

Graveside Service for William O. Drake: June 3rd, 2009
Hornell Rural Cemetery, 11:00 A.M.
Born: March 10th, 1923; Died: May 30th, 2009

Opening: Pastor Childs

"Fear nothing, for I am with you; be not afraid, for I am your God. I strengthen you, I help you, I support you with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 40:10.

Invocation Prayer: Eternal God, in Whom we live and move and have our being, and who by Your mighty power raised Jesus Christ from the dead, give us the light and life of your presence. Help us to put our trust in Your wisdom and to open ourselves to the ministry of your love. Open our hearts to hear Your words of encouragement from Scripture. Grant us Your peaceful presence as we remember our friend, our loved one, William 'Bill' Drake. Grant us the sure knowledge that You have won the victory over death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ! **Amen.**

Pastor Childs: Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

"Do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight and momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal."

Pastor Childs: We are gathered here today to hear God's word of hope as we commemorate with thanksgiving the life of Bill Drake.

Obituary

Letter from the Grandchildren

Eulogy: I have not known Bill. But I have talked with the family and have gained an appreciation for him. Bill was a good husband, a devoted father, a good grandfather, a good brother, and a friend.

Bill was married to Margaret for 62 good years. They met after high school when Sal Brundu introduced them. That first date they went to the movies, and Bill took Margaret's arm to cross the street. She knew then that Bill was special. They met in 1946 and married in '47. They lived on Thacher street at first, and then moved to the home on N. Main, where they enjoyed their life and raised three good sons.

Bill was active with the boys in scouts and 'grasshopper' baseball. He worked diligently at Stern & Stern Textiles all his life, from high school until his retirement after about fifty years. He walked to work daily and was never late.

Bill was a staunch Yankees fan, and loved to watch baseball. Even the day before his death he was sharp as a tack and knew all the players on both teams.

In his younger years he hunted and fished and loved the outdoors. In those days he kept a big vegetable garden in the back yard, and loved to grow and eat asparagus, tomatoes, and fresh veggies.

He fed the birds on the back deck, and could identify each one. He watched them avidly, and kept a can of pebbles handy to rattle away the squirrels. Regularly he would 'live trap' the squirrels and release them up at the Almond Dam.

His other hobby was listening to his scanner, so he knew what excitement was happening around town.

Bill was a patriot who flew his flag at every holiday. He enlisted the day after Pearl Harbor, and would proudly serve his country in the South Pacific Theater. He was on a medical ship for an appendectomy when McArthur and Hirohito signed the treaty on the Missouri, and he could see them out his window. He did not speak much about the events of war, but he earned three bronze stars for his tour of duty.

Bill was dedicated and witty, and loved to pick on everybody. No one was exempt. When asked what was for dinner, his standard reply was, "A toothpick and a glass of water!"

He loved to drive fast, though he never got a ticket. Once, I'm told, he was in the Boston area on the thruway when a little orange Porsche passed him. Doug said, "See if you can catch him, Dad." And Bill was game to try—but the old Ambassador only hit 115!

Bill liked John Phillip Sousa 'March' music. He liked Elvis, and Country music too. In his younger days, he and Margaret went to square dances and then learned Ballroom dancing at the Sherwood Hotel. He may not have been the best dancer, but they always had fun.

In those days he was an avid bowler, and every Tuesday night he was at Leagues. His team won the championship. It seems that every Tuesday night, while he was gone, the boys had a crisis at home—something about burned popcorn while watching 'Commando'.

Each year when the factory shut down during the couple weeks in the summer, the family went to Silver Lake for a week, or Lake Juanita. He helped Pudge build the cottage there, and the family loved their time at the cottage.

Bill loved his cat, Leonard, or 'Lenny'. The cat thinks he's a dog, and Bill actually taught him to fetch, and how to jump over his legs. Each night Lenny would jump Bill's legs as Bill raised them higher and higher.

Bill had diabetes, but managed it well. Until this past February he was very healthy. Then, he suffered congestive heart failure, and went from the hospital to Hornell Gardens. He remained mentally sharp, even as his body gave out. Margaret said that every night he would tell the boys, "Take care of your mother." He was truly devoted and concerned for Margaret above all things—even his own discomforts.

I was not there last week, but in my mind's eye, I imagine an angel appeared to him in the nursing home. A beautiful messenger from God in Yankee pinstripes.

The angel asked Bill if he was ready to go. Was he ready to leave behind the old, frail body, and receive a new body—a resurrection body? Bill did not hesitate—his spirit spoke clearly and said, “Yes, I’m ready!”

The angel took him by the hand and escorted Bill around third base—and straight toward home plate, where he saw mother and father, his sister and brothers. He saw our Lord Jesus, the heavenly umpire, who welcomed him with open arms.

Scriptures of Comfort:

Luke 13:18,19.

“Then Jesus said, ‘What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds come and find shelter among its branches.’”

Matthew 6:25-30.

“So I tell you, don’t worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food, drink and clothes. Doesn’t life consist of more than food and clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to Him than they are. Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not.

And why worry about your clothes? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won’t He more surely care for you?”

John 14:1-6.

“Set your troubled hearts at rest. Trust in God always; trust also in me. There are many dwelling-places in my Father’s house; if it were not so I should have told you; for I am going there on purpose to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I shall come again and receive you unto myself, so that where I am you may be also; and my way there is known to you.’ Thomas said, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus replied, ‘I am the way; I am the truth and I am life; no one comes to the Father except by me.’”

Psalm 23

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
 He leadeth me beside still waters; He restoreth my soul.
 He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
 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.
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.
 Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore."

Pastor Childs: Words of Committal:

Eternal God whose loving care is over all, we commit the earthly remains of
 William 'Bill' Drake to the earth. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, for we believe
 that his spirit is with You for now and forever. To know You is the assurance of
 life eternal. Amen.

Closing Prayer God of all grace and glory, who sent Jesus Christ to bring life
 and immortality to light, we give you thanks that by His death He destroyed the
 power of death. By His resurrection He gave assurance that because He lives we
 too shall live, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to
 come, shall be able to separate us from Your love, which we have seen and
 experienced in Jesus Christ. Help us as we remember with affection Bill Drake
 who has departed this life, to enjoy eternal life with You. He was with us for 86
 full years. We are never ready to lose one we love. Help us God, to comfort one
 another as we remember Bill's life among us, and give us peace that surpasses
 human understanding. In the name and person of Christ we pray, **Amen.**

Benediction

Go in peace, and may the blessing of God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer, and
 the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, be with you, and remain with you now and forever!
Amen.

Dear Grandpa,

We wish to let you know the type of impact you've had on our lives. There are no words to describe the way we feel and look at you. We always looked forward to the summer days we got to spend with you and grandma.

There have been so many memories associated with you; from hiding under the table as you yelled "fee fie foe fum I smell the blood of an englishmen," singing songs after we ate lunch, all of those new songs that you and grandma taught us, like "how much is that doggy in the window?"

You taught us all how to know and love the sport of baseball, especially the New York Yankees. We could always count on you to be sitting in your chair watching all of their games.

Being the wonderful grandpa you were, you easily made everyone laugh and smile in your presence. Whether it was just picking on someone, a joke, or just singing one of your many songs. We could always count on you to brighten our day.

Love,
The Boys
-Emma, Catie, + Hayley