

A Memorial Service for

# **Jared J. Rardin**

August 6, 1937 – November 17, 2021



Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 2pm  
Duvall Chapel  
Newbury Court  
Concord, Massachusetts

## Order of Worship for Jared J. Rardin

*As each family member comes forward during the service, they will light a candle on a wooden candle stand that Jerry built in 2010 for Newbury Court's All-Campus Memorial Services. On the back of the stand, Jerry included this quote:  
"Death is a truth made more profound by the size of our wonder."*

**PRELUDE**

*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*

**Marcia Groome**

**WELCOME**

**Rev. Kristin Rinehimer**

Good afternoon. My name is Rev. Kristin Rinehimer and I am a chaplain and the Director of Spiritual Life here at Newbury Court. Welcome to everyone joining us this afternoon for a celebration of the life of Jared J. Rardin—or Jerry, as so many of us knew him.

The circumstances of our gathering are unique to this time we're in. Jerry's family is gathered both here in person and at home. Thank you, Rardins, for the honor of remembering Jerry here at Duvall Chapel. Newbury Court residents are joining us from their suites, thanks to our internal channel. Friends and family afar are joining us by Zoom. Thanks be for the technology that allows us to stay connected! Our prayer is that everything runs smoothly today, and even if there are bumps along the way, that this time and gathering remains sacred.

I've been thinking a lot about Jerry's love for building recently. Jerry built with both his hands and his words. Some of his woodwork is displayed here today (like this candlestand), and plenty more adorns walls throughout Newbury Court, not to mention those of friends and family apart from this community. His pieces often honored the people to whom he gifted them. They had heart, meaning to them. And the world that Jerry built with words? Why, that was just as meaningful. If you ever had the chance to chat with Jerry, you know he valued the spoken word. He thought about what he said. His words lifted others up, gave them a chuckle or a new way of seeing things. Jerry, with his words was an architect of a world where there was always room for more peace, more love, and more joy.

We are all here because we, at one time or another, were welcomed into that world that Jerry built. It's strange—or perhaps a little intimidating—to welcome people to remember someone who at his heart was a welcomer. Jerry was *the ultimate* welcomer, wasn't he? He cared deeply about helping people find their place among others; he wanted everyone to know they belonged. Jerry and Sue were the first residents of the North building here at Newbury Court, so they had ample opportunities to welcome other residents from that day forward. And they did just that. Just the other day, I was talking to a few residents who were recalling how Jerry and Sue were the first ones to greet them when they came to tour campus. How could anyone not fall in love with Newbury Court with Jerry and Sue as their guides? Jerry will also always be remembered as a welcomer of staff. He cared deeply about getting to know new people—their names, their unique stories—and he helped them feel at home in their new surroundings. That was the case for me, I know. Jerry sought me out four years ago and told me to count him as a friend and supporter as I joined the staff. Many staff, in the last few months, have shared with me that Jerry was a mentor of theirs. Jerry welcomed, wherever he went. So in that spirit, I welcome you today to remember all that he meant to you, to us. Your memories, your feelings, your heart is welcome here.

**HYMN OF PRAISE**

***New Every Morning is the Love***

New every morning is the love  
our waking and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies each returning day  
around us hover while we pray,  
new perils past, new sins forgiven,  
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind  
be set to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still of countless price  
God will provide for sacrifice.

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Kristin Rinehimer

God of Love, we thank you today for the gift of Jerry. As we remember the days we shared with him, the lessons we learned from him, the love and joy we received from him, we ask that you hold us in your grace. Comfort us in our grief. Join us in our reminiscing. Celebrate with us the beauty that Jerry added to this world. And bind us together, dear God, that no matter where we are this afternoon, that we might feel the closeness of beloved community. We pray all these things in Christ's name, amen.

## READINGS

**Psalm 16:5-9**

**Jane Sharp, *daughter-in-law***

<sup>5</sup>The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. <sup>6</sup>The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. <sup>7</sup>I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. <sup>8</sup>I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. <sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

**Romans 8:37-39 (NRSV)**

<sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## **“The Universe Knows How to Take Care of Us”**

**Molly Tee, *sister***

When Jesus talked about the kingdom of God, he was not prophesying about some easy, danger-free perfection that will someday appear. He was talking about a state of being, a way of living at ease along with joys and sorrows of our world. It is possible, he said, to be as simple and beautiful as the birds in the sky or the lilies of the field, who are always within the eternal now. This state of being is not something alien or mystical. We don't need to earn it. It is already ours. Most of us lose it as we grow up and become self-conscious, but it doesn't disappear forever; it is always there to be reclaimed, though we have to search hard in order to find it. Entering the kingdom of God means feeling, as if we were floating in the womb of the universe, that we are being taken care of, always, at every moment.”

- *from The Gospel According to Jesus by Stephen Mitchell*

## **“On Play”**

**Laurie Rardin and Sandy Crump, *daughters-in-law***

Play needs no purpose. That is why play can go on and on as long as players find it meaningful. After all, we do not dance in order to get somewhere. A piece of music doesn't come to an end when its purpose is accomplished. It has no purpose, strictly speaking. It is the playful unfolding of a meaning that is there in each of its moments in every scheme, every passage: a celebration of meaning. Pachelbel's Canon is one of those magnificent superfluities of life. Every time I listen to it, I realize anew that some of the most superfluous things are the most important for us because they give meaning to our human life. We need this kind of experience to correct our worldview.

Too easily we are inclined to imagine that God created this world for a purpose. We are so caught up in purpose that we would feel more comfortable if God shared our preoccupation with work. But God plays. The birds in a single tree are sufficient proof that God did not set out with a divine no-nonsense attitude to make the creature that would perfectly achieve the purpose of a bird. What could that purpose be, I wonder? There are titmice, juncos and chickadees, woodpeckers, goldfinches, starlings and crows. The only bird God never created is a no-nonsense bird. As we open our eyes and hearts to God's creation, we quickly perceive that God is playful.

- *from Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer by Brother David Steindl-Rast*

## REMEMBRANCE

Charles Rardin, *son*

So let me start with an admission, or confession, or a statement of the obvious. I have no idea how to do this. I don't know how to take a lifetime of wise words, backrubs, fresh-squeezed orange juice on Christmas morning, and moments like when, in 11<sup>th</sup> grade Bill Coffin was speaking to our whole school. I knew that you had known him, so after his impressive talk on nuclear apartheid, I screwed up my courage and introduced myself as your son, and this mighty figure instantly melted and gave me the biggest bear hug.

In some ways we've all had more than enough time to prepare for it. Unlike many, the completion of Dad's life unfolded in a way that stretched out the grief and mourning, the losses, the diminishments, but also the reminders of what's important, the astounding love that he gave to and received from Mom, from his family, from his communities. So I can't claim to have been surprised, or caught unaware. And yet still – how do you do this?

So let me just start with the most Dad-like thing I know how to do – to take this turmoil of grief, nostalgia, awe, respect, loss, love, admiration – and to give this hot mess some sort of structure, a way of getting at it - by focusing on the gratitude. Because, God – whatever part you gave for Dad to play in my life, and in who I am today – that would have been enough.

So – Dad - I am grateful for the way you thought about place. Whether it was church, school, home, neighborhood – you didn't see the place as belonging to you – you belonged to the place. I'm grateful for Lincoln Logs, Fischer Technic and your radial arm saw. I'm grateful for you sharing your joy in making things, and making things better. The sound of the latch on the screen door of our Little Pines cabin in Canada sounded sweet after the 13 hour drive because Grandpop had originally put it there, but even more because you had gone to Frasier's Hardware in Port Carling to replace it when it got worn out – and I had watched you do it. I'm grateful for the camp chores you had us do while we were there, because that helped me to belong to that place. And there was no image of greater belonging than you in the pumphouse that you had built at the lake's edge, you at the desk and the window you had made looking out on the water with the last remnants of sunset, with a little scent of pipe smoke.

I am grateful for the way you thought about challenge and hardship. You didn't approach these in a trite way, like a hallmark card or a poster. I don't ever remember you saying "things happen for a reason." Instead, you'd listen, and after this superhuman listening, would invite us to ponder just how close anxiety and curiosity can be. Even the quote from this candle stand - *Death is a truth made more profound by the size of our wonder* – Is Dad's nod to the idea of our own agency in our experience. This notion was sneakily empowering without being – forgive this Preacher's Kid's term - preachy

So as some of you may know, Dad found a metaphor for this technique of taking messy, complex and very human processes, and understanding them at a deeper and richer level. This was the Cathedral. He loved some of the specific ones – Wells, Canterbury, Amiens, Vezelay – but for him, there was also an archetype. For him, this was where Community, Craftmanship and Creation all came together, in moments that take your breath away. He actually built a cathedral – part model, part metaphor, that he carried in a case, and could set up for you. First he'd put together the crypt, then the floor, the nave, the narthex, the walls, the flying buttresses – all of these represented some part of the career, the life, the family that he had built. The congregation he served, the foundation that supported his pastoral counseling, the neighborhood he lived in – these all served truly, even literally, structural roles in this piece of art. As he wrote in his blessing for the Jed and Laurie's rehearsal dinner, we now also invoke you: "raise now the roof of this room into a soaring cathedral, arched of all the loves that interlock this day."

So Dad – I was blessed to have the chance to tell you that I love you, and to tell you that I do know that you love me. But please also know – when someone says that I am my father's son -there can be no higher praise.

## REMEMBRANCE

Paul Rardin, son

One of the many lessons I learned from Dad had to do with group dynamics. This was an interest we shared - I as a choir director, he as a leader of group therapy, whether professionally as pastoral counselor or personally as a family-dubbed "baggage handler" for his own siblings.

The lesson was this:

Whenever there is a change in the group – either a new member joins, or an existing member leaves – the chemistry changes, and the group regresses, for the moment losing its center, until it establishes its new identity.

This got me thinking about how leaders build trust to allow this new identity to take shape. We so often hear about so-called “alpha” qualities of leadership: boldness, decisiveness, courage. Dad had all of these at times, but I think he tended to lead from a different part of the leadership spectrum: humility, empathy, kindness. To be a great leader, one must demonstrate empathy, a willingness to be considered equal, which engenders trust. (A plaque with the simple axiom “It’s called trust” was one he referred to often.)

Dad built relationships on his innate kindness and gentleness. Many of his friends and our beloved family members now viewing our livestream shared touching messages that often led off with these qualities:

- “Kind, and always sincere”
- “Kind, gentle, and insightful”
- “Full of kindness and gentle humor”
- “Warm and caring person”
- “A kind man”
- “So kind and warm”
- “Simply put, he was a good man.”
- “Able to find the good everywhere and to relish it”

Of course, he was human, so occasionally his dark side came out. Once, after a concert I had conducted, Dad, Mom and I joined several of my colleagues and students at a nearby restaurant. The service was very slow that evening, and when after a long wait our party’s food finally arrived, Dad’s entree was missing. Dad being Dad, he encouraged us to begin eating (I don’t recall any objections to this), but after two subsequent visits from our server brought only assurances that the food was almost ready, I could see Dad’s patience being tested. When finally the manager appeared and informed Dad that the entree he ordered was actually no longer available, Dad looked to be somewhere between defeated and furious. He took his napkin and threw it down on his empty place setting.

In my memory, this remains the single greatest act of violence ever committed by my Father.



Much more common were gestures that showed his truer colors:

- A stealth backrub in passing;
- A two-handed handshake - his left hand gently draping both hands
- A glass of wine placed next to a package containing what was obviously a returned manuscript or composition;
- A serenade with his guitar before bedtime;
- A new kitten or guinea pig gently lifted out of his bathrobe pocket, to our great surprise, at Christmas

Speaking of pets, Dad seemed to have a special radar for them. Our cat Maisy is the sweetest, yet most easily terrified cat I've ever known, and will usually hide for the entire duration of a visit from family or friends. But during Dad's visit to our house several years ago, after a few hours of hiding, Maisy slowly crept into our family room, bypassed the rest of us, and headed straight for Dad, as if recognizing a kindred spirit. Dad gently let down his hand to pet her and even play with her. "It's called trust."

This memory is especially bittersweet for me, as it was on that visit - the last one Dad could ever make to our house in Philadelphia - that Dad's decreased mobility and speech became clear to me. But here he was, actually standing up, actually talking to Maisy - gentle recognizing gentle, communing through a toy mouse on a string. It's as if Maisy was blessing him before the long and arduous journey he had ahead of him.

Dad, you have left our group. Our chemistry has changed. We have regressed. For the moment, we have lost our center. We don't know exactly what our new identity will be without you. But through your example of finding and relishing the good everywhere, and through Mom's incredible, vigilant and constant love for you for 62 years, we will remember your kindness, gentleness, and wisdom, and find our center again.

**HYMN*****For the Fruit of all Creation***

For the fruit of all creation,  
Thanks be to God.  
For His gifts to ev'ry nation,  
Thanks be to God.  
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,  
Silent growth while we are sleeping,  
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping,  
Thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor,  
God's will is done.  
In the help we give our neighbor,  
God's will is done.  
In our world-wide task of caring  
For the hungry and despairing,  
In the harvests we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,  
Thanks be to God.  
For the good we all inherit,  
Thanks be to God.  
For the wonders that astound us,  
For the truths that still confound us,  
Most of all, that love has found us,  
Thanks be to God.

**REMEMBRANCE****Jed Rardin, son**

Dear Dad;

It was a fall evening after Brynne's college graduation. You, Mom, Laurie, Marta, Brynne, Bodie and I were gathered in our darkened living room taking in Brynne's senior project. It was a personal documentary of the painting she'd crafted while listening to recordings of quotes and sayings that had taken on special meaning in our lives. I looked over at you and there were tears in your eyes.

You reached your hand out to take Mom's hand in yours. The same small hand you'd held so often through your 62 years of marriage. The very same hands that were linked at the top of the Williams Chapel bell tower preparing to become pinned. The same small hands which, much more recently, have stroked your hair and helped you brush your teeth. I had a strong sense that you were both delighting in the blessings of so many wonderful years and experiences converging in this moment, and yet keenly aware of the difficult journey that lay ahead.

There is so much I remember:

- I can almost smell the Borkum Riff tobacco from the pipe sitting on your basement desk;
- I can feel the joy of roughhousing with you, even when you'd had a draining day!
- You at the tiller of your beloved sailboat the *Ruach*;
- Motoring the length of Lake Rosseau to attend the worship at the tiny Anglican church at Windermere, where I first heard my favorite hymn, *This is My Father's World*;
- Midnight paddles on the lake on my birthday, looking up at the stars.

But what I am remembering most today are your hands:

It was your hands that lifted the needle onto the Herb Alpert Christmas album Christmas morning.

Yours were the hands that held the cross as you led the protest against an agent orange transport train during the Vietnam war.

Yours were the hands that loved the feel and function of a carpenter's pencil as you turned a piece of blank graph paper into a design which then became a bookcase or lectern that quickly took up residence in our home, at church, or in our hearts.

I can envision your swift hands typing your senior thesis and countless sermons and joining with the hands of strangers on the Edmund Pettus bridge, marching with Doctor King in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

Your hands held eight of us here today in this chapel as infants, welcoming us into the world and into this loving family.

Yours were the hands that moved so artfully whenever you related a dream or shared a reflection.

Yours were hands that played unabashedly with Lionel trains and Tonka trucks and filled in Sudoku puzzles,

that helped me hold down two layers of marine plywood hull for the model tugboat while the epoxy set,

and crafted limericks to celebrate a grand child's birth,

and skillfully built Heathkit televisions and tuners

and raised a glass as you toasted our weddings and whirled with us when we danced,

and played the carillon early in the morning on the Williams College campus.

Yours are the hands that made the rounds of the dinner table gently massaging shoulders.

It was your hands that wiped tears of hilarity from behind your glasses after a side-splitting joke....

....but since you died, the image that comes to me most frequently is the picture taken on the day so many of your loving colleagues and family members gathered in celebration of your decades-long ministry as a pastoral counselor. Your hands are outstretched both as a symbol of receiving the love in the room and simultaneously blessing us with your love.

The day before you died, your shaky right hand took my shaky right hand and we held tight for a minute or so, and then we let go, knowing that we'd both had a good run and that it was time for one final benediction. The love was palpable. And then we opened our hands. It was time for you to let me go. And now it's my turn to let you go.

I will always love you, Dad. Go in peace and in joy.

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** Brynne, Marta, Gavin, Miles, and Sawyer Rardin,  
*grandchildren*

*Miles:* Blessed are you, O Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, maker of heaven and Earth, giver of life. We are gathered here today to celebrate the life of our grandfather, Jared J. Rardin.

*Marta:* How do we put into words, O God, all that our grandfather was to us and to countless others? His life as Your good and faithful servant was more profound than most, fuller than many. His love reached farther than we ever could fathom, his light poured into the smallest of spaces.

*Gavin:* His wisdom was a deep, divine well – turning diminishments and disappointments into an opportunity for curiosity. His kindness, a comfort that stretched far and wide, strengthened by his intuitive ear and his immense heart.

*Brynne:* His laughter was a beautiful experience to behold – one usually prompted by the banter he shared with his three boys. His faith, a pillar of strength that never swayed in standing up against injustice in the world.

*Sawyer:* His child-like spirit was an energetic essence that filled his life with fun, wonder, and a unique closeness to his five grandchildren. His joy, a breaking wave that wrapped us in its spirit and seeped into our souls.

*Miles:* His commitment to his family, his friends, his colleagues and to ice cream, was steadfast. His Curiosity—in understanding the interworking’s of people, steeples, dreams, and machines—was unending.

*Marta:* How do we put all of these things, these feelings, and these memories into words, O Lord? The answer is we cannot. Because our grandpa Jerry was and is more than words could ever describe. He embodied the true meaning of life, light, and love.

*Brynne:* We are proud, dear Lord, to be the bearers of his legacy, molded by his role modeling, blessed by his unbelievable presence in our lives.

*Gavin:* God, if you had given us a grandfather who loved us deeply, but who had **no limitless light, it would have been enough.**

*Sawyer:* If you had given us a grandfather wiser than we could have wished, but who had **no** comforting kindness, **it would have been enough.**

*Miles:* If you had given us a grandfather who was a Good and Faithful Servant, but who was **not** brought to tears by laughter, **it would have been enough.**

*Marta:* If you had given us a grandfather who was a child at heart, but who had **no** generous joy **it would have been enough.**

*Brynne:* But he, O God, was all of these things; he was more than enough. And we are thankful. We will carry on his legacy spreading light and love, laughter and life, curiosity and kindness, commitment and a child-like spirit to every corner of the Earth until all the world feels and is healed by the blessings that we received from our grandpa Jerry. **Amen.**

## PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY

Rev. Kristin Rinehimer

Friends, please join me in blessing Jerry and one another this afternoon. If you feel so moved, I invite you to hold the hand of someone next to you or simply hold your hands in front of you. Feel the presence of one another and of God.

Holy One,  
With the words of Romans echoing in our ears,  
We rejoice that you are with us, at all times, in all stages of our lives.  
You bless our living and our dying.  
You come alongside our struggles and our triumphs.  
You are with us in times of joy and in times of grief.  
From you, we come, and to you, we return.  
Nothing, O God, can separate us from you, our Love and our Light.

Jerry's life of wonder, advocacy, love, and strength witnessed to your enduring presence with him. Now, in his dying and in his legacy, we bless him in your name. We remember that nothing, O God, can separate Jerry from you, his Love and his Light.

For our ourselves, we pray for comfort, your abiding presence, and the calling to live life with the same spirit we knew in Jerry.

Let our hands, touching and extended towards one another, remind us of the circles of belonging and community that surround us in our remembering. Jerry is no longer with us, but he is in us. He touched us, just as we touch one another now. He is in our memories, he is in our stories, he is in the way we move through the world. Let us go into the world and joyfully carry Jerry with us in our hearts. Call us, too, to become architects of peace and justice in this world.

God, bless the road ahead and send us with your Spirit. We pray all these things through your Son, Jesus. Amen

## **CLOSING HYMN**

### ***Now Thank We All Our God***

Now thank we all our God  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things has done,  
in whom this world rejoices;  
who from our mothers' arms  
has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
to keep us in God's grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
of this world in the next.

All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son and Spirit blest,  
who reign in highest heaven  
the one eternal God,  
whom heaven and earth adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

### **UNISON PRAYER OF BLESSING**

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work or watch or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, comfort the afflicted, **shield the joyous**, and all for your love's sake. Amen.

*\*Prayer of Compline Jerry and Sue prayed nightly and which Sue continued to pray when Jerry could no longer participate verbally.*

### **BENEDICTION**

**Rev. Kristin Rinehimer**

In a moment, we will close our time together with “O, What a Beautiful Morning” on the carillon—something that Jerry himself played on the carillon at Williams College on rainy exam days. Just one last celebration of his gentle humor. But first, hear a benediction that Jerry once gave me at the close of a coffee chat. It’s hung on my computer ever since: “Be well. Be safe. Be wild.”

**CARILLON & POSTLUDE**

*Oh, What a Beautiful Morning*

**Marcia Groome**