

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of

Donald Francis Baker

September 12, 1941 — April 15, 1995

April 23, 1995

1:30 p.m., The Sanctuary

Plymouth Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

Seattle, Washington

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

L: Let us say again what we believe.

All: We believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and we know that in everything God works for good with those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

***THE HYMN No. 41**

The Sampler

"How Blessed Are They Who Trust in Christ"

MARYTON

THE PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

("debts and debtors")

THE ANTHEM

"God Be In My Head"

***THE WORDS OF COMMENDATION**

***THE HYMN No. 31**

The Sampler

"For All the Saints"

SINE NOMINE

***THE BENEDICTION**

THE POSTLUDE

(Please be seated for the postlude, which is an act of worship.)

Please join others for fellowship at the reception in the Plymouth Lounge immediately following the service.

* * * * *

WORSHIP LEADERS

Anthony B. Robinson, Senior Minister

Susan Yarrow Morris, Minister of Parish Life and Care

Steven M. Williams, Director of Music and Organist

The Plymouth Choir

* * * * *

Gifts to a fund for the Baker children may be made through Plymouth Church.

Please mark your contribution accordingly.

The Order of Worship

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

THE PRELUDE

THE PROMISES OF GOD

*THE HYMN No. 40

"Blessed Assurance"

The Sampler
ASSURANCE

THE GREETING

THE PRAYER

Holy God, whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our thoughts, grant that your Holy Spirit may intercede for us with sighs too deep for human words. Heal our wounded hearts made heavy with sorrow. Through the veil of our tears and the silence of our emptiness, assure us again that ear has not heard, nor eye seen, nor human imagination envisioned, what you have prepared for those who love you; through Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead. Amen.

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE

Psalm 121

Psalm 23

THE ANTHEM

"Come Ye Disconsolate"

THE WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Sue Baker

Joanne Henjum

Bill Norton

SONGS FROM THE ORDER

(see insert)

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 61:1-3

John 20:19-31

THE MEDITATION

The Rev. Anthony B. Robinson

DONALD FRANCIS BAKER was born September 12, 1941 in Adelaide, South Australia, to Norah Jane Coutts and Walter Francis Baker. At the age of three his family moved to Perth, Western Australia, where Don attended school. Don was the older brother of two sets of twins, Gordon and David, and Peter and Kim. After the death of Kim and his fraternal grandparents in Western Australia, the family returned to Adelaide, *WHERE SUSANNE WAS BORN.*

Don was active in church youth groups and choirs. He was in "The Chancel Players," a drama group, and sang in "The Gallery Singers" for many years. At age 17 he was ordained the youngest deacon ever at College Park Congregational Church. Don was a leader of church youth camps, helped organize state-wide activities, and helped set up coffee shop outreaches — "The Attic" and another one at Stow Church — attracting many Aborigines and street people. He completed two years of seminary training at Parkin Congregational Theological College.

Don was a great motorbike enthusiast, owning and perfecting a Honda 300. In addition to flying around the hills of Adelaide and taking interstate trips, Don was instrumental in helping to transform ongoing rivalries of Honda, Vespa and Scooter motorbike clubs into friendly competition. At the age of 20 Don completed a three-year apprenticeship in tool making. He held a variety of tool making and machinist jobs, as well as offering continual TLC for his biking friends and their machines.

In 1973 Don learned of the community-building work of The Ecumenical Institute, and shortly thereafter joined their staff in Mowanjum, an isolated Aboriginal community in northwestern Western Australia. The following are excerpts of a letter received from colleague, George Holcombe:

"I remember, years ago, being in Mowanjum on the Western coast of Australia and one day meeting this lanky Aussie, so unassuming and with a smile that was his whole face. His eyes were slits with twinkling beams. He was a real miracle-worker with a spanner and a vice. In that hot weather where a few hours of thirst could lose a lot of cattle, Don Baker kept worn out pumps squirting liquid and old Land Rovers, Mokes and Utes doing necessary deeds. Sometimes when parts weren't available he made them. He was an amazing genius at keeping things mechanical doing what they need to do. And when day's labor was done we would lift good, cold Emu Bitters and Don would detail metallurgical stories that could only be comprehended by mechanical experts of another planet, but

Don moved to Seattle in 1987, drawn by the beauty of the mountains and water. He joined Plymouth Church in 1989 and enjoyed singing in the choir and the fellowship of the church over the past six years. Andrew came to live with Don in 1989 and Peter joined them two years later. During his time in Seattle, Don continued to live with ICA colleagues and supported their work in facilitation and community-building. In September, 1994, Don, Joanne, the kids and Don's sister, Sue, set up a home together to support him in the final months of his life.

SONGS FROM THE ORDER

THE VISION

Tune: Sounds of Silence

We heard the cry from the past, we heard the cry set forth at last;
Our ancestors plead to live our time,
The crimson line their only awesome sign.
Now all the earth cries out within our hearts: agony.
Comes the dawn of silence.

Beyond the wanderings of time, beyond the race of humankind;
I see living bodies torn and crushed,
Life emerging from the arid dust.
Now the face I see is dark beyond all hope: mystery.
Comes the dawn of silence.

Pain and joy and hope unfold, pain and joy and hope untold;
We cannot contain ascending life,
Nor escape the chaos and the strife.
Now the wonder of our God is struggle and love: eternally.
Comes the dawn of silence.

Lightning moment, blazing spark; lightning moment in our dark;
The birth and death of every star and tree,
The dread assault of spirit within me.
Then God confronts me with terror and with love: ecstasy.
Comes the dawn of silence.

Burning flame and life is born, burning flame and all is gone;
Trembling and afraid above the abyss,
Grasping now that only nothing exists.
Then I plumb the abyss, my life becomes new birth: ceaselessly.
Comes the dawn of silence.

we waited for more stories because of the charm of the teller. Or, without changing speeds, he would pose a theological question that left us all whirling. The Aborigines were close to Don; they favored his gentleness and sudden bursts of temper when things didn't seem just. And we all counted on Don because, beyond his skills, his spirit made us complete.

Don was never satisfied. He always felt much more needed to get done than was humanly possible. People often mistook this as a criticism directed at them but the storm was inside Don, it had nothing to do with others and it generated his unique creativity. It was his own conversation with God.

Don always wanted to help the forgotten people of the world to stand on their own feet. The world really doesn't know what to do with such people. It's hard on such people; they seldom get to dictate the course of their life. Don was not different there, but I believe he's beaten us to it. Somewhere his energy is fixing broken things. He certainly made our life richer for being our colleague."

Don's work with EI, later known as The Institute of Cultural Affairs, took him to many places in the world, sharing with people planning skills and practical expertise. He met Joanne in The Marshall Islands in 1975. They were married there in 1976, spent a brief time in Boston, then went to Jeju Island off the tip of South Korea. Their next stop was Oombulgurri, another Aboriginal community in Australia, accessible by way of a three-hour trip on the Forrest River or a small plane ride. Don's first assignment there was to help raise the barge from the bottom of the river so the community could continue to get supplies and people in and out. In all of these community projects, Don repaired everything in sight and trained young men in maintaining equipment.

Don and Joanne spent five of their ten years together in Australia. After Oombulgurri they were in Brisbane one year, Melbourne one year, and Perth for two years. Andrew and Peter were born in Australia. One of Don's favorite jobs of all time was at the University of Western Australia in Perth working with a team of technicians to build a sheep-shearing robot. In 1983 they moved with the ICA to Atlanta and, two years later, to Houston where Elizabeth was born.

THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD

Those who wait on the Lord
Shall renew their strength.
They shall mount up on wings as eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint,
Help us, Lord, Help us, Lord, in thy way.

Those who love the Mystery . . .

Those who live the risen life . . .

Those who serve the suffering world . . .

Those who die on the march . . .

JOURNEY ON

Tune: From Elcho Island

Journey on, journey on, all of mankind,
Future is waiting for you.
Struggling, stumbling, all the life through,
Future is waiting for you.

(Hum the tune...)

Opportunities, opportunities, all in your hand,
Our minds are limited to foretell.
All of your own, and nature of unseen,
Future is waiting for you.

(Hum the tune...)

Journey on, journey on,
All of mankind,
Future is waiting for you.