ended. When visiting the National War Museum he often fascinated children and adults with his memories, proudly wearing his service medal.

In 1952 Bill, Mary and infant Carol sailed south to start 4 years as Canadian Baptist Missionaries in Bolivia, where Gwen was born. On returning to Canada in 1957, he continued as minister of Spring Garden and Agincourt Baptist churches (Toronto), Broadway First Baptist (Winnipeg), and retired as Minister of Pastoral Care at Yorkminster Park Baptist (Toronto) at age 72. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from McMaster University, building on MA and MTh degrees. His undergraduate work was at University of Toronto. His faith was strong, and he was not afraid to talk of mortality for himself as he had done with so many in his pastoral years. He was a member of Ottawa First Baptist and retained on-line contact after COVID impacted in-person involvement.

He was proud of his 6 grandchildren Sean (Edmonton), Trevor (Kanata), Stephanie (Pasadena), Naomi (Seattle), Ryan (Vancouver) and Hilary (Edmonton), and 14 great grandchildren ranging in age from 6 to 18. Grandson Ryan (Vancouver) was especially instrumental from an early age as he coached William with technology skills.

William out-lived younger siblings John (Sturgess), Isobel (Anderson) and Roy (Sturgess), continuing contact with nieces and nephews across Canada and the UK. He pursued his interest in ancestry and found relatives from Scotland to New Zealand, keeping regular email contact in later years. He also loved and enjoyed the extended Simmonds family (of wife Mary) during the decades living in Toronto.

William loved the outdoors, including cross-country skiing, snow shoeing and canoeing. For more than 30 years he curled weekly until just over 90, when he changed to lawn/carpet bowling. An avid reader, his mind stayed sharp with opinions on politics, religion, social concerns, and his family. He was part of the Friends of the Library for U of T before moving to Ottawa for help with caregiving for Mary. He still carried on conversations in Spanish, and slightly less fluently in French and German. In his late 80's and early 90's he volunteered at the Kanata Community Theatre ushering and later as prompter during rehearsals. While battling cancers and treatments, his spirits stayed strong. He retained a three-wheel bike into his early 90's, and in the last 18 months moved to a retirement community for assistance with meals. The family is grateful for the staff and residents at Hazeldean Gardens who became his social community until his hospitalization in early February.

Donations to the following Charities would be gratefully accepted: Canadian Baptist Ministries; The Canadian Cancer Society; The Dementia Society of Ottawa & Renfrew County [in honour of his wife] or The Kanata Little Theatre.

“One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life” - Ps27:4[a]