

# Opa's Journey

*By Nathaniel Snethlage*

Opa hit the road so young and free  
Fifteen years and a family to flee  
His hands gripped the wheel so tight  
Guiding kin through darkest night

Lost his father on the way  
Found him 'gain one fateful day  
Life was tough but Opa's strong  
Held the family all along

Opa's heart a living flame  
Burning bright through war and pain  
Built a family strong and true  
From his heart our love just grew

Married love a bond so pure  
Children came their future sure  
Built a life from roots so deep  
Stories that our hearts will keep

Through the years his hair  
turned white  
Memories bring him back to life  
Lived his tale of courage bold  
Opa's legacy unfolds

Opa's strength he never missed  
Through every storm and every twist  
Years rolled by and wrinkles came  
Still he stood as a burning flame

Opa's heart a living flame  
Burning bright through war and pain  
Built a family strong and true  
From his heart our love just grew

He taught us strength and how to have fun  
Wisdom gathered like rays from the sun  
Through his eyes we see the light  
Opa's courage shining bright

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# Order of Service

Prelude

Congregational Hymn

Welcome & Prayer

Reading  
*My First Christmas In Heaven*

Congregational Hymn

Tribute

Scripture Reading  
*John 3:16, Colossians 3:17*

Family Tributes

Family Songs  
*Dona Nobis Pacem*  
*Alles Was Odem Hat*

Encouragement

Pre-Recorded Song

Closing Prayer

Prayer for the Meal

Recessional

*Assortment of Hymns*

*Great is Thy Faithfulness*

Pastor Cerena

Jadah Snethlage

*How Great Thou Art (v. 1 & 4)*

Christine Lederman  
Chris Rotger Snethlage (Read  
by Dorothea Hill)

Joshua Snethlage

Gudrun Snethlage  
Dorothea Hill  
Johannes Snethlage  
Melinda Dyck  
Melanie Lee  
Anneliese Schwartz

Family

Pastor Jake

Nathaniel Snethlage

Pastor Cerena

Family

*It is Well With My Soul*



# Obituary

Gisbert Alfred Viktor Emil Snethlage was born in Mönchengladbach, Germany on December 21st 1929. He was the second of seven children born to a doctor and a homemaker, and grew up in Fraustadt during a tumultuous time in Germany. As the oldest son, he drove his family on an adventurous escape across the country at the age of 15. In the difficult years after the war, he apprenticed as a welder and earned his degree in engineering.

On a visit to Canada in 1956, Gisbert heard the young Gudrun Engelke singing at the German Christian Endeavour Church in Kitchener and fell in love with her voice immediately. By February of 1957, they had married and settled in Kitchener-Waterloo, where they would spend the rest of their lives together. Their daughter Dorothea was born the next year, followed quickly by Johannes, and then Christine and finally Andreas in later years.

Though he never lost his love for engineering, Gisbert was unable to get Canadian employers to recognize his German credentials. He supported his family with factory jobs at Babcock & Wilcox and Dahmer Steel, eventually becoming a corrections officer in Guelph, where he remained for many years.

After retiring from the prison, he took over as the shipper for Gudrun's craft business, All Things Beautiful. Once the business was sold, he was able to admire his well-cared-for home, gardens and bird feeders. He enjoyed making memories at the family cottage, and loved spending time with his 10 grandchildren (and later, 12 great-grandchildren), getting on the floor to play with them, teaching them how to climb the tree in the front yard, and showing them where the sweets were hiding. Several times, he opened their home to kids or grandkids who needed a place to live while they sorted things out.

While Gisbert's imposing physical presence and booming voice could seem intimidating at first, this was quickly overcome by his genuine interest in people's lives and work. Always curious about the world and people around him, he had a disarming directness that clearly communicated his concern and affection for the many people he loved.

With his strength of character, his unwavering commitment to his family, and his steadfast faith, his life is like the trunk of a great tree, planting roots along with his wife in a new place and growing and nurturing the branches and leaves of a strong, loving family.

*In loving memory of*



*Gisbert Snethlage*

*December 1929 - December 2024*