

AMELIE:

This is a newsletter I never thought I'd ever have to write.

Sadly, our beautiful 14 month old granddaughter Amelie (our daughter Johanna's baby) died Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> at 8am after a 24 hour battle to save her life, she contracted the vicious and super contagious swine flu. Although she was doing so well health wise her lungs weren't up to full strength, at least not enough to resist the sudden onslaught. She was so beautiful and developing such a cute character, we are all heart-broken. However, the funeral service, which I (Poppa) took last Thursday, was awesome, and her parents Lou & Jo and all of the family have received an amazing outpouring of love, especially through those who have experienced brokenness. So many people loved this special little girl.

Even though we don't have all the answers Jesus has been very near. God doesn't give all the answers, but His presence answers all questions. He even came to earth, experienced suffering and also cried, "WHY?" He understands.

Through our brokenness He enters in, and through our brokenness His love shines out.

This evil flu has hit NZ badly, the first death reported today, with no underlying health conditions, happened to a 27 year old man today.

About the service, it was amazing celebration, 5/600 attended, a lot of non believers, nurses, doctors, teachers etc., some nurses came from the Wellington neo-natal unit, people came from all over NZ and some from Australia; all were very moved. It lasted nearly two hours, but seemed real short. The cousins all spoke, Jo (Amelie's Mum) read her favourite book to her as she lay peacefully in the open casket. Lou (her Dad) spoke tearfully, but so well. Cassia her 8 year old cousin sang, "My Only Sunshine". There were lots of other items and sharing. We sang "Jesus Loves Me" lots, and even sang her favourite song, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". Almost everyone came forward to view Amelie in the casket. At the graveside Jo & Lou kissed her goodbye and put the lid on the casket -- heart wrenching - they looked into the grave a long time after lowering her, and then filled in the grave.

Amelie was a seed planted to bring a great harvest. Our prayer is that this sorrow will not be wasted, but produce an ointment that will heal hundreds of other broken lives; that it will not cause shattered faith, but deepened faith.

Front page Newspaper Report 22/07/09

Amelie (Peck) loved to sing.

She was starting to copy the songs Mum Jo sang to her, promising a musical future.

A sociable child, she had a wonderful first birthday party in May, surrounded by her favourite people.

The little Palmerston North girl had come so far since battling almost every complication that can beset a premature baby some 20 blood transfusions, eye surgery, a series of infections and a type of pneumonia that nearly claimed her life just before Christmas.

The Peck family shared the story of how the surprisingly strong and happy little girl had survived those challenges early this year with the support of Hope, a group set up in the city for parents of preemies.

But today, Jo and dad Lou have to say their final goodbyes to their first and only child.

Their beloved daughter died in Palmerston North Hospital on Saturday, the region's first life snuffed out by swine flu.

Her Poppa, John Walton, was to lead the service at Life Church this morning.

It was planned as a celebration of her life, with a wide open invitation to attend.

"She loved people, but we were so careful to protect her that we often kept her away," Mrs Peck, a part-time nurse, said.

Amelie caught the H1N1 virus at a time when her parents were daring to hope that after all the life-threatening drama she'd been through, everything would be OK.

She had almost given up her oxygen tubes, she was eating, and growing still just a lightweight at 7.7kg, but that was huge compared to her 660g birth weight.

Her parents never gave up worrying. There was no doubt she was special and needed special care, and they lived a quiet life to reduce the risks of her catching any infection that might lead to complications.

But they thought they'd got past the stage of fearing she could die.

As soon as Mrs Peck realised she was sick with something like flu, she handed over Amelie's fulltime care to her husband a school teacher at home for the holidays. It was the first time she'd been separated from her, but it seemed like the safest thing to do for Amelie's sake.

But then the little girl became quite ill, quite quickly, with diarrhoea and other flu-like symptoms setting in.

She was admitted to hospital last Friday. Swabs were taken and a course of Tamiflu was started on Saturday.

"The doctors and nurses were just wonderful," Mrs Peck said.

But as the day wore on, her breathing became worse, and she died that night.

Later, results confirmed the part swine flu had played in the tragedy.

The Pecks have asked those who want to do something to remember Amelie to make donations to the neo-natal unit at Wellington Hospital or Ronald McDonald House across the road the places that were home for Amelie's first four months of life.

Palmerston North's Amelie Peck was the 11th New Zealander to die of swine flu.

Up to yesterday, there had been 2477 confirmed cases, although routine testing has stopped and the actual incidence is much higher.

In Conclusion:

Our hearts and prayers go out to the myriads of parents and children around the world who have cried and are crying right now, especially in less fortunate countries than ours.

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