



Mrs. Erna Adrian

January 6, 1936 - January 10, 2023

Erna Adrian (nee Martens), beloved wife of Rudi Adrian passed away on January 10, 2023 at the age of 87 years.

Erna's early youth was spent playing with Rudi's sister and many other village children in Furstenwerder, USSR (Ukraine). Her mom (Annie (née Pauls)) and dad's (Peter) marriage bliss was short-lived when the communist officials came to their home and took Erna's dad away. She was only 2 years old at the time. Her mother was hardly 23 years of age with 2 children (Peter Martens) and Erna.

In September 1943, all the villagers had to leave as they were forcefully evicted. Everyone in the Molotchna and Chortiza colonies loaded all their belongings on horses and wagons. They moved slowly through mud, cold and snow. They arrived in Poland and lived in a refugee camp for nearly a year. When Erna's mom was called before the commandant and told that they would be shipped to Siberia, she stood firm and said, "I'm not going to Siberia!" When told that if she didn't show up for their appointed time, she would be shot, she opened her arms and said, "Shoot me". Erna would never survive in Siberia because she was a sickly child, so they escaped to the forest. On the way, unbelievable difficulties were met with many tears. Even so, Erna's mom had an unwavering faith in the Lord and as their lives were miraculously spared time and again, little Erna experienced the grace of God

in unforgettable ways.

In June of 1947, they were to be smuggled out of Berlin via a military Red Cross ambulance to the British zone but were a few hours too late. They had been left behind and were again faced with Siberia. Little did they know that Rudi, his brother and grandmother had been in that last ambulance to freedom! The guard's eyes were miraculously closed once again as Erna's mom sneaked them onto a train car filled with soldiers. In September of 1948, they came to Holland and boarded a ship which landed at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. After another 4 days on the train, they finally ended up in Coaldale, AB on the 27th of September 1948. Annie, Peter and Erna were picked up by Gerhard and Tina Mathies who, soon after, lead her to the Lord. They and their children shared their small farm house with them. What love!!

Then after one year, Uncle Mathies bought them a small house. How thankful they were! Here Erna's mother, now 12 years since separation, was informed that Erna's dad had died shortly after being taken into the army. Soon after moving into the little house in Coaldale, Erna's mom married John Wall whom Erna loved and accept as her father. She was anonymously gifted full payment for her high school years at the Christian school. She went on to become a Nurse's Aide. Erna and her mother went to Yarrow to visit all the former Furstenwerder Mennonites, including Rudi's grandmother. About 5 years later, she and Rudi were married. Soon after, John, Carl and Lois were born.

They moved to Calgary in 1968 where Erna spent an incredible amount of time driving them to swimming, diving, violin, piano, choir practice, theory, master classes, youth orchestra, youth events etc. She was selflessly involved in many ministries in church-kitchen, quilting, music. And she especially found much joy in visiting and serving many of the elderly and sick in their homes and hospitals.

One of her greatest ministries was service in having people over for food. Not a Sunday went by without her looking for newcomers or those with no place to go and inviting them to join us for lunch and a good visit. Our home was always full. She took a course in massaging feet and gladly ministered to hundreds while sharing sermons or just speaking about the Lord while she did their feet. This she continued even when she could no longer walk or remember. Her hands remained strong, and her greatest joy was to serve others with the joy of the Lord as her strength.

As Alzheimer's and dementia took its toll, Erna could still remember hymns and passages from the Bible which she had put to memory. As Rudi would pray or speak to her about Jesus, she would light up and you knew her Spirit was very much alive.

She leaves behind her faithful and loving husband Rudi; children John (Heather), Carl, Lois (Marty) Ritz; grandchildren Colt (Kendall) and Josh Adrian, Alexander and Benjamin Adrian, Autumn (Cory) Parker and Rachel (Austin) Fehr, and William (Cassidy) Ritz; great-grandchildren Kinsey and Jackson Adrian, Jayden and Theron Parker, and Lenna Fehr.

A Celebration of Erna's Life will be held on Saturday, January 14th at 3:00 p.m. at the High River Baptist Church. A private family Graveside Service was held prior to the service at the Highwood Cemetery.

Caring for the family is Lyle Reeves Funerals (Craig Snodgrass)
403.652.4242.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

JAN 14. 3:00 PM (MT)

High River Baptist Church
514160 121 street east
High River, AB T1V 1M6 (CA)

Tribute Wall

LP

“ *I remember Mrs. Adrian very well. She was a friend of the family and we grew up along side her children John, Carl, and Lois. (I will never forget German school!) As a kid, I remember how much I looked forward to their visits and how much fun we had. I am sorry for the family's loss and may God strengthen them and give them comfort during this time.*

Lorne Pankratz - January 13, 2023 at 07:59 PM