



The Coupler

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2021

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***Deadline for the
January / February
2022 Newsletter is
December 15, 2021***



NOTES FROM THE DEAN



Dear Friends,

I write today, grateful for my lifelong love of the organ and its music. As the pandemic is still with us, I can always rely on music to lift my spirits, provide a diversion, and mostly, to be a way of giving back and feeling connected. Churches are beginning to open up again, cautiously, offering more in person services. I'm happy to report that Evensong has begun again at the Cathedral of St. John, Jazz Vespers is going at St. John's Methodist, and the TGIF Series has started up again at First Presbyterian, Santa Fe.

My online recommendation for this month is a site called *The Listener's Club*, located in Virginia. TheListenersClub.com

It's a monthly offering of all different sorts of music, from Shostakovich to Sting, with well thought out essays about the music presented, and links to recordings.

I asked Jim Rasmussen's son, James, if we might print a copy of the eulogy given at his father's funeral last August, and he graciously agreed. Many were not able to attend in person or via Zoom, so I wanted to be able to share these words that provided me with so much comfort after Jim's death. May we give thanks for Jim's life, his tireless work with the Guild, and his service as a much sought-after substitute organist.

Since this is the last newsletter before the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, may I take a moment to wish you all a wonderful holiday season, with family, friends, and music. May we be able to come together more and more in the new year.

Nancy Granert, Dean

USEFUL CHAPTER EMAILS

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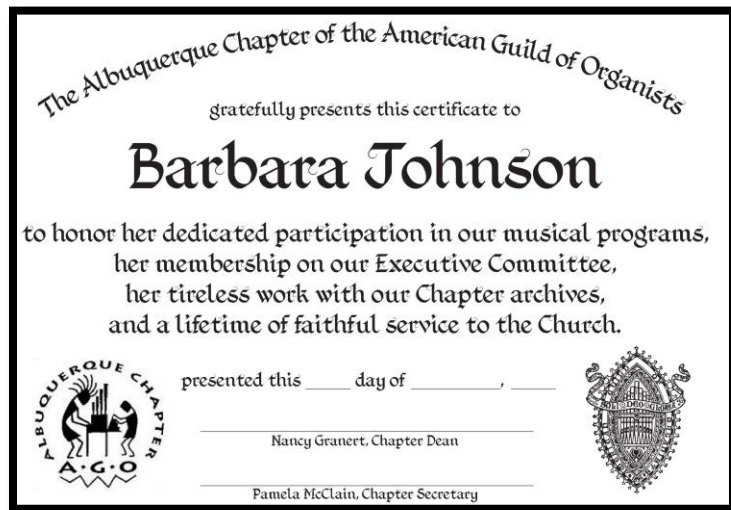
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PLEASE CHECK . . .

Please check the website [Directory](#) for corrections, especially if you have changed jobs or addresses/telephone number recently, and also, the [Substitute Roster](#) page, and then email corrections to the [Editor](#), so that we can maintain good information for each other, and help churches find substitute organists as needed. Anyone wishing to be added to the regular substitute organist list, please also let me know. Thank you.

LONG-SERVICE HONOREE



We had a very micro-mini meeting outdoors at a local Starbucks to present one of our members with a certificate of appreciation. **Barbara Johnson**, a long-time member and on the Executive Committee in one guise or another for many years, was the recipient of this honor. In addition to being an organist and church musician, Barbara was a librarian and did Archives work for our Chapter for many years. She also designed our Chapter's Kokopelli logo. The beautiful certificate was designed and made by member Scott Hagler, from Santa Fe.



Standing: Sanelma Sutton, Pamela McClain

Sitting: Barbara Johnson, Lois Engelkes

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Cathedral of St. John, Saturday, November 6th at 10:30am

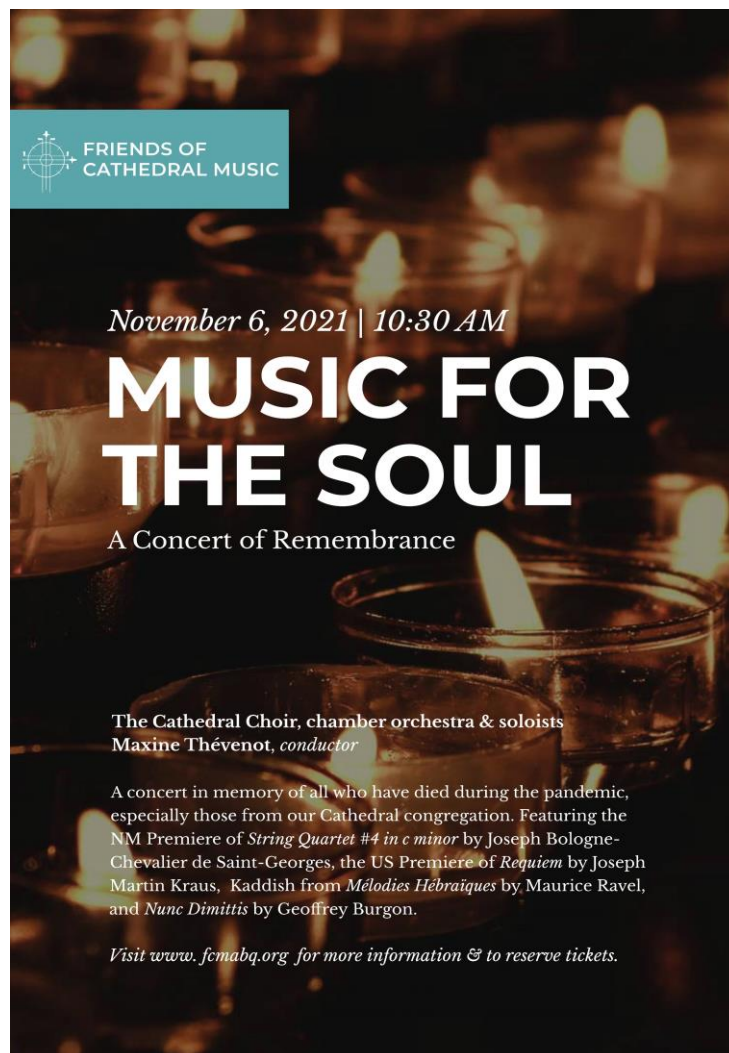
Music for the Soul - A Concert of Remembrance

A concert in memory of all who have died during the pandemic, especially those from our Cathedral congregation. The program includes:

- Joseph Boulogne-Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges, *String Quartet #5 in g minor*
- Joseph Kraus (NM Premiere) *Requiem*
- Geoffrey Burgon's *Nunc dimittis*
- Maurice Ravel's *Kaddish from Two Hebrew Melodies*
- Ernest Bloch's *Prayer*

The Cathedral Choir and Senior Choristers are joined by tenor Jamie Flora, and instrumentalists: Stephen Redfield and Megan Holland-violin, Laura Tait Chang-violin, 'cellist Melinda Mack, Sam Brown-double bass, horns Peter Erb and Michael Walker, with Maxine Thévenot, Conductor.

<https://fcmabq.org/tickets/>



[St Luke Lutheran Church, Albuquerque:](#)

Thanksgiving Service, November 24 at 6.00 pm

Mid-week Advent Prayer Services

featuring Mary Haugen's Holden Evening Prayer,
December 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 6 pm - Fellowship following.



[The Cathedral of St. John, Albuquerque, NM](#)

6th annual Children's Messiah ... preceded by Breakfast with Santa!

December 18, 2021 Breakfast begins at **8:00am** and is open to children of all ages

45-minute concert begins **at 10:30am**

Admission FREE Maxine Thévenot, conductor



Christmas Lessons and Carols on December 23rd at 7:00pm.

[St Luke Lutheran Church, Albuquerque](#)

Christmas Eve Family Service December 24 at 4 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight and Carols Service, December 24 at 8 pm

Christmas Lessons and Carols December 26, at 8:15 am and 10:30 am



Symphony No. 9 - Ludwig van Beethoven

December 31, 2021 1:00pm and 5:00pm

[Tickets available from The Lensic Performing Arts Center, Santa Fe, NM](#)

Maxine Thévenot, chorus master

Joe Illick, conductor

New Year's Eve at The Lensic is a Santa Fe holiday tradition! Celebrate the final hours of 2021 with longtime Santa Fean Joe Illick, music director and principal conductor of the Fort Worth Opera, leading an all-star orchestra.



The program features Sibelius: Finlandia with chorus, Mozart: Requiem and Kyrie from Requiem Mass, Beethoven: Fourth movement from Symphony No. 9, and Sibelius: Violin Concerto with violin Soloist: Augustin Hadelich.

Tickets

1 PM: Adults: \$20 | Children 6-12: \$5

5 PM: \$30 – \$80

Face masks required + proof of vaccination or negative COVID test

TGIF CONCERTS – FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SANTA FE

These concerts have now resumed in person – *masks and proof of vaccination required at the door*. Whether you're ending your week or starting your weekend, every Friday evening at 5:30pm, First Presbyterian Church invites our Santa Fe neighbors and visitors from all over the world to our sanctuary to enjoy a half hour of music and reflection. All are welcome to come and listen to organ music, voice and choral concerts accompanied by various instruments, chamber music, and more.

November

5 — Michael Tortorella, piano

12 — Saxophone Quintet with Piano

19 — Black Mesa Brass Ensemble

26 — David Solem, piano

December

3 — Chancel Bell Choir

10 — eSSO

17 — High Desert Harps

24 — Christmas Eve Services

31 — Jan Worden-Lackey, Sin Nombre Brass Ensemble

SANTA FE SUMMER ORGAN ACADEMY WITH DR. KIMBERLY MARSHALL - REPORT 2021

The 2nd Santa Fe Summer Organ Academy hosted six participants and seven auditors for a wonderful time of discovery and exploration. Two of the participants Nathan Cleaveland and Steven Villavicencio received scholarships for the week from the Albuquerque Chapter of the AGO.

The Academy began and ended with virtual TGIF recitals on the C. B. Fisk organ presented by Dr. Kimberly Marshall, titled “*Celebrating Notre Dame*” with music by Margaret Sandresky, Arnold Schlick, Dieterich Buxtehude, Nicholas de Grigny, Francisco Correa de Arauxo and J. S. Bach.

The first day class day began with practice on the C. B. Fisk for participants and a lecture by Dr. Marshall “*Creating Sound Meditations with the Organ*” that was followed with a “*Sound Bath*” demonstration. The lecture highlighted the fascinating history of sound healing that concluded with practical steps on how to design a “sound bath” on the organ.

The academy continued with four days of morning masterclasses and three afternoons of lectures on the topics: Spanish Organ Music, 1500-1750; the Stylus Phantasticus in the Works of Buxtehude and Bach and the Organ

Works of César Franck. Dr. Marshall's detailed power point presentations distilled these subjects with primary writings and musical examples. For Stylus Phantasticus Dr. Marshall demonstrated its characteristics with examples from the repertory that she performed on the Fisk. The week concluded with a recital of some music examined during the masterclasses by the gifted participants. If you are looking for an intimate workshop with extracurricular opportunities, such as the attending the Santa Fe Opera, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, consider joining Dr. Kimberly Marshall next summer for the 3rd Santa Fe Summer Organ Academy.

Linda Raney, Music Director, First Presbyterian Church, Santa Fe.



PLEASE NOTE . . .

John Homko ([Treasurer](#)) and Evelyn Henson ([Editor/Webmaster](#)) have moved out of New Mexico to Massachusetts and Virginia respectively. However, both are currently continuing to serve the Chapter in their accustomed roles. Please contact via email, as usual. Mailing addresses in the website [Directory](#).

*I was so moved by this loving eulogy offered by James Rasmussen at his father's funeral in August, that I asked him if he would share it with all of us. For me it enhanced my gratitude for my acquaintance with **James Rasmussen, Sr.**, and added to my sadness of losing this beautiful soul way too soon.*

Nancy Granert, Dean

FOR DAD'S FUNERAL, AUGUST 14, 2021

Before I begin, I want to express thanks on my mother's behalf for the many kind words and thoughts and prayers sent our way this week. It has been a great comfort for her to hear how much my dad was and is loved and appreciated. I do want to mention that the music today is our family tribute to my father. And I have to let you know I have a difficult time keeping my composure sometimes even in other kinds of circumstances. I will do my best. There's a gaping hole in my heart, but there is also joy and peace. So even though I am struggling, it's not only pain that I'm feeling. My father instilled in us a deep love for music, and he modeled for us what it means to be a musician. These arrangements of music weren't all his, but they were all in his files and he often liked to get arrangements of pieces and then doctor them up for the instruments at hand, which happened to be my sister and me, and my mom at times. And then as we started to have children, them as well.

The music is not the only thing intended as a tribute today, but also my speaking, which I knew would be very challenging for me. But it is intended as a tribute to my dad who taught me that the craft of music and also the craft of the written or spoken word are among the most profound ways to glorify God and to find meaning for our lives. In teaching me to pursue these two crafts, he taught me to combine intellectual rigor and precision with deep feeling. I am putting myself through the ordeal of talking today as a way to honor him and my mother, and I know I will be glad to have done it later.

So I have two main things that I want to talk about today. First, I will talk about my dad's death and how it happened. This will be painful, but I think it is necessary and important, because his passing was sudden and unexpected and because we are living through a terrible pandemic that we all have on our minds. A lot of us are scared and we all have questions and I think it is important to talk about what happened. After I get through talking about his death I will talk about his life. He lived a rich, full life and there is much to celebrate. I am planning to go on a little long, though it is not just my own words. I've reached out to family members and close friends, many of whom were not able to attend in person today, and I asked them, if they wanted to, to share with me a memory or a story. I wanted to read out some of those, including some very early memories from when he was a little boy and all the way through his life.

DEATH

First, I'll talk about his death. My father passed away last Monday morning, August 9, on his front porch. My mom and my sister were both with him, my sister having flown in from St. Louis just that morning. The cause of death was determined to be a combination of an enlarged heart, likely due to

hypertension, and to what is being called “covid lung” which I understand to be pneumonia along with the presence of the covid virus detected in the lungs.

Just three weeks ago my children and I were with my parents visiting Yellowstone and the Grand Teton National Parks, places that are particularly close to my dad’s heart and to mine because of previous trips there. We had a wonderful trip, camping, boating, playing in the rivers, sight-seeing, doing some hiking too although my dad’s health had been deteriorating for some time and he was not able to do much that he once could do. Perhaps the most memorable thing was when we stopped on the road because there was a buffalo 25 yards in front of us in the middle of the street. We were the first car in our direction to stop, though many piled up behind us, and there were others on the other side. We just sat and watched for a few minutes, and then the buffalo started walking toward us, right up the middle of the road along the double yellow lines. It came closer and closer and walked right by our car, basically brushing up against it. As the buffalo was there, my dad was in the driver's seat and his window was about halfway up. He reached to the window control, and I wasn't sure exactly what he was doing, but I was videoing everything. I sort of had the thought that maybe he was going to roll up the window because the buffalo was just a few inches away. But no, he rolled it down. And then I thought, is he going to reach out and pet the thing? But he didn't. He told me afterwards that he had never been that close to a buffalo before, and he was very happy that I had got that on video.

So we had a great trip. At the end of the trip, I brought my children home to Colorado Springs while my dad dropped off my mom in northern Colorado before coming to our house to spend some more time with us. While in northern Colorado, my dad was exposed to the covid virus. He had not been vaccinated. Three days later, on July 28, at my house, he started feeling sick and he told me he thought it could be covid, so I took him in to be tested. The result came back the next day positive. His plan had been to drive home for when my mom flew back at the end of the week, but he was much sicker on the Thursday and was not in a condition to drive. My house is full of kids, and we didn’t have a very good space for him to be sick in, and I felt in my heart that if I were him I would want to be in my own space to recover. He thought so too. So I drove him to his house on Friday the 30th. My understanding at the time was that my mom would be flying home that evening and would be with him.

As I drove him home, I began feeling very sick myself and I couldn’t drive myself home. But my oldest son had come down in a second car and he drove me back. I had a positive covid test result the next day, despite being myself fully vaccinated. In the meantime, my mom had also gotten sick with covid, and she ended up following health guidelines and staying in northern Colorado for the 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms until she was no longer contagious and wouldn’t infect others. My 6-year-old daughter also got sick with covid when I did, and she and I isolated in our home trying to avoid spreading it further. So it happened that my dad spent about a week by himself in his home. During that week my sister and I both called and texted every day, we had groceries delivered to his house so he wouldn't have to go anywhere, and we checked on his symptoms. What I was most concerned about was if he started to have trouble breathing. He did not. I had a good, substantial conversation with him on Sunday, two days after getting him home, and he was feeling considerably better than on the day I took him down. All week he had no fever and no breathing problems, but he

did become weaker, and he had a hard time eating much. The last time I spoke with him was Friday night, a week ago yesterday. His voice was clearer and more energetic than it had been in the middle of the week, and he told me he had been able to eat more that day. He also called my sister later that same evening (throughout the whole week he had never called her or me), but he did call her to ask for certain groceries and he seemed tired, but nothing was overly concerning. On Saturday evening when my mom got home, he was still breathing fine but was in a very weakened state. On Sunday my mom decided that medical intervention was necessary, and she called a nurse hotline. After a lengthy conversation talking about his symptoms, his medications, his fairly lengthy list of medical problems that he had been having, she was told that no ER visit was needed that night, but care would likely be needed the next day, possibly just a doctor's appointment by telephone to start. My mom also called my sister and asked her to fly out on Monday to help. On Monday morning, though, my dad was very much worse with significant breathing problems. As soon as my sister walked in the door, my mom asked her to call 911. She and my mom helped him get dressed as the paramedics were coming. They arrived and spoke with him in his chair, and due to covid protocols they wanted to have him go to the front porch before making their assessments. He walked out onto the front porch, supported and helped by my sister and a paramedic. But once he got outside, he collapsed right before getting to the chair. After 40 minutes of working to revive him, the paramedics declared that there was nothing more they could do.

There are a lot of what-ifs and might-have-beens about all of this. Part of the pain that I am feeling is not only that it was sudden and unexpected but also that maybe it could have been avoided if this or that had been done differently by me and by others. But while the covid virus took my dad, thankfully it did not take my mom or my daughter who were also not vaccinated. At this point it is not good to dwell too much on might-have-beens, except for the purpose of trying to help others avoid the same tragedy. And one thing I do know is that my mom, my sister, my wife, and I were all trying to be thoughtful about doing what was best and most helpful and what seemed to us to be the right thing at the time.

There are two other things that I know. First, my father was a man of faith, and we are a family of faith. Death comes to us all at some point, and I believe that both the lives and deaths of those who believe are in the hands of a loving God. I also believe, in the words of an American folk hymn that has been personally meaningful to me since I was in college, that "death shall not destroy my comfort." Some of the lines say, "O Hallelujah, how I love my Savior, mourners you may love him too." My father believed this, and I do too. Our purpose here on earth, I believe, is to find our way to God, and not only to find him in an afterlife but to find him here and now, in the midst of our sometimes very messy and troubled lives. Right now, for me, that means finding God somehow in and through my dad's death. That is part of the message of the verse from Job we have put on the program for today: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Job could find God and bless him not only in what was given but also in what was taken. And so I am trying to give thanks to God in all things, even the painful things and even when, like now, I may sometimes not really know what I am thanking for exactly or why. That is part of the nature of my faith.

The second thing I know is that my dad's health had been deteriorating for some time and he had often expressed a strong aversion to the idea of having a long, slow death. We had a wonderful trip in Yellowstone, but he couldn't do things he once could and several times during the trip the thought did come to me that we would probably never be doing something like that with him again. I think maybe we could still have enjoyed several more years with him without any really major changes, and it hurts to have lost those years this way, but changes were coming, and my wife and I had already started to think about and to gear ourselves up for them. A long slow death had happened with others in our family, and he had mentioned a number of times that he hoped it wouldn't happen to him. Well, it didn't.

Instead, he was able to do things he loved and be in places he loved right up to the end, and then the end came very quickly and relatively painlessly. That my kids and I got to be in Yellowstone and the Tetons with him was a blessing. That he did not die while home by myself was another blessing. Things deteriorated very rapidly over the weekend and as a family we couldn't quite keep up, but my mom had precious time with him and my sister also got to see him before he passed, and those were also blessings. There is pain no matter how death happens. But maybe there is also comfort that can be found, too. My dad was able to live his life fully, and with his family, right up to the end.

LIFE

So now I want to stop talking about his death and talk about his life. Like I mentioned, I have asked family and some close friends, many of whom could not come in person today, if they would like to send me something to read out on their behalf. I have several things I'd like to read. I will start with some very early memories from some of his siblings and I have to say some of these are very irreverent stories. But I have had to end up being selective and cannot share everything today.

This is from my Uncle David, who is my dad's older brother. My dad was the second oldest of the seven, and they were very close throughout their lives.

"I have a photo of Jim from elementary school years. Young elementary school years. It is one of those little mug shots from the school photographers, that kids would exchange and mothers would buy for scrapbooks and for grandparents. This one photo Jim autographed and presented to me. He wrote, "Your brother, Jim." From time to time, 60-70 years later, he would call and sometimes open the conversation with "this is your bother Jim".

The next one is from a booklet that my mom put together a few years ago for our kids sharing stories from my dad's life when he was young:

"Jim was always interested in musical instruments. One summer he played the clarinet, but the Junior High band teacher wanted an oboe player. When Jim later expressed his interest in obtaining an oboe to his parents, his Dad decided to buy a cow for Jim to milk to earn the money for it. This cow was dubbed "Clara," presumably after Jim's interest in the clarinet (the former interest). "Clara" made a better name than "Obie" or "Oba." Jim described this cow as "obnoxious" and "horrid" with a "nasty personality." She was fond of kicking over the milk

bucket and anyone who was milking her. Jim got kicked so many times that one day he kicked her back!

With two cows around, there were always plenty of cow pies available. David like to pick up ones that were hard and crusty on the outside but soft and gooey on the inside. Those were fun to throw at the sisters. Jim preferred throwing cow pies that were dried and hard all the way through. He threw them like a Frisbee. The sisters picked those up and threw them back. But they found their own soft and gooey ones to throw back at David.”

The next one is from my Aunt Marie, who is one of those sisters:

“Jim was the brother closest to my age, a few years older. I remember him teaching me to dance and taking me to the church dances when I was just 14. We had a lot of fun together with the waltz, foxtrot, and the German polka! The thing I most remember about Jim is his music because he would practice his oboe every night for 4 hours. He also took piano and organ lessons at which he excelled. He also learned to play every instrument in the band somewhat. He was so talented I believe he is teaching the angels new songs and writing new music in heaven. I loved my brother so much that I got jealous of his friends, but he never knew it. We haven’t spent a lot of time together in our adult lives, but when he came to visit me in the Tri-Cities we would always be on the same page. We could talk all afternoon and tell stories of our lives. As our dad always used to say, “if you get to heaven before I do, just drill a hole and pull me through,” go ahead and do it Jim, when the Lord calls me! [...] We love you always.”

The next one is from my wife:

“As young parents we struggled to know how to handle our first child, who was very strong willed. After watching us struggle for a time with some misbehavior, Jim said to me: You just need to hold him. And then he just sat there and held him, bringing calm and peace just by being with him and sitting. So many times, he just sat and held all of our children.”

The next one is from that first child of ours:

“Grandma, Grandad, Adelle and I toured art museums in Paris, France a few years ago and the most memorable parts of the museums were the various shaped chairs and benches on which Grandad and I slept. Our feet had grown weary traveling to the museums, and we thought it a prime time to rest them, rather than to see the museum.”

This is from my Aunt Susie. She remembers my dad sharing this memory:

“When in the Mission Home (one week in SLC) before going to the Language Training Mission (LTM) in Provo (this was when he was 19 and starting on a two-year mission to Switzerland). Jim heard one of the general authority speakers preach that mission rules were commandments from God. Jim, being thoughtful and observant, and being Jim, disagreed. He thought some of the rules were just silly. He figured he could not stay and be a missionary under that system. He thought; he prayed; he packed his bags and he prepared to

walk out the door. Then he thought he would pray one more time. He prayed; he got an answer; and he stayed. And we all know that he filled a difficult and honorable and productive mission.”

The next remarks are from Ron Staheli, one of his lifelong friends who shared much of that mission experience:

“Jim Lyman Rasmussen has been a close friend for almost 56 years. We met as freshmen at BYU, as we joined the small number of students in the accelerated theory class of 1965. Since the class was small, we all became good friends. But Jim and I quickly became close friends. The extraordinary demands of the theory class kept us working together, reviewing music theory rules and drilling each other on ear-training exercises. Then, just one year later, imagine my surprise and delight to meet Jim again as I arrived at the German Language Training Mission [...] He was two weeks ahead of me in the 3-month program, but we still had time together, especially as we worked together in music with the missionaries. Best of all, we were both called to serve in Switzerland. [...]

It was important to me that I learned, very early on in our friendship, that when Jim was deep in thought—when he was contemplating weighty matters, he would have a rather dour face, an expression that bordered on the morose. Early on I would think he was angry or dejected, but I came to appreciate—even love that look, because I knew his brain was in overdrive, attempting to make sense of all the paradoxes we face in life. That look told me Jim was operating at his “optimal level.”

Our lives have remained closely connected ever since. [...] Our conversations have always been open, deep, honest, and therapeutic. Jim is, without doubt, one of the most intelligent people I have ever known. Add to that his deep faith, his strong work ethic, his unerring taste, his superb musicianship, along with his wonderful sense of humor, and you have arrived at the essence of the man. I know and love this man well. I am grateful for the hope of an eternal friendship.”

This is from my sister Lori:

“Years ago, Dad told me that there had always been so many things he wanted to do, and he used to get really depressed because he didn’t have time to do them. Until it occurred to him how depressing it would be to get to the end of the list, and still be alive. It changed his thinking, and he wasn’t upset any more about all the things he hadn’t done yet. At the time of his death, he was flooding the family with music for a Christmas concert, planning a trip to Dublin, experimenting with plants in the garden, and many other things. He didn’t get to the end of his list, and that is exactly how he wanted it.”

This is from my Uncle David’s diary, August 10, 2021. I’ll try to read it well. It is brief, but it was very meaningful for me to read it, so thank you for sending it.

“My morning prayer:

When will I know that Jim is alright / you already know.

When will I know that I will again share a hug with Jim / you already know.

When will I know when we will get that hug / You cannot know; but it will be alright.”

Many, many more stories have come to me that I don't have time to share or energy, but if anyone else has memories or pictures or stories about my dad please do send them to me or you can post them on the memorial website. Please do that. We would love to hear all memories that you have of my father. It would mean a lot to us if you would share, whatever it is, however it was that you interacted with him.

I am going to end with a few memories and thoughts of my own. It is maybe hardly coherent. But here are some scattered characterizations of him and some memories mingled in.

The first thing I want to say about my dad is that he could be a real prankster. Some of the things he told me he did in college should have gotten him kicked out. I don't know how he stayed in college. But I'm not going to share those. In later years his pranks were more subtle. Sometimes when he was selecting music to play on the organ in church around the time of Halloween, he would select music that all had a theme of ghosts, from the Holy Ghost to doctored versions of music from Ghostbusters and other movies that he would play as postlude. Even if nobody else noticed, just having the idea and doing it was enough to keep him very entertained. He was also a hilarious story-teller and when he told stories he could often get us to laugh so hard we were in stitches. He also had a sardonic streak a mile wide and a very exaggerated head- and eye-roll he liked to use.

But my dad combined all of that with a deeply thoughtful, gentle, and poetic soul. This came through in his music, which he always played with his whole heart, but it wasn't only in his music. He lived a richly poetic life and saying it that way has a meaning for him and for me that I cannot even begin to put into words today, but it was and is one of the most powerful bonds between us. He had a deep feeling for and understanding of others and could give the most marvelous counsel. That came from a deep understanding combined with a deep love for people, despite what sometimes, maybe frequently, appeared to be a rather crusty exterior. He awakened me to an understanding of what it could mean to love and care for lots of people, but each one of them as individuals with great individual worth. I do not do this nearly as well as he did. But I think about, and will be thinking a lot more about, what I heard from him and what I know of how he did that, and I will be trying to continue to learn from him. The care that he took with personal and individual relationships with his children, grandchildren, and many, many others, was a rare gift.

He loved to travel, especially to Europe, and I caught that bug, and I've been basically trying to make a career out of it ever since. He loved Swiss chocolate, especially the Lindt chocolates, and we brought some today to share. Please take one in memory of him and to honor him. He would have to hide them from my mom, who thought he ate too much sugar. But he always took occasion when he came to visit us to buy more of them so that he and I could eat them together. And then he usually left them with us, though I am sure that he bought more for himself. He was an excellent cook. He was a

gardener and outdoorsman who felt a deep connection to nature. He loved to take us camping when we were young, and one of the staples of my teenage years was hiking in the Grand Canyon with him and some of his friends. One of his friends, who is here today (thank you for coming, Jim). This friend (at least this is how I understood it) never cleaned Grand Canyon dust off of his boots because it was Grand Canyon dirt and therefore holy. My dad and I liked that idea so much we started doing the same thing. Eventually I think my mom convinced us to clean them up after all if we wanted to keep them in the house. But dirt was very special for my dad in his garden. He spent enormous time and energy trying to get things to grow in Albuquerque. I didn't know any other yard so lush and abundant. He would send pictures to my Uncle David of his flowers and my uncle would ask, is that Albuquerque or is that England? Growing flowers, fruits, and other things, attracting birds to the yard and watching them was partly a matter of deeply felt religious devotion for my dad. For years he has had a statue of St. Francis of Assisi in his yard, who was so gentle and so close to God's creations, according to legends, that the birds and the beasts rested in his hands or nuzzled up to him. In his heart, my dad was that way too.

I want to tell you about the peach tree in our back yard. I grew up with this tree. It has always been there, and it is still there today. It is very old, has lost many limbs, my dad has had to prop it up in multiple places for many years now, and he worried over it and tended it for as long as I can remember, but it still produces an overabundance of the most amazing peaches. As a child that was not so good for me because I had to help can them and I developed a very strong aversion to the mushiness of overripe peaches. But as far as I knew, this was the only peach tree in the world. It was only much later that I learned there are also good peaches from places other than from my backyard and that there is even a state nicknamed the Peach state. I mention that because Georgia is where my wife is from, and I have come to love the peaches from Georgia and my family from there very much. My father-in-law has flown out to be here today and I am very grateful. But as a child, there was only one peach tree in the world. For me, this tree symbolizes my dad. Like that tree, he gave richly and abundantly in so many different ways to me and to others. And he will continue to do so, through my memories of him and of all the ways over the years that he loved me into being the way I am. I still feel his love now and I thank God for what was given to me in my dad. I would like to end with something that a close personal friend of my dad's, Dave Libhart, who was able to come today, told me about a piece of advice my dad gave him once when he was going through the most difficult time of his life: my dad gave three pieces of advice and the final one was this: "Finally, Jim said, have hope. Hope can actually change your life. Hope is everything." And a scripture that my mom thought about putting in the program today is from Esther 12:4: *"Wherefore, whose believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, and maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God."* My dad did abound in good works, and he did glorify God and it is fitting for us who knew and loved him to do the same and to hope to be reunited with him in a better world.

Thank you, dad, for being my best friend. I still have so much to learn from you, and I will learn from you still. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



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The whole year's calendar is on the Calendar page (use Agenda tab). Please notify the webmaster (editor@agoabq.org) of events you would like to have advertised. Also, paid "[Positions Vacant](#)" or requests for volunteer musicians and singers can be advertised free of charge. Our website gets about 400 views per month. **NOTE:** our Facebook page has 199 followers and can be used for posting notices about events, vacancies, etc. If you "Like" our page, you will receive new postings in your own News Feed.

The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter due to be published for January and February 2022, will be **December 15, 2021**. Please email news, articles, or photos, upcoming events or reports, plus any other website items to the Editor, Evelyn Henson, at editor@agoabq.org

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