

Ava Georgia Simmons was born on March 25, 1957 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta.

She was the youngest daughter of Harvey Irving Simmons and Norma Georgia Simmons.

She grew up in the south side of Edmonton. She attended school, first at King Edward School, for grades 1-9, and then at Strathcona High School, for grades 1-12.

She spent most of her professional career in the insurance business, with three notable exceptions. For a while she worked in the office of a beverage distribution company and afterwards she worked in the telecommunications industry. Also, from 1995 and 1997 she spent some time looking after her sister, Iris.

Both in her professional life and in her private life, Ava always made quite an impact on people. She was generous to a fault and she really took her spiritual life very seriously.

For much of her life, she spent her time searching for a spiritual home which matched her understanding of the Bible, and in 1999, she encountered the Messianic Jewish Movement. We are a community of Jews and Gentiles who express our faith in Jesus of Nazareth from a Jewish perspective.

Ava found her spiritual roots among us and joined us in celebrating the cycle of biblical feasts and in discovering the wonder of the Sabbath. Rest is holy, and resting in our Saviour and Messiah is what Ava experienced.

In 2002 Ava was diagnosed with cancer, and she struggled through chemotherapy until the end of January of 2004, when she was diagnosed with brain cancer. When Ava understood that she was not going to be healed, she accepted this and made her peace with the L-rd.

She remained as independent for as long as possible, and went into the hospital for the last time on February 18<sup>th</sup>. She wanted to spend her final days as wisely as possible and greatly appreciated the many visitors who came to see her. The hospital staff also appreciated her courage and her faith.

On Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, just before 9:00 PM her struggle ended and she went home to be with the L-rd. She was a brave young lady and will be missed by her friends and her family.

She wanted her funeral to be a happy time and that doesn't mean we can't cry and give each other lots of hugs. It doesn't mean we can't comfort the family and mourn for her. It just means that she knew that her death was not going to be the end of her life, and she would want her faith to give us as much comfort as it gave her.

She asked me to share a short meditation with you, which I will do later in the service. Various family members are going to come now and share memories of a great person who we will all miss: Ava. May we mourn until her passing is only one small memory we have of a life which touched so many people.