

## Ethel Douglas McMurtry

Born 1887, died 1944 (at age 57)

Graduate of the National Methodist Training School, 1918

Ethel Douglas attended the National Methodist Training School 1917-1918 for a special one year program to prepare to be a minister's wife. She was born near Uxbridge, Ontario. Her mother died when she was 12, along with a younger brother, from scarlet fever. Her family was staunch Methodist.

Ethel became a nurse, taking her training at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba because they had a program that she could attend with only a grade 8 education. She liked being a nurse. She met her husband, the Methodist minister in Lashburn, Saskatchewan, where she was nursing. They got married when she returned from the Training School in July 1918. Ethel had not considered church work prior to being engaged, and as Doug remembers she never aspired to church work after marriage. She just felt she needed preparation for the role ahead of her. Doug, her first of 6 children, was born in 1919, when they were living in Limerick, SK, when she was 32. Her last child was born 10 years later.

"My mother was a better pastoral minister than my father. Nursing in those days was a lot of tender loving care and so is pastoral care. Mother was welcoming to people no one else wanted to welcome. ... She didn't lead from up front but from behind. She was pretty busy with 6 children and no modern conveniences. She had a lot of friends, she went to church women's groups and took her part but she wasn't the leader."

Shortly after they were married the Spanish Influenza epidemic swept across the prairie. Ethel was one of the only trained nurses in the community and she was instrumental in setting up a temporary hospital. She was well remembered for the work she did during that time.

Ethel was ill for a long time prior to her death. Doug and his sister Ethel, along with his father, nursed her through her last years. In Doug's reflection on her life, he commented, "I think my mother died of stress. No one ever said that, but she was worn out by it all."

Written by Caryn Douglas, drawing on an interview with Doug McMurtry, January 2012 and from *Recollections for my Grandchildren*, by Doug McMurtry, 1996.

