

Remembering Alphie...



My mother, Alphie Bundt. What a sweet, kind lady she was... but her quiet gentleness and generous heart were also reflections of her vibrant spirit and abiding faith. I can't tell you how many times I have been told what an inspiration she was... both through her singing and in the way she lived her life. I feel so privileged to have had her as my mother... she taught me so much.

Her life started in 1914 when she was born Alphie Josephine Hanson on her parents' homestead farm near

Braddock, ND, not far from Bismarck. She and her twin brother Alfred were born at home and I remember her telling the story of how she was put in a shoe box on the open oven door to keep her warm. She couldn't have been much bigger than her great-granddaughter Sina was when she was born prematurely!



She told stories of life on the farm...

- of the only doll she ever had, hand made by her mother
- of how they walked over the rolling hills to school and saw circles of stones where the native American Indians had staked their teepees
- of how they once saw rabbits forming a circle, standing upright and making sounds as if singing in some sort of ritual
- of how she and her brother and 3 sisters got into mischief throwing rocks at their bull one day and how the bull chased them so they ran up on a roof... then slid down onto haystack and onto the back of a pig who raced with them on its back through the yard



Their family moved to Grand Forks in 1928, in time for her to spend her high school years at Grand Forks Central. She started life small and grew very slowly... she said the principal told her he remembered that he could hardly see her over the top of his desk when she started high school.

That small body held a powerful voice, however. Their family spent many hours making music and singing together around the piano, and her sister Lillian said she thought they must have sung duets at every church in town during their high school years! I love the story of how they used to sing for a radio program, pretending they were singing around the fire.



My mother kept on singing her whole life, not just at the hundreds of church services, weddings and funerals for which she was so well known but also at home. As I was growing up I remember singing with her throughout the house... it could be said we lived our own opera, often singing rather than speaking such important dialog as 'time to come and eat' or 'take out the garbage, please'.

I was told that when I was 3 years old someone asked me to sing a song and I surprised them by singing the complete Mallotte's Lord's Prayer. It wasn't really that surprising knowing my mother. It was likely the song I knew best because I heard it nearly every day!



I remember being greeted when I got up in the morning with ‘Good morning to you...’ Our daughter Nissa remembers her also singing it to her when she and Davin spent their summer weeks on the farm. Imagine my surprise when I learned just in the last few months that when my mother went for breakfast at Augustana she sang the same thing to everyone in the dining room every morning! She truly epitomizes the saying, “How can I keep from singing?”

Singing was truly a love of her life. The other love of her life was her beloved Wilfred, who she married in 1948 when she was 34 years old. It’s a tender love story that starts as if she had been waiting just for him... she had turned down two other marriage proposals before she met my dad.



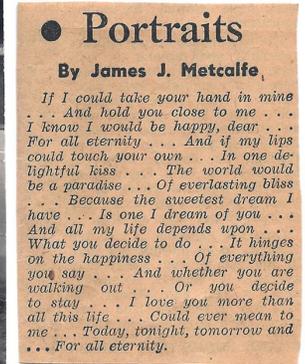
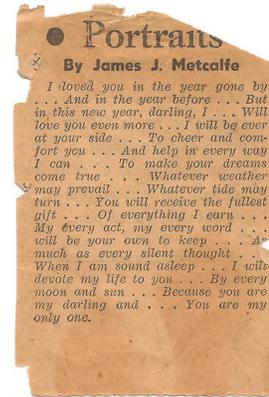
She loved telling the story of how she fell for him 8 times the first time they were together at the roller rink. He was a wonderful skater... and she was not. Every time she fell (which was often) he would glide over and pick her up. Sometimes I wonder if she was really that bad a skater!

The rest is history, as the saying goes, but I remember growing up always knowing just how much my parents loved each other. They were devoted to each other. His tragic death in 1968 was almost more than she could bear. She told me many times how she would come home and cry every night... until one day she finally told God, “I can’t do this any more, you have to take over.” She said she felt the weight lifted and she continued to live an inspiring life for the next 43 years.



My father remained close to her heart for the

rest of her life. I found tucked into her wallet an old photo of the two of them with two yellowed poems by James. J. Metcalfe cut from the newspaper years ago... still there more than 40 years after his death. One ended ‘Because you are my darling and you are my only one’... the other ‘I love you more than all this life could ever mean to me. Today, tonight, tomorrow and for all eternity.’



I find it very fitting that my mother left us on Valentine’s Day to be reunited in eternity with her beloved Wilfred.

Walle township and East Walle Lutheran Church became the heart of my mother’s community after she married and she embraced it with enthusiasm. She was a gracious hostess at home and at church, and welcomed guests warmly, opening her heart and home to her extended family and friends... always with ease and grace.

She always made time for important occasions in the lives of those dear to her... and she and sister-in-law Helen spent endless hours visiting and shopping together.





My mother worked at the Grand Forks County Treasurer's Office for nearly 40 years, much of it part-time during tax season. I remember going to work with her once in awhile as a child and spending the day inside the vault... pretty cool substitute for kindergarten! When I was in school I remember my dad

often had supper ready when she for home from work in the evening... his specialty was loose hamburger! She was deputy treasurer for 8 years and spent the last 4 years before she retired as elected county treasurer.

**Vote for
Alphie Bunde**
Candidate for
**COUNTY
TREASURER**
Grand Forks County

Well Qualified

10 years experience as Clerk
8½ years as Deputy Treasurer
Your Vote and Support will be Appreciated
(Pol adv paid for by Alphie Bunde, Thompson)

Her natural abilities led her to active roles and leadership positions both in the community and the church, including serving on the District Board of the Women of the ELCA and being named Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Women's club.



Jensen urges full participation of men and women in the church

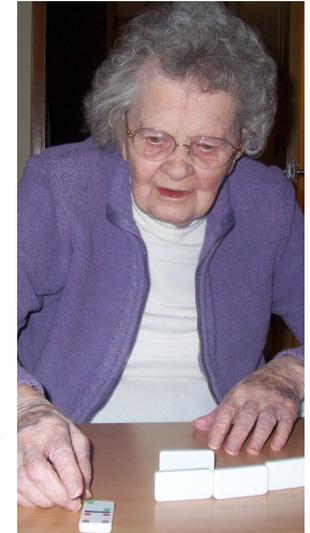
Taking the convention theme "Thank You for Your Partnership in the Gospel," Bonnie Jensen, keynote speaker, asked the convention to look at the tradition, myths, and world view that effect church structure and have hindered full participation of women and men in the church's life.

Jensen said that the gospel empowers us for partnership. She showed how the pyramid structure of our church organizations has been a barrier to the gospel. The pyramid structure is too much like a caste system with ranked levels, much as in society. The servant role of Christ, however, destroys the tiers which prevent partnership, according to Jensen. She suggested that the structure which the gospel implies is that of a circle, where God sees all people as equals. In her conclusion Jensen suggested that partnership in the gospel by men and women in the church needs to be made more visible in our congregations, that we need to reorganize congregations, and that men need to share in the workload of serving.



Members of the district ALCW executive committee are seated on the convention stage with the keynote speaker. From left to right: Bonnie Jensen, keynote speaker; Judith Hoffrening, Harvey; Grace Hagen, Rugby; Alphie Bunde, Thompson; Vivian Sellstad, Fordville; and Helen Tollefson, Fargo.

My mother always seemed to be busy with something... if not something at the church, maybe singing or painting or making lefse at the Sons of Norway. She had that drive to keep moving until the very end of her life. Never content to just sit in her room at Augustana, she was always 'tooling around' in her wheelchair. Whenever we came to visit she always wanted to go out for a walk, and loved playing dominoes.



It was very fitting that my mother was hosting overnight guests and preparing for a dinner party on her last day living in her farm home. When she went into the bedroom and laid down on the bed saying she wasn't feeling well in the middle of preparing dinner, they immediately knew something was very wrong. That wasn't at all like the 'energizer bunny' everyone knew and loved. Thank goodness they were there!

It was after that serious encounter with an abscessed colon that she decided it was time to leave her farm home and move to the Twin Cities. She made the Minneapolis Augustana care complex her new home.



One of my mother's strengths was her adaptability, and she again embraced her new community with enthusiasm, made new friends and became involved in the activities at Augustana. Is it any surprise that sing-a-longs were among her favorites?!

Near the end of her life she and her buddy Vivian were so cute together. I often found them just sitting next to each other, holding hands. My mother said many times that Augustana was a good place to be.

I asked her one day after she had settled into her new home if she missed cooking, because she used to do so much of it. She responded very simply, with no hesitation whatsoever... 'No.' It made me smile.

My mother had two special covered boxes she kept in her dresser with all her important papers and keepsakes. As I was sifting through them, I was amazed at how many sayings and verses she had saved, many of them hand typed on little pieces of paper. As I read through them I realized just how much they were really a story of how she lived her life.

IT'S UP TO YOU

God gave you this day to do just what you would.
 You can throw it away --or do some good.
 You can make someone happy, or make someone sad.
 What have you done with the day that you had?

God gave it to you to do just as you would.
 You can do what is wicked, or do what is good.
 You can hand out a smile, or just give 'em a frown.
 You can lift someone up, or push someone down.
 You can lighten some load, or some progresss impede.
 You can look for a rose, or just gather some weed.

What did you do with your beautiful day?
 God gave it to you, did you throw it away?

THREE LITTLE WORDS
 A retired business executive was once asked the secret of his success. He replied that it could be summed up in three words - "and then some."
 I discovered at an early age," he declared, "that most of the difference between average people and top people could be explained in three words. The top people did what was expected of them - and then some."
 "They were thoughtful of others, they were considerate and kind - and then some. They met their obligations and responsibilities fairly and squarely - and then some. They were good friends and helpful neighbors - and then some. They could be counted on in an emergency - and then some."
 I am thankful for people like that, for they make the world more livable, for their spirit of service is summed up in three little words, "and then some."

When faced with a mountain -
 I will not quit,
 I will keep on striving until
 I climb over,
 Find a pass through,
 Tunnel underneath,
 Or simply stay and turn the
 mountain into a gold mine.
 WITH GOD'S HELP.

GOD USES BROKEN THINGS

It takes broken soil to produce a crop
 - broken clouds to produce rain
 - broken grain to give bread
 - broken bread to give strength
 - it is the broken Alabaster box that gives forth perfume

It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.

"Don't try to climb too high - it will hurt so much more when you have farther to fall."

"Don't sweat the small stuff - its just a mote on the horizon."

One of her hand-typed verses was part of the inspiration for my Wednesdays Unplugged, when I take the day off from appointments and take time for me to enjoy cooking during the day, and for our family to gather for dinner and family time together every Wednesday evening.

We end every meal by pulling quotes to share from what has come to be know as the 'Quote Cup', a Norwegian covered wooden dish that used to belong to my grandmother. I didn't realize before how much this tradition connects me to my mother.

T A K E T I M E

TAKE TIME TO THINK-
it is the source of power.

TAKE TIME TO READ-
it is the foundation of wisdom.

TAKE TIME TO PLAY-
it is the secret of staying young.

TAKE TIME TO BE QUIET-
it is the moment to seek God.

TAKE TIME TO BE AWARE-
it is the opportunity to help others.

TAKE TIME TO LOVE AND BE LOVED-
it is God's greatest gift.

TAKE TIME TO LAUGH-
it is the music of the soul.

TAKE TIME TO BE FRIENDLY-
it is the road to happiness.

TAKE TIME TO DREAM-
it is what the future is made of.

TAKE TIME TO PRAY-
it is the greatest power on earth.



Perhaps collecting all these poems is partly what inspired her to write her own poem, which speaks her story from her heart.

I found the verse of 'I Have a Song' sitting on the piano during a visit to her on the farm about 20 years ago. She said it just came to her and she wrote it down. We gave her a framed copy for Christmas one year and it hung on her wall ever since. She always talked about setting it to music and I made an attempt which we performed for her 90th birthday, but I have searched high and low and can't find a copy of it any more... most likely it's on the hard drive of a 'dead' computer somewhere.

Then, about a year and a half ago, the wonderful staff at Augustana Care Center was putting together a resident talent show. They asked my mother if she would read her poem which they had admired hanging on her wall. She willingly agreed to do so.

When it was her turn in the talent show she asked, "Do you want me to read it or sing it?" They said, "Whatever you want"... so she sang it! It was the first time I had ever heard her sing it, but it was such a touching performance that they asked her to reprise it for the Christmas program.



Then she sang it again for the baptism of her great-granddaughter Sina, named after Alphie's mother. What a treasured gift that was!



'Her song' has been her faithful companion ever since. Her great-grandson Khalen can tell you that they would be strolling down the halls, pushing her in her wheelchair, when she would suddenly burst into her song. About a week before she died, we held hands and sang it over and over... for nearly an hour.

'I Have a Song' tells Alphie's story, straight from her heart. It is a tangible part of her that we will have with us forever.



I Have a Song

I have a song that I can sing,
A song that will make the heavens ring.
A song with the theme of my God and Lord,
A song that ends on a mighty chord.

I have a star to lead the way,
A star that leads to Christ, always.
Not a flickering flame or a glaring light,
But a star that shines with radiance bright.

I have a Savior who saves me from sin,
Who makes and keeps me pure within.
Light of my soul, joy of my heart,
Strength for my weakness He does impart.

I have a Savior, a star and a song,
Christ is my Savior, to him I belong.
He is my star, the light of the ages.
He is my song, I sing His praises.

Alphonse J. Bunde 1914 - 2011

Alphonse J. Bunde, 96, formerly of Thompson, ND died February 14, 2011 at Augustana Care Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She moved to the Augustana Senior Apartments in 2001 and received loving care at the adjoining Care Center since 2006.

Alphonse Josephine Hanson was born September 26, 1914 on her parents' homestead farm near Braddock, North Dakota, not far from Bismarck. In 1928 her family moved to Grand Forks, where she graduated from Grand Forks Central High School and Aaker's Business College.

She married Wilfred Bunde October 23, 1948 and they made their home on a farm in Walle township south of Grand Forks. Wilfred died in a tragic farm accident in 1968. Alphonse stayed on the farm until her move to Minneapolis in 2001 to be close to her daughter's family.

Alphonse worked in the Grand Forks County Treasurer's Office part- and full-time for nearly 40 years, including 8 years as deputy treasurer and the 4 years before she retired as elected county treasurer.

Alphonse was active in the church and community her whole life but is perhaps best remembered for her beautiful singing, which was an inspiration to others until the end of her life.

Alphonse was preceded in death by her parents George and Sina Hanson, beloved husband Wilfred Bunde, sisters Margaret and Helen and twin brother Alfred.

She is survived by: daughter Sharlene (John) Hensrud, Golden Valley, MN; sister Lillian (Robert) Stadelman, Pound, WI; grandchildren Davin Hensrud (Laura Given), St. Louis Park, MN and Nissa (Dominique) Pierre-Toussaint, Golden Valley, MN; great-grandchildren Radley and Sina Given and Kennedy and Khaleen Pierre-Toussaint; many beloved nieces, nephews and extended family members.

Alphonse lived a long and full life, inspiring all those whose lives she touched. She will be deeply missed.