

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Patricia Jane Cober Ashbrook

March 10, 1926 - May 24, 2021



August 4, 2021

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Washington, D.C.

Memorial Service of Patricia Jane Cober Ashbrook

MUSICAL SELECTIONS Selections on hammered dulcimer Jody Marshall

WELCOME Rev. Sam McFerran

PRELUDE *Going Home* from Dvorak's 5th Symphony Jody Marshall

HYMN *Love Divine, All Love Excelling* NCH 43
Beecher melody, instrumental

UNISON PRAYER Fredda Sparks, First Church

God of great mystery and closer than our own breath,
in the presence of death our thoughts startle
and our words flutter about like frightened birds.
It hurts to lose the earthly presence of one we love.
We feel the empty places left by Pat.
We count the ways we miss her.
Comfort us in our sorrow.
Help us find the deeper ties of memory and spirit that keep us connected.
Help us comfort one another
so that this loss may bring us, the living, closer together
and help us to live more fully and love more deeply. Amen.

READING David Ashbrook, grandson

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

ANTHEM

Come to Me, O Weary Traveler
First Church Choir

William P. Rowan

READING

Peter Ashbrook, son

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

TIME FOR REMEMBRANCE

Meg Maguire, First Church
Patricia Yates, Thomas House

Rev. Sam McFerran

HYMN	<i>Be Thou My Vision</i> Connie McKenna soloist, Jody Marshall dulcimer Susan Harvey, daughter	NCH 451
HYMN	<i>My Life Flows on in Endless Song (instrumental)</i>	NCH 476
READING	"Ithaka" Martha McBarron, daughter Julia Harvey, granddaughter	by C.P. Cavafy

As you set out for Ithaka
 hope your road is a long one,
 full of adventure, full of discovery.
 Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
 angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
 you'll never find things like that on your way
 as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
 as long as a rare excitement
 stirs your spirit and your body.
 Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
 wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
 unless you bring them along inside your soul,
 unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
 May there be many summer mornings when,
 with what pleasure, what joy,
 you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
 may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
 to buy fine things,

mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

SAYING GOODBYE

Rev. Sam McFerran

PRAYER FOR HOLY REST (unison)

Fredda Sparks, First Church

Support us, O God, all the day long of this troubled life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed
and the fever of life is over and our work is done.
Then, in your mercy, grant us safe lodging, and a holy rest,
and peace at last. Amen.

HYMN

Great is Your Faithfulness

NCH 423

BENEDICTION

Rev. Sam McFerran

POSTLUDE *Chorale Prelude on "What God Ordains is Always Good"* J. Pachelbel
John Horman, organist

Jody Marshall, a native of the Washington, D.C. area, grew up in a musical family. She is a sought-after dulcimer instructor, the nationally and overseas. Her performance credits include the White House, the Kennedy Center, and Wolf Trap's Filene Center for the Performing Arts. She has several recordings, including on the Maggie's Music label. Jody will be providing the prelude music on the hammered dulcimer.

Connie McKenna toured and recorded with Karen Ashbrook in their band Ceoltoírí Celtic Ensemble. In 2000 she won the Washington Area Music Award (WAMMIE) for Folk-Irish/Celtic Female Vocalist.

Patricia Jane Cober Ashbrook

Patricia Jane Cober Ashbrook, 95, of Washington, DC, died suddenly and peacefully in her room on May 24. Born in Evanston, IL, she is survived by her sister, Jean Talbott; four children, Peter (Amanda Shepherd), Susan Harvey (James), Martha McBarron, and Karen Ashbrook (Paul Oorts); five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; many nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was pre-deceased by her devoted husband of 50 years, James B. Ashbrook, her brother William K. Cober, and her sister Miriam Huff Smith.

Pat Cober attended Denison University, majoring in philosophy. Married to Jim Ashbrook in 1948, theirs grew to a boisterous, adventuresome family. In 1970, Pat took up her professional career first in early childhood education, then in geriatric social work. She received her MA in elementary education from the University of Rochester in 1971 and served as Director for Eastside Day Care Center in Rochester, serving inner-city, high risk, pre-school children. In 1976 she transitioned to social work with the Aging Services Unit of the Family Services department in Rochester. In 1981, she and Jim moved to Evanston, IL. She received her second MA in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago. Working primarily with impaired older adults trying to maintain lives in the local community while enduring poverty and often chronic mental health problems, she was a case worker first for Parkside Adult Day Care Center in Glenview, IL, and then for United Charities in Chicago. Patient and determined, she was a tireless advocate in circumstances of injustice.

In 1985, nine churches, synagogues, and civic organizations partnered to form the Evanston Housing Coalition, seeking to address the affordable housing crisis. They had a ragged start. Pat became President when no one else would. By the time she left in the late 1990s, 22 organizations were involved and several major projects had been successfully completed, allowing for the sale or rent of 41 units (apartments and condos) at well below market prices, to families in serious need. A profoundly challenging experience, she held it as one of the most satisfying of her life. Her

capacity to reconcile and unify was remarkable. She was a healer, even while realistic about the possible.

In 2006, Pat moved into the Residences at Thomas Circle in Washington, DC, a senior living facility. She helped establish 1330 Circle, a committee of renters, condo owners and life-care residents that handled problems, worked with the administration, and fostered meaningful community engagement. She was its first president, serving several years. She kept the library running even after moving in 2015 to Assisted Living, where she also initiated a small committee of residents to work with the administration on behalf of the unit. She was beloved by staff and residents alike.

Wherever she lived, Pat served her church community (American Baptist or United Church of Christ): as Sunday School teacher, Co-Moderator, on numerous committees (finance, governance, outreach, social justice), assisting with worship, and visiting the sick or grieving. Through it all, she loved, nourished, sustained and delighted in her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. A devotee of the arts, passionate reader, and mischievous lover of desserts, she was grounded by family, even as her life contained so much more. Family and friends across generations looked to her for wisdom, comfort, and guidance.

For the ancient Greeks, philosophy was not academic, but rather, practical: a quest for the best way to live one's life within a civic community, with justice, equality, and peace. Hence Pat's philosophy major in college was prophetic: her family, career, religious and social involvements manifested a visionary yet pragmatic commitment to what life should be. Hers was a blessing, lived fully to its end.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**