

Shirley Fretz, from Grace UB church in Sherkston, Ontario, arrived in Sierra Leone in 1967 to begin what would be 18 years as a missionary. She started out overseeing the Minnie Mull school, then spent ten years as business manager of Mattru Hospital, followed by two terms doing Christian education work at Bumpe.

During her furlough in 1983, Shirley had a difficult decision to make. Her father had been hospitalized with cancer almost continuously since July 1982. Should she stay home and await his death, or return to Sierra Leone in December as scheduled?

Shirley later recalled, "My dad was very alert right up to the end. He knew exactly what was going on, and I'm sure that if I had visited him the day I was supposed to leave for Africa, he'd have said, 'What happened? Why didn't you go?'"

So she went. Shirley arrived back in Bumpe on December 6. The next day she received a telegram saying her father had passed away...on December 6.

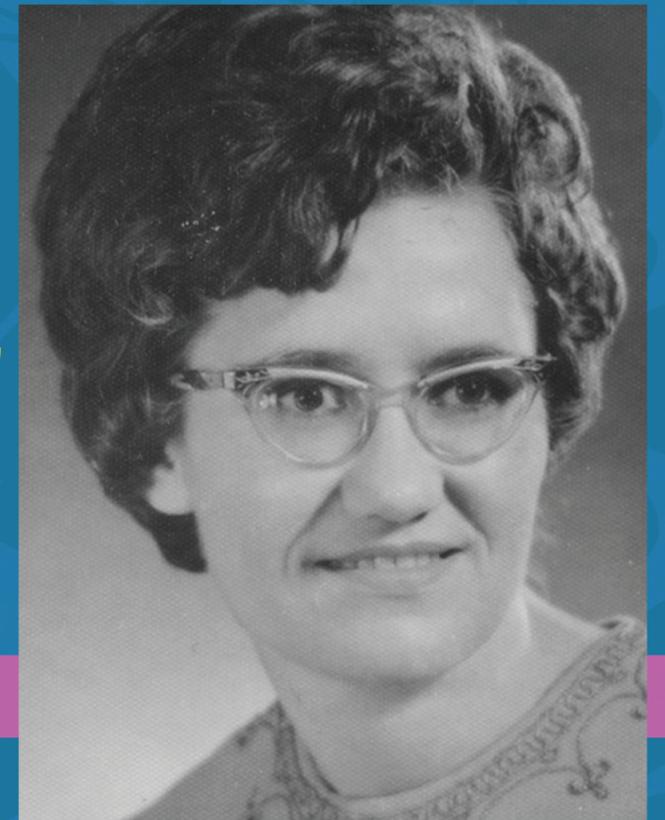
Bishop Jerry Datema happened to be in Sierra Leone for annual conference. He led a memorial service at the Bumpe church the same day as the memorial service back in Canada. The church was full of people. They didn't know Shirley's father, but they knew Shirley. The Bumpe primary children sang a couple of his favorite songs, and then Bishop Datema preached. Shirley said, "It was almost like being home for the funeral."

Shirley retired from missionary service in 1985, and continues attending her home church in Sherkston.

*During her 18 years in Africa, Shirley received a letter from her mother nearly every week. The letters often arrived three or four at a time. "She was very happy when I became a missionary," Shirley said. "She had been praying for Sierra Leone before I was even born. Tears came every time I left for Africa, but she knew the Lord wanted me there."*

# Shirley Fretz

She decided to go.



Grace UB church has produced a lot of missionaries, including Eula Eby, Olive Weaver, Kathy Jones, Audrey Federlein, and Ruth Benner. Grace has also led the way in supporting UB missions financially. This picture was taken at Grace during the 2013 General Conference, which was held in Ontario. L-r: Audrey Federlein, Kathy Jones, and Shirley Fretz.