

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

O God, our loving Parent, from whom we come, unto whom we return, and in whom we live and move and have our very being: We give you thanks for the good gift of life, for its wonder and mystery, its joys and friendships, and for the ties that bind us to one another...

We come to you to give thanks for the life of HELEN BUXTON FREY, a mother, a grandmother, an aunt, and a friend ... Help us to find the meaning that lies deep in the heart of sorrow, disappointment, and grief ... Hear us as we pause, each in his or her own way, to recall all in her that made us love her...

A real Vermonter, Helen was independent and reasonable; like a real Vermonter, she was conservative in the good sense – she valued and stood up for things that were good and true and beautiful. like a good Vermonter, she was kind and neighborly to those in need, quietly trying to help make life a little easier for those to whom life had been tough. like a good Vermonter, she was tolerant and civil in the good sense – respecting the dignity and rights of others, regardless of whether she agreed with them or not. And because her faith was in her heart (and her blood and bones), she was caring and compassionate. Like a Vermont hillside in late Spring and early Summer, she was nurturing and life-giving and fresh, dependable and trustworthy; like an old couch, you felt comfortable around her and she was a comfort to be around. And like those hills, it is hard to imagine our lives without her around.

Helen was a blessing to all of us. We will miss her dearly and deeply. We love her and thank you for blessing our lives with her life. Out of gratitude for her life among us grant that we may be given such a spirit as Helen's – kind and compassionate, honest and independent, dependable and full of integrity, devoted to family and friends – so that we too might love and laugh and seize every precious moment of this life that is so freely given to us.

Grant to those who mourn the death of HELEN the comfort of your presence. Take our fear and sorrow up into your peace. Gather all our thoughts of HELEN and of ourselves into the knowledge of your love for her and for us. help us to move from grief over what we have lost to gratitude for those things that can never be taken from us.

And finally, we thank you that deep in the human heart is the unquenchable trust that life does not end with death; that the One who made us will care for us far beyond the bounds of our earthly vision. And we praise your name that our hope has been so wondrously confirmed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

AMEN