



Emma F. Grentz

September 18, 1927 - August 10, 2020

Emma Freimuth was born at home on September 16, 1927, in a small village in Romania, called "Kilometer Funf," a suburb of Costanza. It was located 5 kilometers from the city near the largest port on the Black Sea. Emmie grew up in a village of mostly Germans attending school in both Romanian and German. They lived close enough to walk to the Seventh-day Adventist church. As World War II progressed, these German families were recruited to "come home to the fatherland" and help with the German war effort. Living so close to Russia they were fearful, motivating them to leave their homes and farms, with the promise of housing and land in Germany after the war. In November, 1940, Emmie was only 12 years old, when her family left their farm, along with most of their village, traveling by train, ship and bus to live in a crowded displaced person's camp, not far from Vienna, Austria. Later they were provided better housing in Czechoslovakia. Emmie was the oldest of 5 children and her father was far away in the Army. As the war was coming to an end they prepared to flee from the Russians. She helped her mother butcher and can chickens and prepare food to take with them. Emmie recalled many stories of God's protection during those frightening times.

Emmie had been writing David Grentz, a young man from her village, who had also been drafted into the German Army. Shortly after he found his family and Emmie at the end of the war, they were married in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Vienna. The young couple were assigned housing in Archshofen,

German and were living there when their sons, Siegfried and Werner were born. When the boys were 5 and 3 years old the family were sponsored by distant relatives they had never met, who lived in North Dakota, to immigrate to the United States. David and Emmie could not speak English and they faced a major adventure, saying farewell to their parents before they left in search of better opportunities to earn a living in the U.S.

They arrived in the New York harbor in April 1952 and traveled by train to Carrington, North Dakota. The family moved in with their sponsors, Walter and Elma Kruger, and David helped out on their huge sheep ranch. After several months Emmie became very homesick for her family and her severe depression concerned David. They moved to Michigan to live at first with David's family until he found work in Detroit. There they attended a German speaking church and Emmie had other German friends to talk to. She was never depressed again. She gradually learned to speak English while watching television. Their daughter, Christine Klara, joined the family in 1956 while they were living in Detroit.

David longed to have a farm of his own and the family was able to leave the big city and move to a large farm near Paris, in central Michigan, in 1959. The large 5 bedroom cement-block farm house had no insulation or indoor plumbing. Emmie and the boys took turns on the opposite end of the crosscut saw from David as they worked endlessly cutting wood to keep the house warm. The family had to work together very hard just to survive. Emmie and David would begin their day at 4:00 a.m. feeding and milking 20 cows, before dropping the boys off at the church school and Christine at the babysitters. Emmie worked all day in a sewing factory. After factory work, they did the whole routine in reverse.

In 1960 David heard about a 160 acre farm for sale a couple of miles away. The house was much smaller, but easier to heat. They switched from milking

cows to raising beef. The soil was also better and gradually they made major improvements on the farm. When the sewing factory went bankrupt Emmie found work cleaning houses. She cleaned up to 9 houses a week. After a few years she began caring for an elderly woman from their church, in their home. She enjoyed this type of work much better and later took another woman into their home. Emmie began to dream of having a larger home to expand and create her own business.

In 1976 David and Emmie moved into their new home, designed to care for eight adult foster care ladies, with the top floor as their private family area. Emmie provided excellent care, delicious food and an immaculately clean house. She always had a waiting list and enjoyed operating this home for 10 years. Emmie loved having her own money and was very generous sharing with others in need.

In 1987 Emmie and David decided to retire after working so hard. They settled on 20 acres in Gobles, Michigan very close to the Seventh-day Adventist church. As usual, Emmie's love of hospitality and tasty German cooking won the taste buds and hearts of her new church family and neighbors, helping to ease her transition. They truly enjoyed a slower lifestyle, living in this home for 20 years. During this time her mother came from Germany to live with them. It had been 45 years since she had lived close to her mother. In 1997 Emmie lost her husband David after 50 years together. She had provided loving care for him for three years after a debilitating stroke. The next year her mother passed away and Emmie was suddenly alone for the first time in her life. She adjusted quickly and continued to share her hospitality and delicious Sabbath meals with family, friends and strangers. Emmie often drove long distances alone to visit her family and made several trips abroad.

In 2010 Emmie sold her home in Gobles and moved south to live close to her

son Werner in London, Kentucky. She enjoyed living in her own home in a peaceful country setting for remaining 10 years. The London church family looked forward to the huge braided loaves of bread she baked for potluck every week. Emmie continued to cook and bake until she turned 90.

Emmie always made friends easily. People were fascinated to hear her accent and meet someone who had lived during WWII. She never hesitated to share her love of Jesus with strangers. She always remembered birthdays and one of her favorite hobbies was corresponding with and calling family and friends around the world. Once she got acquainted with someone, they were always treated like part of her family. Her heart was very tender and she would easily shed tears just hearing a sad story. Best of all, Emmie loved and trusted Jesus as her friend and Saviour. It was always a treat to hear her pray. We anxiously await the resurrection morning and look forward to life together where we will never part again.

The family will meet friends on Friday from 10 AM until time of funeral service at 11 AM at the Gobles Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Interment will follow in Lindsley Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Lindsley Cemetery

104th Ave. West of 41st St.
Allegan, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG **14**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Pinedale Seventh-day Adventist Church
32146 6th Avenue
Gobles, MI

Service

AUG **14**. 11:00 AM (ET)

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