

# In Celebration of the life of



## William Stewart

25<sup>th</sup> September 1927 – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Service arranged by William Stewart,  
and conducted by Salvation Army Envoy Margaret Moore  
and Rev Kate Cambridge, Minister of Bishopstoke Methodist Church

Wessex Vale Crematorium, Bubb Lane, West End  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
10.45 a.m.

## Order of Service

### Opening Music

Ave Verum Corpus

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1791)*

### Opening Welcome and Prayers

Margaret Moore:

'Good morning to those of you who've been able to gather here this morning and, of course, to those that we know can't be here but will be thinking of us and will, in due time, be watching and feeling part of what today means for all of us.

We're here to think about William, to give thanks for his life and, you know, a life which he gave to God many years ago. He gave his heart to Jesus and was saved with that commitment to his Saviour.

Different people use different ways when people die – different phrases, different expressions. Within the Salvation Army we use the phrase when somebody dies, we recognise as being promoted to glory. It's a lovely phrase. Who doesn't want to be promoted?

William knew that phrase very well. He was a soldier in the Salvation Army for quite a few years and all the music, the thoughts this morning are William's – laid down for us to follow. We wouldn't dare do otherwise, would we? Unfortunately, we can't sing but you have the words in your order of service so you can follow them through and maybe reflect on them later when you have your own opportunity to think about the words.

We're going to have first of all the good old hymn – song as we say in the Salvation Army – but one known to many of us and absolutely familiar to William and one that he lived by. What a friend we have in Jesus.

### WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

**What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.**

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.

*Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819 - 1886)*

## Opening Prayer by Kate Cambridge

### Psalm 23

A PSALM OF DAVID

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Margaret Moore:

There is so much that can be said about William and his life, and this morning we're just going to have a snapshot of some of that life with memories from Dave, and Mary and family, and Peter.

First, the thoughts from Dave.

# Tributes

## Dave's tribute to his Dad

In recent years, my father befriended two neighborhood children, a little sister and brother, who affectionately called him the gentle giant. They sent him a greetings card not long ago, and its message was of love. They did love my father, those children, and he loved them. And if they live as long as he, they will be able to look back and fondly recall a man who, by then, would have been born nearly two centuries before. Not even the most famous of their day can be assured of being this long remembered, so why is it that this extraordinary ordinary man may well be? The love in his heart is the answer. My father loved: his family, his countries (Australia and Great Britain), his wife, his own sons and daughters, his community, his church, his God, his Malawi foundation, and many, many a stranger. And he demonstrated his love in countless ways, through a generous word, a gift, a hug, a kiss.

My father was born in Melbourne, Australia, was raised in Scotland, and lived in England and the Middle East. He truly was a man of the world. But in his heart, he always dreamed of returning to the place where life began for him. In his last few years, he set out on an epic cycle ride, from the great indoors of his bedroom, with Australia as his destination. He had reached close to Christmas Island, Australia's westernmost territory, a few days before he died. So, in a way, the Aussie did make it home. Ultimately, though, he was aiming for Melbourne, and I do believe that in the wee hours of January 10, the fair winds lifted my father up and bore him safe to the city of his birth. I'm sure the hundreds of Stewarts there of six generations would have said, "Welcome home, Bill. Good on ya, cobber."

For my own part, I shall miss the wonderful weekly conversations with my father that ranged from history to politics, movies to music, books to world affairs. Always an inquisitive man, he never stopped asking for the point of view of others, even to the end. His mind was as sharp at 93 as it had ever been, and his memory for people and events yesterday and 90 years since was astounding, which made sharing the past with him always rewarding, illuminating, and most often a joy. In the last decade of his life, he and I grew close as adults, not as father and son, but as adult men, swapping ideas, enjoying each other's company. We loved each other as friends, good friends, and the absence of my good friend is a barren hollow. Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind? is Robert Burns' immortal question, from a song that moved my father every time he heard it. With regard to my good friend, my dear dad, I answer Mr. Burns with a resounding, no!

(Margaret – 'And now from Mary, Willie and William, come their thoughts')

## Mary's tribute to her Dad

'I shall pass through this world but once.

Any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now; let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.'

This quote by Stephen Grellet was one of my father's favourites and he tried to live up to it during his long lifetime.

My family and I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of respect, love and affection for Dad by so many people in so many areas in which he had worked and done good. Some people knew him personally, but others did not – they knew him through his tutoring, books or, during the last four years, through his work to change lives in Malawi.

The word most used in the condolences to us is 'legacy' – his name and his memory live on.

I'm sad that he's gone from our sight but pleased that he is – his own word – at Stewartville – the mansion which is filling up and which will have welcomed him with joy as he sped there. I'm glad too that he retained his zest for life, his intellect and his independence, to the end.

People have noticed how proud I am of my father. I always was. Every time he got a promotion in the Army, we were chuffed. Every book he wrote, we were proud. Each revolutionary idea he had in the mental health and counselling fields, I was in awe.

For standing up for what he believed, and not being afraid to say so, I admired him.

Dad lived by another of the sayings which many of his students have taken to their hearts – 'Look Up and Aim High'.

He did. For a boy who grew up in poverty and had to leave school at 13, he did so well. Hard graft on farms, in the mine, at the brickworks; rising through the ranks to Captain in 20 years; gaining his BA; carrying on tutoring until he was 93. A determined man whose intelligence shone through.

I'm sorry we can't be with you all today in person.

I wish you all peace and safety in these strange and uncertain times which will pass. When they do, I hope to see some of you again, and meet others who were my father's friends.

Mary, Willie and William

(Margaret 'And now a memory from Peter')

## Pete's tribute to his Dad

My dad taught me there was usually a reason to laugh.

If he were here today, and if I mentioned the wheelchair at Stirling Castle, he would definitely be laughing.

In 2013 we took him to Scotland.

For the Stirling Castle visit, we needed to borrow a wheelchair.

The local church was persuaded to loan us their wheelchair – maybe because of my dad's reliable credentials.

On arrival at Stirling Castle, we were dismayed to find a vast area of cobbles.

This looked challenging, because the wheelchair had four little wheels and solid rubber tyres - and my dad weighed 15 stone.

The wheelchair vibrated horribly over the cobbles, and so did my dad, which set him and us laughing.

We were all laughing uncontrollably when the welded join in one of the solid rubber tyres failed.

What started life as a perfect circular tyre suddenly became a writhing Biblical snake on the cobbles.

If my dad had banged his walking stick on the ground, the picture would have been complete.

Losing a tyre aggravated the vibration, and soon the opposite tyre failed in identical fashion.

We were not supposed to laugh at the destruction of a borrowed wheelchair, but my dad made us all laugh uncontrollably.

The wheelchair was going no further, so my dad gripped the armrests, and stood up, flinging his hands into the air.

Unfortunately, in one hand, he was still gripping half of the nice, vinyl-covered, sponge armrest, which he had literally torn in two.

To this day, Stirling Castle probably still recalls the bionic elderly man who shot from his disintegrating wheelchair – still gripping part of the armrest in his hand - while he and his four accomplices were trying to breathe through tears of laughter.

Margaret Moore:

Mary mentions the word 'legacy'. Laughter is another one that we can put to that legacy left by William.

As we have heard these family memories I am sure you all have other memories that have come into your own minds and as we hear now a song from the Gaither Gospel Singers, a song that gives us a real expression of William's beliefs – you have the words on your sheet - as you read them I'm sure that you'll understand why William chose this song for us today. What a Meeting in the Air.



#### WHAT A MEETING IN THE AIR

Gloryland is not so far away,  
And we'll reach it some glad day,  
Heaven's home is now my final goal,  
There to live while ages roll.

*What a happy day 'twill be,  
What a glorious jubilee,  
All of Heaven will be there,  
What a meeting in the air.*

Wretched lives are oh so sad to see,  
Those who live in misery,  
But in Heaven, no more grief or pain,  
Crippled lives are whole again.

*Marty Phillips 1983*

Kate Cambridge:

At Bishopstoke Methodist Church which William attended for many years there is a tapestry which he presented to the church on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and on it is a picture of a shepherd holding his hand out to a sheep which stands before him.

Made by William himself, it represents the well-known psalm we read today – The Lord is my Shepherd. And the psalm describes God as being like a good shepherd and his people are the sheep under his care. It speaks of confidence in God who cares for His people as a good shepherd cares for the sheep.

The writer knew that many difficult times would come in his life but that God would be with him even in the darkest valleys, to lead him and comfort him; that he did not need to be afraid for God was with him.

We're here today to give thanks for William's life. We've heard some wonderful words from the family which bring some personal memories, thoughts and funny stories. From talking to others about William, it seems to me that he packed an awful lot into his life, from his working in agriculture, from his work as an officer in the medical corps, his family life, his counselling and tutoring, his many books, his tapestries, and his musical talents and he touched many lives through the love of his family, through the quiet way he offered friendship and a listening ear to those who sought it, his professional life, his work with the Salvation Army soldiers and to his singing and keyboard playing at the Methodist Church.

In the last few years he dedicated a lot of his time to co-founding and supporting the William Stewart Foundation in Malawi, as we have heard, and he will be greatly missed by those who knew him well, but also by the parents and children who used to wave to him on their way to school, and the local bakery where he used to go and collect his bread.

William was a man of strongly held beliefs. His Christian faith was a driving force in his life and while he was willing to share it, he didn't impose it. He's been described by friends as someone who always seemed competent, careful, encouraging and deeply spiritual and I believe he would want me to point today not so much to him but to the God he worshipped and adored.

He gave his life to Jesus many years ago, on 16 November 1941 and described that day as his spiritual birthday. He often reminded people of the work Jesus did by dying for us on the cross, and he knew that he was a sinner, loved and forgiven, saved by God's grace, and so I'd like to read some words from William himself which he wrote in his book Daily Prayers & Meditations, about the day that he came to know Jesus.

'I remember that night. I ran home rejoicing that my burden had been lifted. The stars had never shone so brightly. The angels, so the Bible says, sing but their song is limited for they have never been redeemed, but I sing the song of one who has been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb.

'On that night I knew without any shadow of a doubt that you had cast my sins behind me and my name was written in the Lamb's book of life. Though years have passed, my song goes on, and I shall praise you as long as I have breath and in eternity I shall join with the heavenly choir, praising you who wrote the song and brought every sinner out of sin into the light of your love.'

William knew his Lord, the shepherd, the one who loved and cared for him and called him to follow, and the one who would lead him at the end of his life safely home.

The psalm ends 'surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever'.

As we say goodbye to William today and give thanks for his life, we do so in sorrow at our loss but also with joy knowing that we entrust him into the hands of the good shepherd, into the loving hands of God. Amen.

We're going to listen to another of William's favourite hymns – three verses although you have all the verses in your order – All Things Bright and Beautiful.

#### ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

*Refrain:*

*All things bright and beautiful, All  
creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord  
God made them all.*

Each little flower that opens, each little  
bird that sings,  
He made their glowing colours, He made  
their tiny wings:

Refrain

The purple headed mountains, the river  
running by,  
The sunset and the morning, that  
brightens up the sky:

Refrain

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant  
summer sun,

The ripe fruits in the garden, He made  
them every one:

Refrain

The tall trees in the greenwood, the  
meadows where we play,  
The rushes by the water, To gather every  
day:

Refrain

He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that  
we might tell

How great is God Almighty, Who has  
made all things well:

Refrain

*Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 - 1895)*

## Prayers

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father,  
which 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 them  
that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever,  
Amen.

Margaret Moore:

I'm now going to read, as a poem, the final song chosen by William today – All Things Which Live Below the Sky.

And it's in the words of that song that we see how William recognised God's power, in creating the world and everything in it, and that there is a place for everyone in God's heavenly home.

And it's in that knowledge that we believe that William is already in that home eternal and because of it that we're able to commit his earthly body to the elements, with thanks for his life.

### ALL THINGS WHICH LIVE BELOW THE SKY

All things which live below the sky, Or move within the sea.  
Are creatures of the Lord most High, And brothers unto me.

I love to hear the robin sing, Perched on the highest bough;  
To see the rook with purple wing follow the shining plough.

I love to watch the swallow skim the river in his flight;  
To mark, when day is growing dim, The glow-worm's silvery light.

The seagull whiter than the foam; the fish that dart beneath;  
The lowing cattle coming home; the goats upon the heath.

God taught the wren to build her nest, the lark to soar above;  
The hen to gather to her breast, the offspring of her love.

Beneath His heaven there's room for all, He gives to all, their meat;  
He sees the meanest sparrow fall unnoticed in the street.

Almighty Father, King of Kings, the Lover of the meek;  
Make me a friend of helpless things, defender of the weak

*Edward John Brailsford (1841 - 1921)*

Margaret Moore:

'We've been unable to sing this morning, to shake hands, to hug as we would normally want to do but we can, together, as we say the Grace that's on your sheet, in these final words left for us by William to use today, we can hear after that grace, the final piece of music which William has left for us as we bid our final farewell to him from this life.

Let's just, together, say the Grace. Stand if you wish. Just say the Grace. We can acknowledge each other. We don't need to close our eyes. We can't shake hands or hold hands, but let's just acknowledge each other as we say these lovely words.

## The Committal

### The Grace

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, ever more,  
Amen.

'You'll see on your sheets that William has asked that we wave him goodbye to this lovely piece of music, a reflection of his life.'

## Outgoing Music

THE HAPPY WANDERER by the Stargazers 1954

I love to go a-wandering, along the mountain track,  
And as I go, I love to sing, my knapsack on my back.

*Refrain: Val-deri, Val-dera, Val-deri, Val-dera-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha,  
Val-deri, Val-dera (add last line of previous verse).*

I wave my hat to all I meet, and they wave back to me,  
And blackbirds call so loud and sweet, from every green wood tree.

*Refrain*

High overhead, the skylarks wing, they never rest at home,  
But just like me, they love to sing, as o'er the world we roam.

*Refrain*

Oh, may I go a-wandering, until the day I die!  
Oh, may I always laugh and sing, beneath God's clear blue sky!

*Refrain*

*Melody by Friedrich Wilhelm Moeller 1949  
English Lyrics by Antonia Florence Ridge 1953*

William requested any donations to be made to the William Stewart Foundation.

The service has been transcribed by Mary – with apologies if any of the words have been misheard – so that those who were not able to join in the original webcast, or the watch again video – can feel part of the celebration, and so that the children in Malawi will be able to read in their Library about the life of the man whose Centre bears his name.

