

Eleanor Whyte



Introduction

We mourn for our sister Eleanor and our thoughts and prayers are with her family and many friends. It is hard when we cannot say good-bye as we would like and so the congregation of St James hope, that this tribute will be a comfort to those who care for Eleanor.

The Service

Gathering/ Call

The Lord, our God says: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you". We have come to this place in this sad time to take our leave of our sister Eleanor Whyte, to remember her life with grief and with gratitude and to commend her to God's grace. Not all who would like to be here today can take their leave in person during these difficult times, but we know that they remember Eleanor and grieve for her from their home today and we can be assured that God is present in every place.

Prayer

Gracious God,

You have given your assurance that you will be our fortress and our strength, our help in times of trouble, you have promised to walk with us, to comfort us and to restore our souls. Trusting in these your promises we bring our grief before you as we also remember Eleanor with gratitude for all that she was to those who knew and loved her.

We give you thanks for a lady who went through the adversities of life with a smile, for a lady who endeavoured to make those around her smile with her and who loved and was loved in return. We give you thanks for Eleanor's many talents, both hidden and in plain sight. May it be a comfort to all that the memories of Eleanor's life will be cherished by many. We give you thanks for your son Jesus Christ who redeemed us so we all may have eternal life, a life without pain, a life without suffering at your right hand. In this time of grief let us all remember that you sent your son so nothing can separate us from your love, let us live in the trust, that Eleanor is now at peace with you, as we all will be.

Loving God,

We entrust Eleanor and ourselves to you in this time of grief, when our loss seems too hard to bear, when we feel lost and hurting, when it seems that nothing can comfort us. May we be able to seek and find your loving presence in this time of pain.

And we pray all this through Jesus Christ, the first to have risen from the dead. AMEN

Hymn: I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

Reading: Isaiah 40, 28-31

Do you not know?

Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31

but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

John 6, 37-40

All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

Eulogy

It is a cause for grief and sorrow that we cannot say goodbye to Eleanor as we would do in different times, but we will take some time to honour her life and to remember who Eleanor was. Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid", (John 14, 27) and so let me share with you my firm belief that Eleanor is now at peace with God as we all will be. Remembering God's grace let us stop and think who Eleanor was to us.

Eleanor Whyte was born on 22 July 1975 in Lanark but spent her first years in Coylton before she found a permanent home with Margaret and her family. From a very young age Eleanor preferred the company of adults to playing with children, and so instead of going to the playground she loved to visit the adult friends of the family for a cup of tea and a biscuit. She was, however loved and loving within her family and was particularly close to Diane who was about Eleanor's own age and to Frances, the youngest. Eleanor always called on Frances, when she wanted to go somewhere or when something was on, especially at Strathayr, where she felt at home and where the staff was exceptionally brilliant, as I was told from credible sources. Especially the birthdays were special, and Eleanor shared many a birthday lunch with best friends Marie, Jaqui and Morag, whom she met there. When she was able to, Eleanor loved to be out and about, be that in Strathayr or in Sutherland house, where she made many friends, be that for birthday lunches or at the bowling club with Frances or venturing to Glasgow

with Marie for a Karaoke session. Eleanor would go whenever she fancied on the spur of the moment, but on Wednesdays, when the money came in nothing could keep her in the house. When she had the opportunity, Eleanor ventured further and was particularly fond of Blackpool. She loved the buzz of the place and the fact that she could stay in a hotel. With her family Eleanor travelled the world. A 30-hour bus trek to Spain, a holiday in Canada and a trip to Florida were all experiences Eleanor enjoyed. Among these Florida stood out, partly because almost the whole family was able to go to a lovely villa with swimming pool, partly because Eleanor loved musicals and everything Disney. And it strikes me that this is not surprising, given that Eleanor had a happy disposition and did not hold with doom and gloom and that being affectionate and kind to boot she wanted those around her to be happy, too.

Eleanor had many talents, some of them came as a surprise even to those who knew her best. After her education at Newton Primary and Rosebank school her aptitude for cooking and baking was recognized at College and so she found a job at the café at Hansel village. At home she put on a marvelous spread, too on special occasions. Her specialty were scones and Jimmy would ask specifically for them.

Eleanor's other talent was for acting and singing and Karaoke was a particular hobby of hers, Whitney Houston being only one of her idols. Her beautiful singing voice was noted among her friends and acquaintances and she used to sing in St James' choir. Eleanor had a strong link to St James', and she went through the Sunday School and Guides, where she attempted her gold badge

and thought highly of guide leader Ina. When she still could she would visit the gift service every year at the very least.

Of course, there were things, Eleanor did not enjoy quite so much. Babysitting was just about tolerable when the wains did not cry or complain, and it is probably fair to say that patience with small children may not have been her strongest point.

This, however, does not take away from Eleanor's sunny and affectionate character and her many friends and caring family will sorely miss her.

The last year or so was a challenge for Eleanor and her health was failing. She was often breathless and tired and could not walk as much as she would have liked, which must have been a considerable frustration for someone as active and sociable as Eleanor. When she was finally admitted to hospital it was particularly hard for everyone in these difficult times that visiting was insufficiently replaced with modern technology. And so, it may be a comfort to us all that Margaret was able to see her in person once more and it is my sincere hope that you can find comfort in the thought that Eleanor was, as I firmly believe, never alone, that God was by her side every minute during her last days and that she is at his side even now.

AMEN

Committal

Jesus said: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Eleanor Whyte is committed into the hands of God in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ who died was buried and rose again for us and is alive and reigns for evermore

Prayer

Loving God,

It was a privilege for all who now mourn for Eleanor to have known in her a kind and caring lady, a lady who saw the sun shine beneath the clouds of life. In giving thanks for Eleanor's life, for the journey we travelled together we commend to you those Eleanor loved the most and who cared for her.

We pray for Margaret and Jimmy, who knew Eleanor the longest, cared for her and saw her grow up, who now grieve for a child that has gone before them. May they find the strength to grieve and the courage to let go when the time is right.

We keep in our prayers Jane and Paul, Robert and Kerry, Maggie and Barry, Joyce and Mark, we remember Frances, Keith and Diane, who grew up with Eleanor shared their earliest memories with her and now have to say good-bye to a sister and sister in law, who leaves a gap, that cannot be replaced. May they find the peace that only you can give

We pray for Michelle and Danielle, Jack, Hal, Barry, Daniel, and Naomi, for Mark, Graham and Damon, for Bethany, Sophie and James and for their families. And we include in our prayer Eleanor's friends Marie, Jaqui, Morag and Paul. May they all find comfort in you and in each other.

We pray for the doctors and nurses of the NHS, who give all their commitment to patients like Eleanor on the frontline and who will grieve for all they cannot save.

As we now return to our daily lives, as we have committed Eleanor's body to God's grace, and prepare to say farewell, whether we can do so in person or have to grieve from the distance of our home, we pray for ourselves, that we may all allow ourselves to acknowledge the pain of loss, that we find the strength to grieve.

We pray for the assurance that after a while the tears of loss will turn into smiles and leave us with happy memories. May we find the faith to trust in Eleanor's resurrection to eternal life, may you grant us all your love and your peace.

For this we pray in Jesus name. AMEN

Benediction

And now may God comfort you with the assurance of His love. And the God who is higher than all our understanding, God the father, son and holy spirit be with us all now and forever. AMEN