

COMMITTAL SERVICE FOR
Ruby Sprinkle
February 13th, 2002
The Rev. Warren P. Lynn, Pastor

We come to this place in this time to commit Ruby Sprinkle to the everlasting love of God. This is a time of honoring God's eternal care for Ruby, and celebrating the fulfillment of Ruby's hope in God's grace through her deep and committed life of Christian faith.

As we do these things, I invite you to listen to a few words from the Bible as a witness to the gifts of God's comfort and guidance for our own lives, as well as Ruby's, in moments like this.

The truth is, throughout the words of the Bible we find that the promise of God's comfort and care is mentioned again and again.

My hope is that you might, indeed, draw on that promise now, but also in the days ahead.

I invite you to listen now for the Word of God,

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First, hear the words from Isaiah (40 & 41) who spoke to us of the comfort of God.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Our Lord does not faint or grow weary, God's understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the faint and to those who have no might God increases strength.

Even the young shall faint and be weary, and those who are youthful shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint...

...Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

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And these words from Revelation (21:3-5)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with humanity. God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people, and God personally will be with them.

\ The Lord will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

And the One who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

Indeed, at this moment we come trusting in the One who said, "I am the resurrection and the life", confident that this is not the end, but a new beginning.

It is in this moment then that we commit unto the gracious care of God this one whom you have known and loved, confident that because "Christ lives we too shall live."

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Shall we pray:

O God, our protector, we come to this moment and this place, confident in the warmth of your love and the quiet strength of your presence. We come here to honor Ruby Sprinkle.

We pray that you would hold closely in your arms Ñ all who love and miss her.

Overwhelm each of the members of her family with the peace and hope of your Spirit; a securing sense of relief and release.

May each one here today understand the intended gifts of love through all who care. And may we all be instruments of your peace; a witness to the gift of resurrection you bestow upon us all.

In this time and place then, O God - who - watches - over - us - all, we bid farewell to the remains of Ruby Mae Sprinkle's physical being, and we also now commit her eternal living Spirit to your graceful and ever-lasting care.

And in this time, as we begin to look forward in hope, we trust you will do for Ruby far

more than we could ever imagine, keeping her eternal living spirit secure until we all join her in your presence and share together in the grace that is your gift of eternity to us all.

Now,

even as we have committed this one, Ruby Sprinkle, to your care, O God, we also await your leading for our own lives in this world. Grant us, then, the vision and hope to move into the days ahead with courage. Amen.

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Benediction:

In the grace of God, you who are family of Ruby Sprinkle are heirs to her legacy. So have you also received Ruby's witness to life.

In the same grace of God through which Ruby lived, it is now your turn and my turn; to take the torch of life she carried, and move ahead into the future.

Do not squander the wisdom you have learned from Ruby. Do not keep to yourself the love she shared with you.

But see these gifts as gifts from God and in the legacy of Ruby Sprinkle, in the joy of her eternal life, let us share what we have been given that the world might be a better place; even a place of healing and of hope. Amen.

This concludes the graveside service. I want to especially invite each of you back to the church for a memorial service in Ruby's honor, beginning at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon.

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MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR

Ruby Sprinkle

February 13th, 2002

The Rev. Warren P. Lynn, Pastor

Marilyn Carter, Organist

PRELUDE MUSIC

WHY WE ARE HERE

You have come out of your separate lives today to be together in this time and place because you are family and friends of Ruby Sprinkle. Like all who have faced the death of a friend or family member, this is a time when feelings of loss come easily.

So also do feelings of grief, sadness, emptiness come into our lives at times such as this when we must say good-bye to one we have know as a member of our family or a friend. This is true even in the knowledge of Ruby's long and loving life.

This is also a time filled with good memories, though. One of the hopes I hold for all who gather at such times as this -- is the hope that we will look upon our joyful memories of the one we come to honor, as one of the more powerful reasons for gathering together.

For, even in the midst of our sadness, this is a time for remembering the fullness of Ruby's life in your midst, and celebrating those memories.

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But even still, even in the midst of such good memories, there is something more important about gathering in this time. You see, most importantly, this is a time to recognize and worship God who is present with us in the midst of all life, and moves with us in power and grace beyond even death.

Each of you, in some way, directly or indirectly, has witnessed and been a part of Ruby's life. And in that life you have shared with Ruby you have also experienced God's glory and grace, whether you realize it or not, working to make a difference for Ruby and for each of you.

As God's people in this place, then, we do indeed celebrate that God was present in Ruby Sprinkle's life and manifest to us through Ruby.

And in our Christian faith, we celebrate that God continues even now to embrace Ruby, beyond her physical death, into eternal life.

So, look back on what you know of Ruby. Find strength for your life out of the way she lived life.

Let your memories of this one become gifts from God that your own living may be stronger, and lived with greater wisdom.

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And now, in the midst of even the pain of grief, let us share in the grace of God's love that is certainly Ruby Sprinkle's experience right now. Let us celebrate God's gift of eternal life for us that is certainly a gift Ruby has also been given.

And may those who are present here -- both offer and receive support from one another as we worship together in the presence of the living God.

I invite you to bow your head with me as we pray.

PRAYER

Gracious and loving God,
we gather in your name to draw upon your strength and love and comfort, because we are in need of support. We are never quite prepared for times such as these and certainly even Ruby's death leaves an empty place in our lives and spirits.

In this time then, we pray your presence would be felt strongly among us, that we might be able to worship you, and in our worship find comfort for the present and vision for the future; hope for our own living and trust in Ruby's eternal life now lived in your unveiled presence.

Be with us now, O God, as we continue to celebrate the life of Ruby Sprinkle. Be with us as we see a peace for our own living in times ahead.

Be with us now, even as we pray the prayer our Lord taught us, praying,

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 sins,

as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

HYMN How Great Thou Art #33 vss.1,4

LIFE SKETCH

Throughout her life, Ruby Sprinkle, has been present to so many others, including yourselves, in so many ways.

(as wife, grandmother, great-grandmother, a caring aunt and supporting sister, and certainly a close friend to many Ñ just to name a few.)

And so we come in this time to remember Ruby and the life that was not only given to her, but also the abundant life she shared with others.

Ruby was born to Robert Walter and Kathryn Marie (Knudson) Keene on June 24, 1917 in Logan, Iowa.

Ruby's early years were not easy ones. Her father died when she was just seven years old. Her mother died when she was 16.

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After that time, Ruby was invited to live with her sister, Marie, and then her brother, Oscar, as she continued through to graduation from the Logan high school in 1935.

At age eighteen, Ruby started helping run a restaurant for Oscar. But at age 20, Ruby met with another set of tragedies. Her brother, Oscar was killed in an auto-bus accident. And just a short time later, Oscar's widow, Grace, and their three children lost their home to a fire.

A childhood as tough as Ruby's might have left any other person bitter and without hope, but Ruby was always one to look beyond the tragedy in her life toward the presence of God's grace, and even find a way to help others.

After Oscar's death and the loss of his family's home, Ruby was the one who helped raise Oscar's children while his widow went back to school so she might better support her family.

Of course, as Ruby knew so well, in the midst of any tragedy there is always hope to be found, and I believe Ruby's hope probably came in the shape of one person more often than not.

When Ruby was just twelve, she moved into the neighborhood of a young man by the name of Francis Sprinkle.

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For years they were just acquaintances and friends. and yet, even early on, Francis remembers, as he puts it, how that impressive young girl caught his eye.

Well, Francis eventually went away to his first year of college. But the next summer, after he came home, something happened. Francis and Ruby began dating. And their friendship turned into love.

A couple of years later their love was celebrated as Ruby Mae Keene and Francis Sprinkle were married in Logan, Iowa on August 26, 1938 (actually on Francis' birthday). He still says to this day that Ruby was the greatest present he ever received.

Ruby and Fran lived in Logan until 1940 when they moved to Billings, Montana where Fran attended the Billings Polytechnic Institute, now Rocky Mountain College. Fran still remembers, when they left for Billings, they took with them only two suitcases, a couple of one way tickets and \$100 in cash. But Ruby didn't question the move or second guess her position in life. She was with the man she loved, and that was what brought joy to her life.

At school, Ruby and Fran were the only married students around and that made them sort of special. In fact, Ruby used it to her advantage when she became the dorm mother for the senior dorm.

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After 1942, when Fran graduated, they left Billings as Fran's teaching career in Montana moved them first to Culbertson, then Hardin, and then on to Helena through the next 12 years.

While in Helena, Ruby and Fran's love was celebrated with the birth of their daughter, Lynne, in 1946 and also their son, Randy, in 1950. The love Ruby and Fran had to share with the world and their family expanded to an even greater level when, in 1953, they welcomed their foster son, Ronny Beaver, into the family.

From 1956 until 1960 they were back in Billings at Rocky Mountain College where Fran was the Dean of Men and the Head of the Industrial Arts Department. Fran chose to stay at home during this time while her kids were younger, but she was never at a loss for a way to also help support her family.

As a baker, she put her artistic talents to good use with the occasional cake decorating job.

As a seamstress she also took in work to bring in money for the family's household needs.

In 1960, Ruby and her family moved to Bozeman where Francis became the Industrial Arts Department Head at M.S.U. It was at this time Ruby began her career at J.C. Penney as the drapery and fabric department manager.

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As it would turn out, 1964 would be another tragic year for Ruby. Within one week, Ruby's brother died of cancer, her brother-in-law died in surgery, and her sister died of a heart-attack.

But again, Ruby's spirit rose up as she continued on with a sense of optimism and opportunity. She was always on the lookout for a way to take care of everyone else around her.

In fact, even now, when you ask Ruby's family about her hobbies, what it was she enjoyed Ñ the first things that come to their thoughts are the ways she was always caring for others, and how easy it was for Ruby to laugh at something and find joy.

Fran and Ruby retired together in 1980. But their hard working lives continued on full steam. They travelled to visit their now grown children and grandchildren, even when they were half way across the world. But Ruby, especially, used her new found freedom to become a spoiler of grand-children. She pulled out all the talents she had once used on her own children -- for a new generation of little ones.

Where before she had completely created her daughter's wedding and bridesmaid dresses entirely by herself and helped her foster-son's and his fiance with their wedding now she was concentrating on filling grandchildren's lives with joy.

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Her new focus included sewing dolls clothes, organizing picnics in the yard and supervising week-long sleepovers. Ruby understood the magic of how to include her grandchildren in just about any little project she needed help with, and even make it fun.

Hers was

W the wisdom that said home-made cinnamon rolls in the morning, popcorn at night, and a never ending helping of love was always the healthiest menu for the grandchildren's growing lives.

Her granddaughter, Robin Miller, boasts about Ruby that she probably made 85% of Robin's clothes when she was younger, and they were always first class and nicer than store bought. Robin remembers the formal dresses Ruby made for her as she grew up.

But, the grandkids also knew they didn't dare take off their shoes to romp around in Ruby's house, as there were always at least a couple stray straight pins, left over from Grandma's many sewing projects, hiding somewhere on the floor.

Even into the days of her declining health after 1994, Ruby continued to live out of her concern for others.

She loved to make time for reading to her great grandson, Collin.

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And when was she no longer able to read, she still made sure there was place next to her on the bed in the nursing home Ñ where Collin could snuggle up.

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You know, as much of an accomplished cook, seamstress, devoted wife and a child's best friend as Ruby was Ñ I also need to mention Ruby's solid Christian faith and devotion to her church.

Ruby had the kind of unflinching faith that could question her failing health with great frustration, and yet never let go of her trust in God's love.

For over 40 years Ruby was an active member here at Grand Avenue Christian Church, devoting a great deal of time and energy to build up the ministry of God through this congregation.

As much as she loved her family and friends, she also worked hard to help others know of the love God held for them as well.

] Hers was, indeed, a caring soul; one whom, I'm sure, was also loved deeply in return by you who are her family, even as she is now clearly missed.

At age 84, after a long life, Ruby Mae Sprinkle passed away this last Sunday evening, February 10th, 2002, at the Gallatin County Nursing Home here in Bozeman.

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Ruby was preceded in death by:

- ¥her parents
- ¥her brothers, Oscar and Alfred
- ¥her sister, Marie
- ¥and daughter-in-law, Ruth Beaver.

She is survived by:

- ¥her husband of 63 years, Fran Sprinkle, of Bozeman;
- ¥her children:
 - Lynne Van Sice and her husband Robert,
of Seattle, Washington;
 - Randy Sprinkle and his wife Donna,
of Woodstock, Georgia;
 - former daughter-in-law D'Arle King,
of Bozeman
 - foster son, Ronald Beaver

- ¥Grandchildren Ñ Heather Van Sice,
Jason Van Sice, Robyn Miller and
her husband Travis, Kelly Sprinkle,
and Ryann Sprinkle;

¥Great-Grandson, Collin Miller

- ¥Foster Grandchildren Ñ Jeff Beaver,
Laura Boyce and her husband Chris
- ¥ and her Foster Great-Grandchildren
Jace Beaver, Justin Boyce,
and Stephen Boyce.

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For those of you who are family of Ruby, and also you who knew her as a friend, I would like for

you to take a moment this afternoon, right now, to think of one word that best describes Ruby in her relationship with you; just one word.

At this time then, as a sort of litany of Ruby's qualities in our midst, I would like to offer you the opportunity, from right where you happen to be sitting, to share that one word, if you would like to, with the rest of us who gather as family and friends of Ruby Sprinkle:

(words shared)

Even as I am sure you all remember more of who Ruby was in this world, than I have mentioned thus far I will be the first to say that what has been shared is not all Ruby Sprinkle was, nor is it all she will ever be.

For, while we grieve in the separation we feel through the death of Ruby we also rejoice that this separation for us --means for her-- a new found joy in her eternal and complete presence with God.

In the hope of a Christian faith in God's loving grace, we recognize that in God's presence, Ruby's living spirit continues on with a truth that will never fade.

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WORDS OF FAITH

It is important that we are honest about our grief for those like Ruby, but it is also important we recognize this time as an opportunity to rely on God's strength.

At a time like this when we are dealing with a variety of emotions, and questions and our own inability to know what death is all about ... this time becomes for us an opportunity in which we can renew our trust in God.

And, as a result of faith we can know that death is not what it seems. We can confess that in God's eternal loving care this is not the end for Ruby, but a new beginning.

In Christian faith, as we are guided by the words of scripture, we can now move beyond Ruby's death and know that she is right now in the very presence of God.

Her life has moved beyond the physical failings and sufferings that come to every person's life at some point, into the restoration and beauty of a spiritual eternal life.

Also, as a result of our faith, we know that we, too, are at this very moment being cared

for by God in the midst of our feelings of loss.

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In fact, Holy Scripture attests to the fact that above all of the promises of God, the greatest gift to all is the gift of God's presence.

Ours is a God who chose to come and be among us, to be with us and walk beside us. We know that whatever pain, whatever hurt we experience, God hurts with us . . . but God also helps move us through that hurting to the hope of eternal life which always is before us.

SCRIPTURE

In this time, then, when we come to acknowledge the eternal life God has given to Ruby Sprinkle, and has also promised to us, let us now listen to several readings from God's word as it brings to us a sense of grace and comfort and healing and peace.

As I read from Scripture let us listen for the Word of God:

First, from the 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
 he makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;
 he restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley
 of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
 thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou prepares a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
thou anoints my head with the oil of blessing,
 my cup overflows

Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

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And also, from Psalm 121, we hear of the promise of God's eternal care:

I lift up my eyes to the hills-- from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your

life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

And finally, from Paul's letter to the Romans :
(8: 35, 37-39)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...

... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the One who loves us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Let us pray,

PRAYER

Eternal God of Love and Mercy,
Draw near to us and grant your comfort to our hearts. Allow us to feel the assurance and security of your presence. Strengthen us in our faith, that we might rest in the hope of your grace.

Thank you for the gift of your presence with us, God. And thank you for the gift of Ruby's life among us also.

Be with her family in the days ahead. Fill them with a sense of your love. Fill all of us with a sense of the joy which comes from you, for we are assured that finally your love and grace will lead us all to a new hope for the future.

And now may you, O God of all grace, surround us with love, fill us with comfort and grant us strength in our living. Amen.

Hymn

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INVITATION

Following this service we invite you join family and friends, downstairs in the church's fellowship hall, for a reception in Ruby's memory and honor.

BENEDICTION

Now,
as we leave this place may,
The Lord bless us,
defend us from all darkness,
and bring us all,
in our own time
into everlasting life.
Amen.

POSTLUDE MUSIC

In Memory of

Ruby Sprinkle

June 24, 1917
through
February 10, 2002