

## OPENING PRAYER

As Jean taught me, so I invite you to place one palm on your heart and one palm on your belly, to pay attention to your mind, your body and your breath for one minute of quiet stillness; your eyes either open or closed. At the end of the silence, I will lead us into a time of prayer –

'Even if our skin could pulsate with the energy of the earth  
and every living thing  
Or our faces glow like the sun and the moon  
Even if our eyes could sparkle like twinkling stars  
Or our mouths fill to overflowing with the songs of birds at dawn  
Even if our hearts could beat like the hooves of deer on the highest  
mountain slopes  
Or our breathing could flow like the tides of all the oceans  
Even if our arms could spread wide and lift like the wings of eagles;

That would not be enough to express our gratitude to you Jesus  
For the almost 81 years of Jean's life:

Because of her and for her and for each other - we are here.  
We thank you, living God, for the way she brought very different people  
together in unity and balance.  
Her spirituality, faith, values, philosophy of life and example continues to  
inspire our own lives now and going forwards from today:

And so, Trinity of Love, one God in perfect community  
Maker, Saviour, Holy Dove.....  
Hear us say out loud in unison the universal prayer for peace

Lead me from death to life,  
from falsehood to truth.  
Lead me from despair to hope,  
from fear to trust.  
Lead me from hate to love,  
from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our heart,  
Our world, our universe.

*'Universal Prayer for Peace' (1981); adapted from the [Upanishads](#) By Satish Kumar.*

AMEN

## Eulogy Jean Rhodes

This is Jean's 80 years in her own words – recorded by one of her grandchildren 4 years ago.

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### **CHILDHOOD**

Jean was born during WW2, 9th May 1943 in Aberfeldy, Perthshire in Scotland. She lived in Mill Cottage with her mother Jessie and her grandparents. Her Grandfather was the manager that small tartan/tweed mill and her Mother worked there too - in charge of the Queen mother's tweed. Jean's dad, Harold, whose roots were in NE England was Petty Officer in the navy and Jean rarely saw him. Her Grandmother was the most significant part of her early childhood, giving her a sense of right and wrong and compassion for people struggling and in poverty. Jean's earliest memories were seeing tramps sitting on the doorstep at the mill and being given a bowl of soup and a hunk of bread. Aged 8, Jean came to live in Henderson Road near Hammond's Pond in Carlisle, when her father left the Navy. She found this city, very different to Aberfeldy and got bullied at Upperby school for having a Scottish accent.

A third of the children in Jean's class had lost their fathers - killed in the Second World War. Aged 10, Jean remembers her mother, Jessie, taking her old clothes to a family of six who lived up her street. Later on, Jessie saw a girl at the bus stop and said to her ' that's an awful bonny dress you've got on' and the girl said, 'Jean gave it to me'.

Jean passed the 11 plus but her mother had to go out to work, scrubbing pub floors to pay for the uniform....due to her father's gambling addiction. Harold loved theatre and film and every Saturday night he took Jean to the cinema or the local theatre throughout her childhood. Her father's brother, uncle Alf was killed at the Day landings and had he lived six weeks later he had been accepted for ENSA which was the entertainment branch of the Army. He was a wonderful singer as was Jean's father. Jean knew all the 1950's film stars and loved musicals. Her mother other couldn't afford dance lessons - Jean remembers looking longingly at red tap shoes in a shop window on her route to school. Jean is

very proud however of winning a twist competition with a lad with rugby legs at the cameo ballroom in Carlisle in her teens.

## **TEENS**

Her teens were dances, camping weekends and boyfriends. School work was not her priority but she got five GCSE's at a time when only 5% of the population took them. She left school and worked as a typist at Kangal Helmets. Wage £3 a week. Also at Vasey's, scotch St, Carlisle wage £4.50 a week.

## **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

Jean's world changed forever, when Terry Rhodes from Scotby rescued her from a drunk fella at a dance in the County Hotel. Age 19 she married him on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1963 in The Church of Scotland in Carlisle. They moved into 1 Park Close, their home for 60 years. Son, Paul, came along, then daughters Karen and Samantha and in time 6 Grandchildren too. Her children and grandchildren have been Jean's pride and joy and she has always taken them to musical theatre shows and cinema – just as her dad Harold took her. Jean was also very close to Peter, her brother in law with Downs Syndrome, who lived to age 57.

As a young Mum in Scotby, Jean got a job behind the coffee bar at the church youth club on a night. She heard they wanted a secretary, and after someone else declined the offer, Jean took it. For much of the early years of her children's lives, Jean was around - as her job was part time.

## **VOCATIONS**

As Paul and Karen became more independent, Jean applied for a job at a Psychiatric Hospital as a secretary in the Social Work Dept - typing out the Social Workers case notes. So she had a knowledge of mental health, working in offices attached to the ward. She got to know the work of the social workers and she thought "I'm sure I could do this". She applied to Northumbria university and was rejected the first year after a tricky interview. There were only 30 places and five hundred applications. She applied again aged 42 and got in. This meant she had to travel 120 miles, round trip every day, at first on the train which took forever and then by car.

Jean was subsequently employed by Cumbria County Council as a social worker, in the Children and Families team - which encompassed Child Protection, Children in Need, Fostering and Adoption and Court work. In her own words she says: "she had to take babies into care out of the hospital from drug addicts, she had to chase a girl down the motorway with her children in the car, she had to get the police to escort her to houses where dangerous men were present - to rescue children, she had to also take kids into care where their parents were drunk, she also had to track down runaways - one boy ran away to a circus. Jean also had to work alongside the police - on cases of child abuse and the domestic abuse of women and in cases where the women were the abusers." She loved it and she did it for 11 years. She then transferred to the Children with Disabilities team, specifically children with Autism and Jean ran a support group for parents and a teatime support group for siblings. This meant traveling the width and length of Cumbria.

Because Jean's social work job was stressful; she took a 4 year part time course in her mid 40's whilst she was working - to become a BWY yoga teacher. She had always practised yoga since her late 20's and felt that she wanted to go deeper into it. Once qualified, aged 48, Jean taught a yoga class every weeknight, only eventually retiring from teaching yoga around age 75. Since retiring from social work, Jean applied herself as the rep for BWY Cumbria and wholeheartedly as a fund raiser for Hospice at Home and as a Governor of James Rennie school. Only 3 months ago she was attending a U3A class on meditation and mindfulness at Belah.

## **TRAVEL**

She was not a natural traveler, only going as far as Blackpool or Morecambe as a child. But with Terry, Jean travelled extensively in Europe, India, South Africa (their favorite holiday), the United States and across Canada in an old Lincoln car from Ontario to the Okanagan Valley. In the Motorhome they went to Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal and in Jean's infamous words etc etc etc....

It's so clear from Jean's memoir, who she was and always will be in our memories: Compassionate, kind, generous, full of energy, intelligent, determined, fearless, resilient, organized, strong opinions, sense of right

and wrong but understanding, a love of the arts, creative, a home maker, family focussed but with more than one career and a small business, a safe wise pair of hands, young at heart, a stylish, irrepressible, brave and proud....there will be so many more words in your minds to add to what you've heard – on behalf of the family, thank you for all your care, cards, messages, help and support. I hope you'll come to Scotby Hall and talk to them and to each other, sharing your memories of Jean Rhodes, celebrating all that she was.

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What's not in Jean's memoir 4 years ago would be how her story would end. *Diagnosed with late-stage cancer mid January this year, Jean was admirably stoic and accepting throughout, she said on the Saturday before she died that she was ready to go, Jean had very little fear or pain and simply slept away at home. The speed of decline has been shocking for Terry, the whole family and all of us – Jean drew strength from a deep spirituality embracing both East and West, she wanted a Christian cremation and church memorial and interment in this church yard– all of this she planned herself. Her ashes will be interred her tomorrow. Rev Isaac gave Jean an anointing of oil, the cross on her forehead two days before she died – she referred to it as her 'last rites'. She genuinely died at peace and in peace having heard and seen all her close family, knowing how much she was loved by each one of them in her final moments.*

*'The Power of Love' sung to us now by 2 of her granddaughters Sally and Francesca says it all.....Donald Scott accompanying them.*

## COMMENDATION AND FAREWELL

*If you take time to look around at the stain glassed windows you will see a warrior with angels wings, a woman in white pointing upwards beyond human existence, you'll see Jesus surrounded by little children and families - putting them at the centre of everything and Mary being visited by an angel with one palm crossed over the other on her chest: feel free to make this same gesture over your heart space. Some of you did not have the opportunity to say thank you, sorry or goodbye to Jean.....so let's pause to provide that moment now in this Sacred Space. Let us release Jean into God's safe keeping.....*



