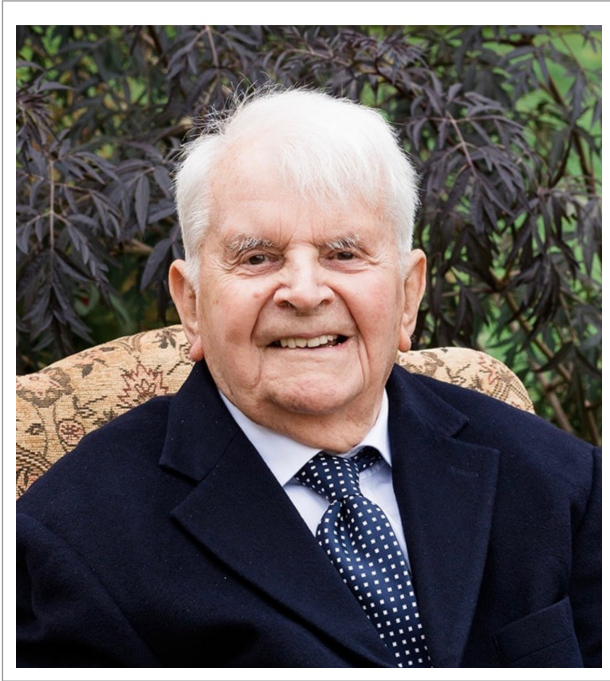




JAMES MACINTOSH HOUSTON

1922 - 2026



"I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven."

ACTS 26:19

*"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*

JOHN 12:24

We invite you to record your visit through our digital guest book and share a memory.



A POEM FOR REFLECTION

The Pulley

GEORGE HERBERT

This poem was one that Dad loved and requested for this time. It is hard to grasp through reading alone, so is here for your reflection. Dad embraced the intentional 'repining restlessness' and 'weariness' as a gift from his Creator, in anticipation of the deeper Rest – 'this jewel' – in which he now reclines.

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."

So, strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

WELCOME

The people of First Baptist Church welcome you today as family and friends of Jim Houston. In this sacred place where we are privileged to worship, we seek to lift up Christ that all may be drawn to him. May you know the peace and grace of this same Christ Jesus as we give thanks for the life of His servant Jim.

JUSTIN KIM · Pastor

WELCOME

CHRIS HOUSTON · Son, for the Family

HYMN

Be Thou My Vision

This hymn was playing as Dad drew his last breath. He likely heard the first verse; the last was drowned out by Glory. This ancient 10th-century Irish text, recovered by Mary Byrne, expresses the very breath of our father's life. "Be Thou my vision!" – he longed that same desire should animate us all.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me save that thou art;
Thou my best thought by day and by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I thy dear child;
Thou in me dwelling, with thee reconciled.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my dignity, thou my delight.
Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r;
Raise thou me Heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'ns Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

OPENING PRAYER

ALLISON PINCHES · *Granddaughter*

REFLECTIONS ON JIM

LYDÈLE TAYLOR · CLAIRE TAYLOR · PENNY CROSBY · *Daughters*

H Y M N

May the Mind of Christ My Saviour

This hymn came from the heart of Kate Wilkinson who was deeply immersed in the Keswick movement at the end of the 19th century. It was set to the tune St. Leonards by Arthur Barnham-Gould who served at the parish at Langham Place, later the parish of Jim's close friend, John Stott. For Dad, these words challenge us to bring every dimension of life under the Lordship of Christ.

May the mind of Christ my Savior
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of Christ dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His pow'r.

May the peace of Christ my Savior
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 23

READ BY JEN CAIRNS & JONATHAN TAYLOR · “GRANDS” TO JIM

Jen...

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

Jonathan...

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

Jen...

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Jonathan...

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my
life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



JIM'S MESSAGE TO US ALL

CHRIS HOUSTON · *Son*

Jesus the Very Thought of Thee

Attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux as "Dulcis Jesu Memoria". This 42-stanza poem (no, we don't have to sing them all!) was a favourite of Dad's, as Bernard, who though he lived over 800 years ago, was a dear 'soul-mate'. Edward Caswall translated some of the original text to give us this hymn, set to the tune St Botolph, written by Gordon Slater. For Jim, these words invite us to join him in loving God simply because of who He is.

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
 With sweetness fills my breast;
 But sweeter far Thy face to see,
 And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
 Nor can the memory find
 A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
 O Savior of mankind!

O hope of every contrite heart,
 O joy of all the meek,
 To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
 How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
 Nor tongue nor pen can show;
 The love of Jesus, what it is,
 None but His loved ones know.

Oh Jesus! Light of all below!
 Thou fount of life and fire!
 Surpassing all the joys we know,
 And all we can desire.

Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
 As Thou our prize will be;
 Jesus, be Thou our glory now,
 And through eternity.

Hebrews 11:8–16

READ BY STEPHEN TAYLOR & JULIAN HOUSTON · GRANDSONS

Stephen...

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

Julian...

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.



THE GOD WHO CALLS

PAUL SPILSBURY · *Regent College*

Oh, Worship the King!

This hymn, based on Psalm 104, was written by Robert Grant in the late eighteenth century. Grant was a man of political power who also had a deep heart for God and love of hymnody. As so often in Dad's life, the psalmist, David, both grasps and declares for Jim and for us all, the sovereignty of God.

O worship the King, all glorious above,
 O gratefully sing His power and His love;
 our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
 pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
 whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,
 His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
 and dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
 It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
 it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
 and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

The earth with its store of wonders untold,
 Almighty, thy power hath founded of old;
 hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
 and round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
 in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;
 thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
 our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

O measureless might, unchangeable Love,
 whom angels delight to hymn thee above
 your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze
 In true adoration shall sing to your praise.

CLOSING PRAYER

MARKUS BOCKMUEHL

Please join us afterwards for a light refreshment in the gym to the left of this sanctuary.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We much appreciate the gracious welcome of the people of First Baptist Church and for their collaboration and partnership. We are deeply grateful to Paul Spilsbury and the team at Regent College for the immeasurable support they have provided in so many ways. Markus Bockmuehl, biblical scholar in Oxford and son of dear friend of our father, Klaus Bockmuehl, led our closing prayer.

Our music today has been ably led by long-time family friend, Ed Norman, with trumpet accompaniment by Katherine Evans (<https://www.katherine-evans.com>).

The beautiful art of Psalm 1 is the work of Tim Botts (<https://www.timbotscalligraphy.com/>) and was a private commission for inclusion in *Letters from a Hospital Bed*.

Remembering Jim Houston

1922 – 2026

James (Jim) Macintosh Houston finished his well-run race on earth, on March 15, 2026, in Vancouver, his daughter Lydèle and Gord, by his side. He was 103 years old. Jim was born to missionary parents, James and Ethel May Houston, in Edinburgh, on November 21, 1922. His young boyhood was spent in Spain with later schooling in Edinburgh. He won a gold-medal in Geography at Edinburgh University and completed his DPhil in Oxford in 1950. As a geographer, his best-known work was *The Western Mediterranean World: An Introduction to its Regional Landscapes* (1964). He was a fellow of Hertford College at Oxford for nearly twenty years. He became an esteemed scholar, author, and mentor, but he was most of all, a man profoundly shaped by his friendship with God.

Even as a young man, raised in the Plymouth Brethren, Jim had a passion for equipping and empowering Christian laypeople for their ministry, not just within the church but in all of life. In Oxford, Jim was a friend to many of the Christian intellectuals in Oxford. With his wife, Rita, he hosted gatherings of students in their family home and organized Bible studies that served as an early experiment in lay education. In January of 1962, Jim had sensed a clear call of God, his heavenly calling, to which he was resolutely faithful for the next sixty-four years of his vigorous life.

After twenty-five years as a geographer in Hertford, Brasenose and St Catherine's Colleges in Oxford, Jim moved his family to Vancouver, in 1970, for him to become the founding Principal of Regent College, a graduate school on the UBC campus, that would focus on educating the laity in their Christian faith. Jim and W. J. Martin, a biblical language scholar from Liverpool and first Vice Principal of Regent College, taught Regent's first Summer Programs and together with Carl Armerding and Ward Gasque welcomed the College's first full-time students in 1970. In the early years, Jim held a joint appointment with the University of British Columbia and quietly supported UBC's earliest advocates for environmental stewardship. He retired, officially at least, as the James M Houston Professor of Spiritual Theology, after a lifetime of nurturing and encouraging both students and many others in both their Christian faith and their professional and personal lives.

For all his intellectual and academic stature, Jim was above all a trusted and treasured brother in Christ. Countless people spoke with him just once, but found their lives changed by that never-to-be-forgotten conversation. He acted as a spiritual director long before Protestants recognized and adopted the role. As founding Principal and later as Professor, mentor, friend and just a fellow pilgrim in the way of Jesus, Jim Houston has played a formative role in the Regent community for well over fifty years. Often, his impact was around a meal table, with wife Rita – his most able foil! – that simply stretched to welcome the guests who appeared. When he travelled, he often gave small gifts – he called them “courage money” – intended to embolden, encourage, to cheer on their recipient to the embrace of risk in faith in whatever domain their call was heard. While the Regent community and his family grieve our loss, we are deeply grateful for the life Jim lived, and we rejoice at the new life that is his in Christ. The Jim and Rita courage fund has been established in his memory at the request of the family (<https://www.regent-college.edu/give/houston-fund>).

Jim was predeceased by his wife of 61 years, Rita (Davidson) (2014) and his two younger sisters Louie (2003) and Ethel (2018). He is survived by his four children Chris (Jean), Lydèle (Gordon), Claire (David) and Penny (Wayman), by his 12 grandchildren Jen (Tim), Nick (Yolandi), Allison (Jordan), Amanda (Scott), Justin (Britt), Stephen (Christy), Jonathan (Sophie), Julian (Angela) and Natalie, and by his 17 great grandchildren Luke, Chelsea, Charlotte, Ian, Zoe, Bennett, Danica, Brinley, Emmy, Arden, Jacob, Adelyn, Brooklyn, Winston, Heidi, Samuel and Elisabeth.



Jim and Rita Houston · Washington State, c. 2010