

REBECCA SWAFFER PRATER.....

**A LADY I WISH YOU HAD THE
PRIVILEGE TO MEET**



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I would like to introduce you to a lovely lady by the name of Rebecca, lovingly known as Becky.

Becky was born on September 30, 1968. Becky was one of four children born Jim and Peg Swaffer and their only daughter. Becky's father was a pastor in the UP of Michigan and in Missouri. She grew up in a very Godly, Christian home with loving parents, grandparents and family.



In June 1994 she met a young man at the church she was attending by the name of David Prater. Becky and Dave dated for two years. And then on February 1, 1997 they were married here at Metro Baptist Church.

Becky and Dave dedicated themselves to working with young people. They were both in the same accord. They loved teenagers and gave of themselves willingly. Becky taught the girls who were Junior & Seniors in high school and Dave taught the boys of the same grade. They were lovingly called Bro. Dave and Ms. Becky.



In December of 1998 they had their first daughter Mackenzie. In

July of 2001 they had their second daughter Morgan and then in January of 2004 they had their son Donovan. Becky loved her children and was a very devoted mother. She and Dave centered their lives around the church and their children.

After Donovan was born, Becky just felt there was something wrong. In March of 2004 when Donovan was two months old, Becky found out she had breast cancer. This was such a shock to all



of us, but Becky handled it with grace and dignity. She had a mastectomy in April and then started chemotherapy. Although she was sick and lost her hair, Becky kept up her cheerful spirits and was an encouragement to all. She ordered several different wigs and hats and would always look so lovely. We were always wondering which one she would wear and we each had our favorites.

In October of 2004, Becky went to Christian Womanhood Spectacular. She loved going to spectacular. Becky had attended Hyles-Anderson College from 1987-1989. Even at that spectacular she tried to cheer up others. Kris Grafton even spoke about her during her talk. After spectacular

the doctors told her that the cancer was in remission. We all rejoiced with her and she got busy with the teens and her children again.

In February of 2005, Becky had gone with our teens to Gaylord, MI for their Youth Conference. She tried to put on a “happy face” but wasn’t feeling well. Becky went to the doctor the following week and they found she had two tumors in the brain and three tumors in the liver. We were all just devastated.

Everyone started praying earnestly for Becky. She underwent radiation on the brain and then chemo for the liver. In April the doctor’s told her she had maybe two months to live. After the doctor’s appointment she and Dave came by the church to talk to the preacher, Dr. John Vaprezsan. After talking and praying with him, our youth pastor, Bro. John W. Vaprezsan asked Dave and Becky to come and talk to his Bible class here in our Christian School. This was a difficult day, but Becky did it with grace and dignity.

Our ladies decided to band together and see how many people we could get to fast and pray for Becky’s life. I wrote emails around the world and people started writing back to tell me they were praying. I made a list of names, missionaries, countries, etc. and gave it to Becky to encourage her that people were praying for her. Mrs. Cindy Schaap and the ladies at Christian Womanhood were on this list and I won’t begin to name others

because I am sure I will leave out many.

God heard our prayers and she lived beyond her two months. Matter of fact, she started feeling



better and was able to do more things with her Sunday School class. She started singing in the choir again and she sang specials in church. One very precious memory was in September of 2005 when

she sang a duet with her daughter Mackenzie.

She did go to spectacular in 2005 and got to see many friends from around the world and many who had prayed for her. We have a very special picture of her with Mrs. Becky Martin. Becky and Bro. Dave loved missionaries and they especially loved the Martins. They were very generous to



missionaries and she was so pleased to see Mrs. Martin. They would make up food

boxes for those who might be traveling through and would need help.

We knew this past winter the tumors were growing again so she went through more radiation and more chemotherapy. While we were at Pastor’s School, 2006, we received an email from

Becky's husband Dave telling us that the news was looking grim. On Friday, March 24, 2006, the doctor told her they could continue to do chemo but she only gave her 2 weeks to 2 months to live. Of course we all prayed diligently again only this time we really prayed that God would do the impossible and heal Becky.

Becky started to deteriorate rather quickly. But, she wouldn't let it get her down. She made a point to be at the Mother-Daughter Banquet on April 1st for a short time with her girls. We had our Young Fundamentalist Conference on April 7 & 8. She came to the service on Friday evening and testified to the young people. On Easter Sunday, April 16th she also made it to church. Friday, April 28th was Metro Baptist Schools Spring Program. She made a point to come and hear her daughters perform with their classes.

By the first of May she was basically bedridden. She had cravings for Jr. Whoppers so different ones of us would do a whopper run for her. I remember taking a whopper to her and praising the Lord she had the strength to eat it.

Becky's husband Dave is a most unusual man. He dedicated himself to taking care of her and being there for their children. Dave tried to make sure that the girls and Donovan had a somewhat normal life. Dave always had the children at church and for any activities they were involved in. Fortunately Dave had wonderful help also in

his in-laws Jim and Peg Swaffer and his mother Linda Prater.

Dave asked my husband, Dr. John Vaprežsan, to come to their house and help him as he told the girls that their Mommy was going to heaven. We went over on a Saturday evening. Dave sat the girls down and began telling them that as they knew Mommy was sick and that one day Jesus was going to need her in Heaven to do a job for him and when he took her to Heaven she wouldn't be able to come back. The girls accepted this just like innocent children because they knew that Heaven was a good place.

On Monday evening, May 8, my husband and I were there and she spoke the last words to my husband. It was just, "Hi preacher", but she had recognized him. We all knew she was close at this point. She then went to sleep. Becky fought valiantly but the next morning, Tuesday, May 9 she slipped in to a coma. On that Tuesday we sat at her bedside and talked to her and I sort of teased her about different things. That evening, we went back and we knew the time was close. We talked to her and my husband prayed with her. We were home about an hour when the call came that Becky had gone home to Heaven.

We left immediately and went back to their house. We were able to stand at her bedside and pray and cry. The children had come in from being gone for the day and Dave had told them to

go kiss Mommy goodbye since Jesus would be taking her to Heaven that night. Little Morgan who is 4 pulled her chair up alongside the bed. Dave asked her what she was doing and she said she was going to watch Mommy go to Heaven.

Dave took the girls upstairs and talked to them. Morgan told me that her Mommy had an important job to do for Jesus so she had to go to Heaven. I thought what a precious thought for these children to have about their Mother. They got down photo albums and began looking through family pictures.



Dave took the children to the funeral home the next day so he could explain everything to them. He showed them the pretty box that Mommy's body would be in and the room where they would be. He then explained that Mommy's body was like a wrapper to a candy bar. The inside was gone, but the wrapper was left behind.

Dave and Becky had planned her funeral. Becky had hoped these ideas would not be used for a long while, but she wanted to have everything planned. Dave and Becky wanted to have a Memorial Service the night before the funeral here at the church. It was to be a time of singing and testimonies. Dave had made a CD of different songs that meant a lot to them and played it

continuously in her room. They chose about a dozen songs and people to sing those songs from our congregation.

We have never done a Memorial Service quite like this one. It was truly a blessing to everyone who attended. The auditorium was packed. One of Becky's greatest desires was to have the teenagers who she and Dave had taught through the years sing at her funeral. All of our college students came home and others flew in from out of state. They sang "What A Day That Will Be."

The memorial service ended with the playing of Barbara Burke's song "If You Could See Me Now." The words of this song describe exactly how Becky must have felt when she entered Heaven.

We had all prayed for Becky to be healed. Her mother said to me, "God did heal her, He took her home." What a testimony to everyone. She was such an encourager to our teenagers and to Becky's friends.

At Becky's memorial service were some wonderful testimonies. One of her Sunday School girls, Erin Cochran Roberts, who is an assistant pastor's wife in Maryland flew in and said this about "Miss Becky": "She was my Sunday School teacher, a Godly influence. Her class was a lesson that taught me values and principles. She sent me care packages and would take me shopping while I was at college. She desired to

please her husband and that impressed me. Through her life she taught me what a difference one life would make around the world. Her sweet and godly spirit lives on in the investments in Sunday School girls spread out all over the United States who are now influencing other teenagers.”

David Lutz, one of Bro. Dave’s Sunday School boys, who is an assistant pastor at First Baptist Church, Hammond, IN drove up for the services. He spoke this about “Miss Becky”: “Teenagers sometimes wonder if their Teen Workers really care. Bro. and Mrs. Prater were sincere and you knew they were genuine. Mrs. Prater was full of grace. She epitomized what grace was. She was a great example of grace. When I got the message of her passing of course I cried. I got to thinking of what it must of been like when she got to heaven. She had such a beautiful smile and kind way. “St. Peter” has always been sort of the host of heaven and God must have

decided he needed a hostess. She is everything a hostess should be. She lived for others. I can hardly wait until the day I get to heaven and get to see Mrs. Prater in her new position.”

Mrs. Jennifer Vaprezsán, the assistant pastor’s wife at Metro Baptist Church and one of Becky’s closest friends spoke this about Becky: “Becky was not just my friend but my best friend. We seemed to spend most of our time on a bus going to a Youth Conference or in the mall especially Kohls. She and I always shared chocolate. She was an incredible encourager. Through her battle with cancer she showed us character and dignity.”

Becky will be missed by many. She was a much loved lady. To know Rebecca Prater was to love her. I wish you could have known her and if you did know her, you feel the same way.

