

**Meditation by Rev. Alice L. Phillips**

Marian will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. She was born on Christmas Eve 1917 in Toledo, Ohio, and her family moved to Beulah Beach on the shore of Lake Erie. A member of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church as a child and young adult, Marian's faith in Jesus Christ was very important to her and her faith is where she found strength all of her life. Beulah Beach was one of her favorite places to be – she loved the lake and she was a good swimmer and ice skater. It was at Beulah Beach where she would take her own family on many occasions to share with them the joy she had in that special place as a child. Her faith in Jesus Christ that she passed on to you is the greatest inheritance you could ever receive.

After graduating from Asbury College, Marian began teaching music and history at Creston High. It was while rooming at Harriet Ault's home, that she met Harriet's grandson, Ben. They were married on Dec. 29, 1942. A wonderfully long marriage of 68 plus years....BEN, I don't think I've seen anyone as devoted to his wife as you have been to Marian. Your sweetie as you often referred to her would give you a smile and always wanted to be by your side...your love for one another was very evident. In her last lucid moment, it was to you she looked.

Marian and Ben would begin raising children...it was almost like two separate families because of the age differences between the first two sons, Barry and Tom, and the last two children, Lynn and Phil. Marian loved being a mother and her children described her as positive, compassionate, sweet, appreciative, active, loving, involved, a hard worker, always on the go for something, someone who taught them proper manners and social skills, and someone who made a neat appearance. I had the privilege on Friday of reading a little calendar booklet that Marian had – from 1951. In it she recorded little things that Barry and Tom had said to her that she thought were memorable. For Barry, it was something about straight teeth and for Tom, it was something about tears. Now we didn't get to any calendar booklets for Lyn and Phil...although I'm sure there are some there in the multitude of boxes and boxes of collected items...but maybe she would have recorded the day she was driving to transport

homemade pies that were in the back seat along with two rambunctious children, named Lynn and Phil. They had a squabble and Phil's hand went all the way through one of the pies. It would be interesting to hear the end of that story from Marian.

Although there were times when she might have been frustrated at the hard work of farm life, she was known to be pitching in to help by riding the tractor making hay. She cooked and baked so well that it was hard to believe it really was not her favorite thing to do.

Marian's interests were music and history. She was an accomplished musician and served as the church organist and pianist for years...playing not only for Sunday worship but also for many funerals and weddings. She also taught music in her home in private lessons. But her children were also the recipients of her musical talents...Lynn remembers washing and drying dishes with her mom and singing rounds with Marian.

As her children were raised, Marian took classes at Ashland and went back to teaching third grade and kindergarten.

In her spare time Marian enjoyed reading and was a member of the Creston Book and Music Club. She enjoyed doing crossword puzzles, word games, needlepoint, doll and stamp collecting, and children's literature. Ben chuckled when he pulled the book entitled "Elvis and Me" from the shelf along with her other books. Marian also enjoyed writing. Her numerous diaries are at the Romich home. She would write of details of her day, things she bought, things she had for dinner, places she traveled, and friends and family who were visited. She especially enjoyed writing Round Robin letters in her beautiful penmanship to her college classmates – friends for a lifetime.

After her retirement, Marian would have the added bonus of enjoying six wonderful grandchildren. She would read to them and bought them Tasha Tudor and Little House on the Prairie books. Marian also remained active in the community.

Marian was always the type of person that wanted to help someone. She and Ben were good friends to so many people. As Ben had said time and time again..."We've been so blessed!" The reason they

were so blessed is because Ben and Marian were a blessing to so many. Her volunteer work included teaching in the Adult Basic Education Program in which she got Lynn and Beth involved, helping with Mountain Mission, and volunteering at the library.

Marian loved people. And even in the last years when she was not well, her face would light up when people visited – she even enjoyed being teased by Eugene McIlvaine on a regular basis.

Marian was a member of Creston and Jackson Presbyterian Churches and the Presbyterian Women's Guild. Marian enjoyed her years of Bible Study Fellowship. Worshiping and studying God's Word and being actively involved in the church was central to Marian's life. Her faith was of the utmost importance in her life.

In the passage of Scripture from Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah sees a ray of hope amidst all the problems that surrounded him. He says this is what he calls to mind and gives him hope.

**1. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed.**

- a. God's great love is steadfast...it is always there and it never ceases. And that great love has been made known to us as our Heavenly Father sent His Son Jesus to die for us and who was resurrected so that we might have life and have it abundantly. And because of that great love we never have to be consumed by the problems that may seem to overwhelm us.

**2. His compassions never fail...they are new every morning.**

- a. The Lord's mercies never come to an end for the Lord is compassionate and forgiving.
- b. And the beauty of the Lord's mercy is that it is new every morning. Each day we can awaken again to the

Lord's mercy that helps us to start each day with a new beginning.

### **3. Great is your faithfulness**

- a. The Lord is faithful no matter what. He promises us he will never leave us or forsake us.

And because of these three characteristics of God, Jeremiah could say: "The Lord is my portion says my soul, therefore I will wait for him." Marian made the Lord her portion and she, too, could say, "I will wait for him." For she knew God's love, God's mercy, and God's faithfulness and that gave her hope for each day and the glorious hope in waiting to see her Savior, Jesus Christ, face to face in Heaven.

Marian's interest in history inspired travel throughout the United States and Europe with her husband, friends and family. Marian led a very interesting life. A passage of Scripture that reminds me of Marian is John 10:10, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Marian basically saw the world. Even in the last years when Marian was not well, she still wanted to go somewhere in the car. I remember visiting her early on when I first arrived here, and she always asked whose blue car it was in the driveway. Life is much like a trip...a journey. And with Jesus Christ it is a journey filled with joy. The journey with Jesus, however, doesn't end here on this earth. There is more...much more beyond this earthly life. On Wednesday

evening, August 10, 2011, Marian experienced the best trip of her life. It can't even compare with her travels here on earth—actually, Marian arrived at her final destination!

A pastor friend of mine years ago told the story and adventure that he had in moving his son and daughter-in-law. He had to drive them from Texas to Pennsylvania. When he arrived he assumed that they would be packed...but they weren't, as they had a squabble. They had to get a whole house packed for their 1,000 plus mile journey. The last thing was a bird in a cage. The pastor watched as his son and daughter-in-law took that bird, got a shoe box and punched holes in the box, and then put the bird in it. After the bird was in it, they wrapped the box with that sticky tape. The pastor had to have the bird in the box ride with him from Texas to PA in the moving van as there was no room in his son and daughter-in-law's car. As he traveled along, the pastor heard....peck, peck, peck...peck, peck, peck - until finally the bird escaped and began flying all over the cab of the truck. He had to pull over as the bird flew under the dash. Finally, the bird perched on top of the seat and began to sing a beautiful melodious tune.

In many ways, Marian has been trapped in a body and mind suffering from Alzheimer's Disease that created so many difficulties. She now has been set free completely....she has been given a new body...a new mind...a spiritual body...through faith in Jesus Christ. In many ways that little story of the bird is a vivid illustration of being set free from our earthly bodies to a resurrected body that is new...a

spiritual body....and that, too, gives us every reason to sing. Scripture tells us that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." When we have that kind of faith in Jesus Christ, He assures us of a heavenly home. Scripture has assured us that those who have faith as Marian had faith in Jesus are welcomed into Heaven with open arms seeing Jesus face to face and where a special place...a special home is prepared for them. It is a place where there is no more mourning or crying or sickness or pain or Alzheimer's. It is a place of great joy and love beyond anything that Marian could imagine here on this earth...I think about the wonderful love and care Marian was surrounded by each day in her husband Ben, her children, grandchildren, care takers, Jill and Mary Lynn, her sister-in-law Shirley, friends, Donna and Eugene, and so many others who drove up the driveway of the farmhouse to check in...yet what she is experiencing in Heaven is far beyond all of that incredible love and care. It is a place of a grand reunion with all those who have gone on before her. It is a place where I would imagine Marian is certainly enjoying the music of the Heavenly choir. It is a place where the glorious hope in the resurrection she awaited for all those years is now a reality...for Great is the faithfulness of our Lord! It is a place where she has been welcomed home by her Lord and Savior Jesus who she faithfully served each day and who has let her know, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Well done."