

Hymn #32 "We Love the Perfect Way of God"

Prayer - Jennifer Bartels We can bow in a word of prayer. Our Father in Heaven, today we're thankful that you are pleased to see those that come to the house of mourning, because it causes us to consider the end of our life and the purpose of life. It causes us to consider the story of Jesus that Elton loved for so many years, not just a story, but a living hope. And we're thankful that Elton believed that Jesus came to save him, and to save every one of us. Elton believed that the One who called him was able to help him get victory over every enemy, and to keep him to the end of life. And we want to believe that Jesus is the way to victory over sin and the way to redemption and eternal life. We pray, even as we think of those who mourn the loss of a father and a grandfather, that they could find comfort in knowing that you want to be a heavenly Father to each of us. And just as a father cares for his children and protects them and nurtures them, you want to do the same for our souls. So, we pray today for your Spirit to be with us, and that you could speak to each of us by name and assure us that you love us, and that you can help us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus to the end of our life. We pray in Jesus' name.

Joyce Lawrence There are a couple things that I hope I remember always about Elton. One was that he believed with all his heart in the goodness of God and how good He was to him. You noticed on your leaflet that his favorite verse, Romans 8:28, is quoted, and he believed that. Another thing that impressed me about Elton was that sometimes we would hear him say in a half whisper, "A day in thy court is better than a thousand." I wonder if we could add "better than 1000 ordinary days." Those ordinary days are where we are today. I love the description of ordinary days in the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes, the first verse. It says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven". And then there are 15 different pairs of things that happen to everybody in the ordinary days. There's a time to sow and there's a time to reap. There's a time to get and a time to lose. A time to keep, and a time to let go. There's a time to be born, and a time to die. It's the ordinary things that we're all living. But you know, it doesn't say a thing about time for God. We have to set apart time for God, we must make time for God, it doesn't just happen. Elton felt that that time was better than thousands of other days. We talk about time, how the day flew by and the year vanished. We talk about losing time and wasting time. The way we talk about time reveals a lot about how we use time. In this chapter, we're living those ordinary days, just doing what we do every day. But behind the scenes, in an elusive way, time is passing, it just keeps on going. Time is a continuity, it doesn't stop, and we can never catch up with time. We can't repeat the day, we can't make up for lost time -- it just keeps on going. We can be sure that our lifetime, whether it's short or long, is time enough for God to have worked his purpose in our life. That's what Elton has been longing for, the finish of that work. If he could speak to us today, I wonder what he would say? Oh yes, that a day in his courts, a day in the presence of the Lord, is worth thousands of ordinary days.

Carl Hamilton When I heard about Elton's passing, a verse came to me, the first verse of 2 Samuel 23. "Now these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue." I thought of that when I heard of Elton's passing. We all know that he was a talented musician. He loved music, and his life was like a song of worship, of praise to God. His life was devoted to those things that God had given to him. I was thinking of Psalm 45. "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever." Inditing is like composing a hymn. We're thankful that when God has control of our life, when he has our devotion, there is a song of praise, of thankfulness, of humility. A song that helps others to understand not only what we think of God, but what God is, and what he has come to mean to us. That gives our life meaning and purpose above ourselves and beyond those things we see on this earth. It tells

us in this Psalm of David's being ready to fight, and his being prosperous because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and the scepter of His kingdom being a right scepter. It says these words of Jesus in the first chapter of Hebrews. Righteousness is the power that allows us to conquer every enemy, conquer ourselves, and conquer those things that would hinder us from understanding who God is. Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity. He hated those things that were unequal, things that were not upright. We're thankful that our brother gave himself to all that is of God, and now what remains with us is a song. The scepter of righteousness. King Ahasuerus opened the way for Esther to speak to him when she came into the court uninvited -- he extended the golden scepter to her. If he hadn't extended that scepter to her, it would have meant death. We realize that when God opens the way for us to receive His righteousness, His truths, His help, it's a matter of eternal life, God has made it possible for us to share His own life and Spirit.

Lyle Schober I don't suppose many of us have known people who are 107 years old. I just can't imagine living 20 years more, much less 30 years more! But we understand that it's not the years, it's the pleasures, the joys, the disappointments, that add up to what makes life. It's wonderful to think of Elton. I didn't know him in his younger days, but from his older days I can understand he was a very positive man, a man full of life, a man with a lot of ambition, a lot of interest. In these last days, we've appreciated his time amongst us here in Texas. We appreciate the folks there in Pennsylvania sending him this way! It's been a gift to us, really. His life was a gift to us because it taught us how to enjoy life. He taught us how to enjoy music, and he taught us a lot of things about old age. The man Jabez came to my mind. We read these words in 1 Chronicles 4:9, "And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, that thou wouldest keep me from evil that it may not grieve me!" And the verse ends with these words, "And God granted him that which he requested." Where he came from, who his father was, who his children were, how long he lived -- there's nothing about that, just that most important thing we can read about any man. Jabez had a request, and that request was made to the only One who could grant it. We have lots of requests sometimes. We ask people about different things, questions we have, and then we ask for favors, but Jabez asked this of the only One who could give it without limits. His first request was, "Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed." I believe we can honestly say God did this for Elton, God blessed him. And I believe we can say what it says in the next request, "And enlarge my coast." It seemed like Jabez felt, "I'm in the promised land, and I'd just like to possess more of it." We are in the promises of God, those of us who have made our choice like Elton did those many years ago; we are in the promises of God, and we just want more of it. We're satisfied with what we've gotten, and we're not disappointed in anything that God has given us, but we just want our coast to be enlarged. We want to take in more of it, and, of course, the more we take in, the more we're responsible for. We understand that, but life is pleasant to those who get more of God's blessing. So that was his second request. His third request was, "And that thou wouldst keep me from evil." The world is full of evil. I suppose it was like that back in 1917 when Elton was born, during the years of the buildup of World War 1. Those were dreadful years for many people. No doubt going through the Depression were dreadful days. Then all through the years, some good, some bad, but what is in the world around us doesn't make a difference on what this request was, "That you would keep me from evil." In other words, whatever is out there doesn't have to be in here. There was a border between him and the evil of the world. And we can have that same thing. It gives us wonderful peace and a resistance to what's wrong. And then this next expression, though it doesn't call it a request, "That it may not grieve me." It would be wonderful if all of us could live every day with the thought, "I don't want my choice today to be a grief to me. I don't want what I say, what I do, what I think, what I purpose to be a grief to me." We know someday, if we haven't had the forgiveness of Jesus, we'll be answering for all the things that have come through our hearts, all the things that have been in our minds and in our actions. We respect the life of Elton, but most of us could not imagine what he would have been without the Almighty God. That's made a tremendous difference in his life. Personality is what we are born with, just our nature.

No doubt some of these requests that Jabez had in his heart were some of the same feelings that Elton echoed in his own requests to God, and God gave them to him. I'm sure many of you know many things I wouldn't know about Elton. We can enumerate some of those things today, but I'm just happy to say that the conclusion of the whole matter is, like Solomon said, "Fear God and keep His commandments." There's a Psalm I'd like to point your attention to in closing, a Psalm that I believe was in the heart of Jabez. Psalm 17 "Hear the right, O Lord, attend to my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." In other words, my sentence in life, let it come from you. What I'm going to get out of life, let it be your choice. "Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal [that are just]. Thou hast proved my heart: thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me and shalt find nothing." I love that. "You've looked at me and you see nothing that offends you." And he said, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God. Incline Thy ear unto me and hear my speech. Show Thy marvelous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them." That was basically the same thing as Jabez said in his request. "Just preserve me, don't give me over to the enemy. Look at me, search me." I believe that would be the words of our brother today.

David Cleveland God did bless Dad, and he knew it, and always expressed his gratitude for it. Thank you all for coming, it does mean a lot. After I speak, Karen's going to say something, and then after that, we are going to have an open-mic time for anybody who wants to share something, just a memory or inspiration, or whatever. But now the first thing I want to say is just a huge thank you to Ken and Kathy, to Shawn and Anita, to Salena and Kenny. These people have gone above and beyond what you would call the normal standard of care. And then in extension, to the Milles and the Overbys, and Hoffmans. There's just so much love and compassion and consideration and kindness that Pecan Grove has shown. Dad never ceased to say, "I couldn't be in a better place", and it's true. So, are you ready to hear all about Dad's accomplishments and his successes, his wealth and his education, and the respect he commanded? Isn't that what we do at funerals?? No, how about just what he was? He did have some notable characteristics he was famous for. He was old. He was a fantastic piano player. His sweet tooth had a reputation of its own. But as I watched him fade in the last weeks, especially the last week, I was so profoundly aware of this -- who cares? Who cares that he lived to be old, and he played the piano well? Nobody cares, especially not him. So, what do accomplishments, or the lack thereof, mean when we're facing the end of the journey? Like we heard, nothing, very little. But what was he? He was an uncomplicated man. He was hardworking and dedicated, but not naturally ambitious. He was satisfied with his job and his place in life. He personified integrity and honesty. Especially honesty, I always remember a story from when I was back in high school. I was on the track team, and it came to the most important, the most significant, meet of my high school track career. And the official for the event said, "Your coach has to be here with you while you run this race." And my coach was off somewhere else! He couldn't do it. So, my coach went to my Dad and said, "Can you maybe just pretend you're David's coach and stand in as his coach?" And my Dad's jaw dropped, he was aghast, and he said, "You mean LIE???" You might as well ask him to take his clothes off and streak across the infield. He was aghast at this, and my poor coach thought he was just suggesting an easy solution. But that was that. He was pure honesty. He was pure integrity. He also loved desserts. As I said, he loved traveling. He loved visiting people and discussing spiritual matters. He loved our mother, and you all know that he loved God. There was never a time in his life when he would not go out of his way to witness to anybody who would listen. This was not a duty to him. It was almost a desperate desire to share the treasure of a true relationship with God. And he was certainly zealous, wasn't he? It's like his nickname. He was a zealous, zealous man. I maybe told some of you about this. It's not something I share with everybody. But there was a time when I walked into his room back here, and he was praying, he was praying out loud. There's only been a few times in my life where I felt the presence of God in a sensory manner. I could feel it. He was praying out loud, he didn't

know I was there, and I felt like I was walking into a force field. I mean, the presence of God was so powerful. I felt like I could sense angels with their arms around him and just funneling his words straight to God. Anyways, this is not a sad time, this is a happy time. And on the lighter side, he was guileless and He was genuine and he had abundant energy. And you know what that means, right? It means that he was also tactless and unfiltered! And he was impatient all the time. He didn't understand why people didn't think like him. He didn't understand that what he was talking about wasn't understood by everybody. He often annoyed people, until they realized that he meant no malice, and he really was just childlike and innocent. I do appreciate the people here who understood that. So I guess a brief bio. Yes, as you heard, he was born right at the end of World War One. He experienced the Depression as a young man. He was not dumb, but he was not driven to excel. Unlike his brother [Roger], who was valedictorian, Dad barely escaped high school with his life and a diploma. His father was a very accomplished man, the chief engineer of a very large company. He managed to get Dad an apprenticeship as a toolmaker. Dad excelled at early precision machines. The impression I get of him as a young man is that he was kind of happy-go-lucky, and he loved music and dancing, and spinning the tires on his 1920's car. He did excel at piano playing, and he had his own jazz band for a few years. He was drafted, as were all of my uncles, for service in World War II, but the war ended before he was called up, so he didn't have to serve. Somewhere in there, he met my mother, and he recognized her for the jewel she was, much to his credit. They were married in 1945. During World War II, his brother Roger served in the army in India. There Roger met some of the other boys in the army who were honestly and sincerely trying to serve God, not just religiously, but as the Scriptures described, and he was moved to do the same. He wanted to share this revelation with his family at home, but he was certain that his brother Elton would not be interested -- his brother was too worldly! So at Roger's insistence Mom and Dad attended some of these services that these homeless ministers held, figuring in his own words that "it couldn't hurt". After attending these meetings for some years, God stirred his heart, and he gave his life over to Jesus Christ, with Mom soon following. So they lived and raised their daughters to their middle teens, and then -- oops -- in their mid-40s, they became the parents of David, who's been late ever since! And we are grateful. Karen, Cheryl, and I, we're all grateful to have been raised, not in a perfect household or family, but in one in which we knew that there was no doubt what was vital in life. And those are the details. There's lots of details, some of them are interesting, but they just fade in importance to me now. I shared this actually last Sunday. I had this vivid impression in my mind of a boat traveling in a straight line, pointing in the direction it's heading to, and it leaves behind it a V-shaped wake. Somebody in the boat looking forward is not aware of the wake that spreads. That's the influence. Dad often wondered why in the world he lived so long, but he was always forward-looking. If any of you were inspired by anything in his life, he was unaware of it, because that's the wake that he left behind. I appreciate that vision. If Dad could relay a message to us now, what would it be? Anybody hazard a guess? Some of you mentioned it in the meeting last week. "Have a good finish, have a good finish." Keep true. We want to finish well. So, Karen's going to speak to us, and then we'll pass the mic around. Just stand up if you have something to share. It's OK if you don't, you're still invited to stay for lunch!

Karen Cleveland I could share some memories of my Dad. I was probably about Isla's age [4] when I remember tiptoeing into Mom and Dad's bedroom, and there's my dad on his knees. I went and knelt down beside him, and he looked down briefly. Then he went on praying, and finally I tiptoed away from the room. The inheritance that our father left us was that there was nothing more important in his life than serving the Lord. And then after that, like David said, was our mother. He didn't make life easy for her, but he worshiped the ground she walked on! We would go to meetings every Sunday; there was absolutely no reason to not go. It was 45 miles, an hour's drive, but we went. When he was younger, Dad had a hard time getting anywhere on time. We'd be zooming down the road and pull up to the meeting home, and he'd say, "We're 2 minutes early!" That meant 2 minutes before meeting started.... But after he retired from his work, something changed. If you got there 20 minutes before meeting, you were there just barely in time! So sometimes, some things can change. But a Gospel meeting -- a 100-mile radius was acceptable, and we went through rain, sleet, floods and blizzards. Dad was an excellent driver, and sometimes we'd

be the only car that could move on the road. And that, too, is a wonderful heritage. Sundays, maybe between morning meeting and a Gospel meeting, we'd visit shut-ins, or go to a nursing home. Dad was always interested in seeing if he could encourage somebody, and that was another very good impression -- reach out, think of others. When we were children, Dad would come home from work all nervous and tense, and he'd sit down at the piano and play that jazz or big band music. You could just sense the tension draining away and the music becoming more gentle, and moving on to the hymns. Those hymns would be the last thing that we children would hear going to sleep at night. I agree with David that Dad was not a tactful man. He said what he thought, what he felt was right, and sometimes it wasn't too acceptable. But like David said, there was no malice in it. Sometimes we have said that if we could put one word on Mom's tombstone and one word on Dad's, for Mom we would put GRACE, and for Dad we would put ZEAL. We are thankful for all that was left to us, an inheritance that the bank cannot count. We are very grateful for the care here, and Dad's extended family, the residents, the helpers, the caretakers. He did try to fit in, but he stuck out! We're grateful to you folks for making his last years so happy.

Brendan Furrow I was anxious to see what hymns were going to be chosen today. I think that's one of the things that I will associate with Elton. About 3 months ago, he had difficulty giving his testimony, but one thing he said very clearly. He said, "The hymns are a remedy." We heard already a little bit about that, that they would be the last thing they would hear going to bed. A remedy is just relief. Thankful for the joy that he gave and showed in playing the hymns, and it's always touched my heart.

Ty Nordic When we first were here in Texas and we had been coming to the Residence to visit quite a bit, Amy and I were just really drawn to Elton. He mentioned one day that he had never been to NASA and he really wanted to go. So, for his 100th birthday, Amy and I took him to Houston and we visited NASA. I just remember this 100-year-old man; his eyes lit up like he was a little kid, just so excited to see all those things. He wanted his picture taken on the moon! It's one of our favorite memories of being in Texas, that day alone with Elton at NASA, and I'm thankful for the time we got to spend with him.

Dominique Mille I have always been impressed that a word, or a sentence, or a hug, or to meet someone can mean so much in our life, and that was the case with Elton. We know it was a good finish. We visited with him a couple of days before he passed away. He was laying down and he was not reacting, but I'm sure he was able to hear. We talked to him and he was lifting his arms up to the sky, like someone or something was calling him. It was really impressive. It's wonderful to keep such good memories, we loved him for sure.

Leah (Cleveland) Griffin I was surely blessed to be a part of a family with such zeal and spiritual heritage. I have lots of great memories of my Grandpa, but a lot of them were wrapped up in my Grandma. I remember specifically this one Thanksgiving we were going around the table and we were all saying things we were grateful for. I think Cheryl was there. I remember Grandma saying that she was most grateful that she could have children and a family, and Grandpa leaned in and gave her a squeeze for that. He was the head of that household, and he was at peace with that, and she was at peace with that. I remember my Grandpa doing puzzles and liking trains, and our trips to Connecticut before they came to Fairfield to live. But two things that I will always associate with Grandpa. In meeting or prayers or testimonies at conventions, that heartfelt, half out-loud "Amen, Amen" that he would add. And he used to finish off his testimonies, especially at convention, with "Oh yeah, and give the devil a kick!" I'm sure that's what his life was. I'm very, very grateful for that.

David When we were at family gatherings, Dad would often hold Mom's hand and wink at her and say, "See what happened when you let me hold your hand??"

Dawn Overby Well, I'm going to miss Elton. I would walk in the door, and Elton would say "I have just 2 stamps left!" I wonder how many hundreds, how many thousands of hearts were lifted up by his letters.

Esther Duncan When I think of Elton, the first verse of Ecclesiastes 7 comes to my mind. "A good name is better than precious ointment." Ointment can be very costly, but a good name is very, very costly. Elton had a very good name and we're very thankful for his life and his example here in Pecan Grove.

Marie Mounce We had the privilege here of seeing Elton in his ordinary days, getting up every morning, being around the house. The next day the same thing. But he didn't have to say when he got up, "I want to keep true today", because we all understood that was his purpose, and he hadn't changed. He was steady in his purpose. In his testimony and in his prayers, he always ended up by, "Help us to have a good finish." It wasn't vain repetition. He kept it before himself, and in doing that, he helped keep it before us.

Mary Ann Colson Some have mentioned Elton's saying that he wanted to have a good finish, and urging the rest of us to do so. But he always added one other thing that nobody's mentioned. He always said, "For JESUS' sake." He had a very great love for Jesus. I just want to have that for myself.

Ken Newman When we think about Elton, we think of his zeal, as we've already heard. But also, his joy. His service to God was not a burden. I've learned a lot from him about longevity. Elton came here at 97, with no idea that he would live 10 years more -- and no desire to live 10 years. He often talked about the end and looking forward to the end, and yet he continued to enjoy life. He hadn't been here very long, and maybe after he was 100, in a Bible study he made the statement, "Life is too long." I was kind of taken aback! But I realized that the fountain of youth would not be a blessing in this life. Anything that would give eternal life in this life would not be a blessing. Someone once said that he'd never seen anybody over 100 that he was jealous of, but Elton came close! Because we could be jealous of his zeal and of his joy, even when he was well over a hundred. He had no desire to reach the age that he reached, he was looking forward to going home, and we're glad that he finished well.

Jane Jacobson I've been coming to Peacon Grove for quite a few years, and Elton was a high point because he always had something fresh and cheerful, and his tunes on the piano. I stayed here a week once when my family was going to California, and so I was in on all the meals. It's just such a wonderful home life here. I admire the cooks and there's so many people volunteering from all over, each one wanting to help. It just was very special and I just wanted to add my thanks.

Adelia Hapner I'm so grateful that I got to meet Elton. The memory I have of him is that after Gospel meeting, people were shaking hands. I went over and shook his hand while he was sitting down, and he said, "Thank you for shaking my hand." It was a very small thing that I did, but I just want to be like that and want to have joy with people and joy with God.

Gwen Farmer In this year that I have been here, I have watched Elton closely at table and in the meetings. When I had the opportunity to go to him after meeting and thank him for what he shared, he took my hand in both his hands and said, "Thank you." I can't forget that feeling of hearts agreeing and hands agreeing. It will go with me as long as I live. And I want to follow that example.

Sarah Cleveland My last memory of Grandpa was his birthday recently. We came to visit, and when I was saying goodbye, it was heartfelt, but bittersweet because I knew that I was saying goodbye. His words to me were, "Never forget, never forget." He said it over and over again, never forget, never forget. And I've thought about that a lot, wondering what it was that he didn't want me to forget. Was it God's love, or God's mercy, or the love for family, or the love for the way? I think that that was the point. He didn't want me to forget any one thing, but that all of us would remember God, remember love, remember his

way, remember to fight every day. I want to do that. Growing up, there were 4 of us girls, so he called us by numbers, we were all numbers! So, though I'm very grateful for the blessing of the last name Cleveland, I'm grateful for the number 4 too!

Mimi Mille Like others, I have good memories of Elton. I have been his barber for almost 10 years. At the very beginning, he was OK with me, but a little bit distant. Little by little he came closer and closer, and after the haircut he wanted to have a hug, and it was so precious for me. I remember one day, it was a Sunday, and we had had lunch here at the residence. He said, "I need a haircut." I said, "Do you want it now?" He said, "On SUNDAY??" He was very aware that Sunday was the day for God.

David Every time he would get out of bed, he would look in the mirror to make sure his hair was OK, and comb it. Now, he may have had only one slipper on, and the shirt was untucked, but he had to make sure his hair was combed!

Karla Furrow I also think of Elton as joy. My memory will always be when he came to the girls' school a few months ago. The girls [Maven and Maren] had asked if he could come. There were 3 classes of students and several teachers. The entire room just fell in love with Elton. He made such an impression that other people who worked there later came up to me and said, "I wish I could have met Elton." The kids were hugging him and asking for his autograph, and he signed their Bibles. He wrote, "The Bible is a mirror", and he signed his full name. They were all impressed with his cursive! I will never forget that day, it's such a wonderful memory.

Dan Willbur Liz shared with me about going to the nursing home, and Elton coming with Ken and Kathy. He went to the piano and began to play, and the residents came out of their rooms and gathered around. I just thought of the picture of Elton entertaining the "young folks" at the nursing home! Also the picture of Elton standing up to give his testimony at convention, and saying, "Here we are." When I heard of Elton's death, I thought of that verse "Moses my servant is dead." What message could Elton give to us today?

Matthew Hutchinson I'm Elton's grandson. I want to read some memories from my sister, Elizabeth, Elton's granddaughter. She says, "Grandpa enjoyed photographing the people he loved at events. There was not one Thanksgiving meal or birthday celebration where, as soon as the food was on the table but before we were permitted to dig in, we all had to pause and look at Grandpa for a group photo. I was unappreciative of that ritual when I was young, but now my photo albums are filled with people I love, too, thanks to Grandpa's insistence on documenting every family gathering for decades. Another favorite memory of Grandpa was listening to him speak in meetings. He'd squirm in his chair and grasp at words because his feelings of gratitude and devotion to God were so strong that he could hardly contain them. It made an impression on me as a child, and though I don't squirm in my seat, I would like to feel that much love for God too." Thanks, Elizabeth. I could share some of my old childhood memories of Elton as well. I remember when he was 69 or 70, felling trees and splitting wood to feed the fire back in the Connecticut home. At his age, I'm probably going to be using a "reacher" to pick things up off the floor, and there he is splitting wood! I remember the perpetual bin of letters, like a foot-and-a-half deep, on the kitchen island counter, letters received and being written. Which as you know, was continued until recently. I remember his delight in telling us that his physician's name was Doctor Donald Dock. I remember the big candy bowl that was available after Sunday morning meeting at Marjorie's house. There was a limit to how many pieces we kids could take, but it was comfortably high, because what could Elton say?? I remember Elton bringing me on a ride on a preserved steam train. I remember his delight in blowing the wooden whistle that replicated the steam train's whistle. My own kids remember getting birthday cards and letters from Elton, but they couldn't read them because they were written in cursive! We remember him playing the piano and the electric organ with the big bass note pedals in Connecticut. Somehow, everything he played kind of sounded similar in energy and tempo. One day I asked him, "Grandpa, play

something happy, cheerful.” And he did. Then my next request was, “Grandpa, play something sad.” But it sounded just like the happy song! I said, “Grandpa, play something popular, something current.” And he played something from 1942! So, it sounded the same, but he played as he lived, with zeal .

Abigail Hoffman If I had the voice and the time, I could talk about Elton for hours. He was hilarious – and kind. I always looked up to him because, even when he was not sure why he was still alive, he would live fully every day. He would play the piano and write letters, and he would keep going because he was given another day. And he loved people. He was so interested in everybody's lives, and he would try his best to remember your family, and what you were doing, and what you wanted to do, and what you liked to do. He always remembered what songs we liked, and he would play them. As a staff here, most of us had theme songs he would play. I told him one time that I really liked “I've Been Working on the Railroad”, because it reminded me of him and of his love for trains. He played it so much after that it became part of his track list, and I have so many recordings of him playing that song! He asked me why I liked trains, and I didn't tell him that one of the reasons was because he liked trains. I'll miss him a lot, but I won't ever forget the impressions that he made on my life. We heard about the wake that he left behind that is much bigger than his boat, and it will stay there for a long time.

Sue Dawson I just wanted to mention that, because of having Elton here, we've also had the privilege of having Karen and David here. There's one memory I have that touches me because of being in the same position. One time when we were here, Elton came out to the table with a letter he had written to Karen with a comic on it. Then it was copied and faxed to Karen, and later that day there would be an answer from Karen. Just thinking of that bond between Dad here and Karen wherever she might have been in the work. That was a flame and encouragement that was constantly fed and continued. Because of Elton's being here, we've had the privilege of having Karen and David here also.

Kim Hoffman I have one slightly humorous memory of Elton. I took him into town one day, he had a list of things that he wanted. Mimi was out of town, and he wanted to get his hair cut. So we stopped first at the barber and there were two people, one on the barber's chair and one waiting. Elton said, “Too many people, too long a wait!! I was like, well, we're going to go home and you're going to wait for dinner, and I'm not sure where we want to wait! Anyway, he said he'd just wait for Mimi, and we went home! Like others, I've always enjoyed his zeal and his joy and just his excitement for life, even though he didn't understand why it was so long. He woke up and he lived that day, and I want to take an example from that.

Linda Ronhaar The impression Elton left with me was twice at convention, he simply faced the crowd and said, “God can hear even a sigh.”

David Thank you so much, it really means a lot. We're going to close with the other hymn on the leaflet, number 37. When Dad would come home stressed out from work or burdened by some problem in life, this was his go-to hymn. “Nothing matters but salvation” was not a selfish thought. Not like “Nothing and nobody else matters to me, just my own salvation.” Rather it was “With all that life has and contains, there's nothing more important than salvation.” Everything else is just so far down on the list of priorities compared to salvation.

Hymn #37 “Nothing Matters but Salvation”