



**REMEMBERING**  
**Elizabeth Wiens**

December 29, 1930 - June 14, 2021



Our much-loved mom was born to Johann and Maria Penner on December 29, 1930 in Paulsheim, Ukraine. She was the oldest of three girls, but her mother always jokingly said she should have been a boy because she was a tomboy through and through. She spent her childhood climbing trees, playing in the barn and trying to avoid "inside" chores.

Mom's father was taken from his family because of his faith in God in 1938 during the Stalin regime when mom was only 7 years old. Not long after, World War II began and Grandma and her two young girls were running for their lives, caught between the Russian and German armies. When the war finally ended, they were in Poland and while there, they learned that Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was gathering Mennonite people in a refugee camp in Berlin. They found their way to this refugee camp and could hardly believe what they discovered when they got there. People with heartbreaking stories not unlike theirs, but there was plenty of food, singing and church services. MCC was working political angles to get this group of refugees safely through the Russian occupied zone of Berlin to freedom. Through miraculous circumstances, the whole group made it out of Russian territory. They boarded the Volendam on February 1, 1947, in Bremerhaven, Germany and set sail for Paraguay, South America. Here the refugees were welcomed into established Mennonite colonies where they found community, safety, and freedom to live their faith.

And this is where mom met Abe, a handsome rancher's son in the Chaco. The first time dad spotted 16-year-old Elizabeth he knew this was the girl he was going to marry. They began courting and fell in love. They were married in 1948 and immigrated to Coaldale, Alberta together with Dad's family that same year. They briefly returned to Paraguay 10 years later, but once there, realized that Canada

had become their home. They returned to Canada and in 1961 settled on a farm in Tofield, Alberta to raise their family.

On the farm they raised 7 children. Mom was resourceful, worked hard and was a great cook. Life on the farm was good. Mom transformed the farmstead into a lovely yard with a bountiful garden. Because Dad was a capable carpenter, the farmhouse was in a constant state of renovation. Mom's favorite line in cajoling Dad into yet another renovation was "But Abe, just think how nice it will be!" Mom could always see the end game and was not afraid of the hard work needed to make it happen.

Mom and Dad retired into the town of Tofield in 1987 and began to travel more. In 2002 they moved to Abbotsford, BC. where they lived their remaining years.

Mom's greatest joy was having all her family around her long table. There was always room for one more stacking stool. Her waffles with white sauce and her donuts are legendary in our family. Family and friends often left with buns, a jar of borsht and if you were lucky, a bag of donuts.

But it was the interest mom showed, and the extraordinary love she poured into each and every family member that kept us all coming home.

Mom loved us all so well. But most of all, she loved the Lord with a strong and simple faith.

Elizabeth Wiens passed away peacefully at home on June 14, 2021 surrounded by loved ones. She was predeceased by her beloved husband and best friend, Abe (2017); great-grandson, Samuel (2014); and her sister Erika (1939). She will be dearly missed by her children Vic (Esther), Ed (Sharon), Werner (Donna Ascah), Betty (Arnold Poettcker), Esther (Greg Andrukow), Harold (Shelly) and Albert (Jolaine), 16 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and her caring sister Annie Penner.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in mom's memory to Logos Canada Foundation, P.O. Box 2249, Station A, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4X2

