

Bernice Habel



24/5/1943 - 16/4/2026

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

for

Bernice Faye Habel

April 28th, 2026

10am

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hamilton

INVOCATION & REMINDER OF BAPTISM

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P As we come here to farewell Bernice, St Paul comforts us with these words: “Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection”. (Romans 6:3-5)

PRAYER

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom you raised from the dead. Assure us that you keep watch over all your children, and not even death itself can snatch us out of your hand or separate us from your love. Comfort us in our grief and remind us that you are always near. We give you thanks for Bernice who is now with you in glory. We praise you for the love you gave us through her and the mercy you have on us all. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

HYMN LHS 793 'To God be the Glory'

1. *To God be the glory, great things He has done!
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in*
 Chorus
*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give Him the glory, great things He has done!*

2. *O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:*

3. *Great things He has taught us, great things He has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:*

REMEMBERING BERNICE

Bernice Faye Habel (nee Gellert) was born in the Willaura Hospital on the 24th of May 1943. Her Mother was Gladys (nee Dymke) and her father was Walter Gellert. She was the first of four children, having two sisters Moyra and Val and one brother Neil. She was baptised at St John's Lutheran Church in Willaura on the 25th of July 1943 by Pastor Wiebusch and her sponsors were Rupert Gellert, Stella Dymke and Elsie Gellert.

Bernice reaffirmed her baptismal faith when she was confirmed on the 15th of December 1957. She was a member of St John's Lutheran Church in Willaura and then became a member of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hamilton when she was married in 1965.

Bernice grew up on the family farm, “Walanga”, where her parents were graziers. She went to the Willaura Primary School from prep to grade six, then for her senior years attended the High School in Ararat where she boarded during the week with a family. She enjoyed her schooling and her favourite subject was needlework. Bernice enjoyed playing netball and tennis, and during her secondary school years she also learnt to play the piano.

After High School, Bernice went onto Nurses training at the Hamilton Base Hospital which was then known as the Glenelg Base Hospital. She completed her four years of training in 1965 and during that time she became second in charge of the Women’s Medical Ward. She enjoyed all aspects of nursing and it was during her nursing days that she met some of her dearest lifelong friends, whom she continued to meet with regularly throughout her life. Bernice always looked forward to her annual nurse’s dinner or weekend where she could catch up with her nursing friends.

Bernice resigned from nursing when she married Barry in 1965 and then went back to work as a District Nurse on a part time basis until 1974.

Bernice was married to Barry, the love her of life in 1965 until 2022 when Barry passed away. Bernice had known Barry since she was 15 years of age, when they met at Luther League through her cousin Rupert. They married at St John’s Lutheran Church, Willaura, on the 1st of May 1965 and were blessed with three Children; Paul (dec), Susan and Sarah. During their married years Bernice helped to run “Violet Creek” where they were graziers and had super fine Merino sheep and Hereford cows.

Bernice’s nursing skills proved to be invaluable throughout her life. In 1974 when Barry was run over, she nursed him back to health. This was not an easy time for her as it was the accident where they also lost their son Paul. She also nursed Barry back to health after he had his stroke in 1998. Throughout Bernice’s life she was resilient and strong whilst being gentle and nurturing.

In many respects Bernice was the glue that held the family together. She took great pride in creating a home that was warm and welcoming. Her home that she created usually smelt of freshly baked goodies, a roast or something yummy for dinner. Bernice enjoyed her knitting and her sewing, as well as spending time in the garden. She was a true home maker.

Bernice enjoyed being involved in the community. She enjoyed being around people and got a lot of energy from it. She was the President of the Ladies Committee of the Yulecart Hall for many years. The committee organised regular casserole teas for the Yulecart community and also helped to organise the annual Yulecart Gymkhana. The ladies committee provided opportunities for the community to get together and support one another.

Bernice also liked to be involved with the tuck shop and uniform shop while Susan and Sarah were at Hamilton College. She even played the role as communications officer in the Yulecart CFA for a time while Barry was captain.

In 1991 Bernice learnt to play golf and she won best player in her Tuesday group that first year. Her weekly golf game was something that she looked forward to. She enjoyed spending time with the ladies and the comradery from being involved.

Barry and Bernice spent their life farming at “Violet Creek” until Barry suffered a stroke in 1998. During that time, they leased the farm out until 2000 and then sold the farm to retire in Hamilton. Bernice continued to enjoy her weekly game of golf and her daily walk around Lake Hamilton. They also enjoyed going for road trips around Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

Throughout her life, Bernice also liked to be involved and volunteer at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hamilton. Later in life when Bernice and Barry moved to Hamilton, she enjoyed volunteering at Eventide on Sundays to help with the weekly church service.

In 2008 Bernice was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. For many years it was well managed and very slow progressing, which meant that she and Barry were able to live and enjoy life in their home on Rippon Road overlooking Lake Hamilton for a further 14 years.

In 2021 Bernice and Barry moved into permanent care at Eventide Lutheran Nursing Home, now known as Lutheran Homes Group. Bernice lived a full life at Eventide. There were many activities that she looked forward to each week. Some were her knitting group "knit and natter", Bingo, her walks with the Physio, getting her hair and nails done, the gardening club, and listening to live music in the activities room. Bernice also enjoyed going for drives and lunches with her family and friends. Each week she looked forward to the Sunday service and Holy Communion on Tuesdays. She enjoyed making friends with other residents and was very thankful to have such good friends. She adored the care staff and they became like family to her.

On Friday the 10th of April Bernice was airlifted to the Royal Melbourne Hospital due to injuries she sustained from a fall. On Thursday the 16th of April, Bernice passed away peacefully at the Royal Melbourne Hospital after being surrounded by Susan, Sarah and Percy and the very supportive staff at the hospital.

Bernice was someone who saw the best in everyone. A woman who saw the glass half full instead of empty. A problem solver, choosing to find a solution. She was kind and always smiling. Strong, resilient and yet so very gentle. A woman of integrity and faith in her Lord Jesus Christ. She loved her family, her friends and the community. She was a good team player and had an awesome sense of humour. She always had a smile on her face even when things weren't so great. She loved her family, her friends and the staff at Eventide who became so much like family. We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ for Bernice.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

1st Thessalonians 4:13-18

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.

Therefore, encourage each other with these words.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

John 14:1-6

Jesus says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going".

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?". Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me".

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

WORDS OF COMFORT

HYMN LH 387 "The Lord's my Shepherd" (Psalm 23)

1. *The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.*
2. *My soul He doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for His own name's sake.*
3. *Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.*
4. *My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.*
5. *Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the
Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day
he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the
right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence he will come to
judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion
of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the
life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord Jesus, help us to pray the prayer you have taught us.

All Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

P The Lord watch over you, as you go out and as you come in, now and forever. And the blessing of almighty God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you always.

C Amen.

HYMN LHS 881 “How great Thou art!”

1. *O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the worlds thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:*

Chorus *Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!*

3. *But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing
he bled and died to take away my sin:*

Chorus:

4. *When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: "My God, how great thou art!"*

Chorus:

THE RECESSIONAL

- P** In the sure hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, we will now take the body of Bernice, our sister in Christ, to its last resting place.
Let us go now in peace.
- C** **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*The family thank you for your attendance today.
After the committal at the South Hamilton
Lutheran Cemetery, you are invited
to a time of fellowship and light refreshments
at Lutheran Homes Group (Eventide).*