



Reverend Duane William Thompson

March 13, 1933 - July 5, 2015

Reverend Duane William Thompson died on July 5th at the age of 82. He was born in North Dakota in 1933 to William and Florence Thompson and moved to Washington State as a young child. He spent his childhood in Sunnyside, WA, as the older brother to two sisters. He was an outstanding student and was recruited by Pacific Lutheran College. His plan was to become a history professor, but along the way two things happened. He felt the call to become a Lutheran minister, and he met Patricia Marlene Soderman. They married young and, 10 months later, Patricia graduated, their first child was born, and they moved their small family to Minnesota where Duane entered Luther Seminary.

During his four years at the seminary, another daughter and a son were born. Upon graduation, Duane was ordained into the ministry on June 14, 1959, in his home congregation of Bethlehem Lutheran in Marysville, WA. Rev. Thompson took his first parish in the small town of Gatzke in northern Minnesota. Two more daughters joined the family before the Thompsons moved to Gary, Minnesota.

After a decade serving rural churches in northern Minnesota, Rev. Thompson received a call to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Bellingham, Washington, Patricia's old home town. While his growing children were completing their education, Duane continued his studies as well, earning a Master of Divinity

degree.

A return to rural life took Duane and Patricia and their two youngest daughters over the mountains to Fairfield, Montana. There were a few more parishes to serve, this time without any children in tow, for Duane and Patricia. They moved to Smith Center, Kansas, and then to Brewster, Kansas, before they retired to their small retreat in Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. Even there Rev. Thompson served local parishes as interim pastor, and performed marriage ceremonies at a local resort. Their time of lakeside bliss was cut short when Patricia died in 2000 after a short illness. They had been married just two days shy of 46 years.

Duane found second love and dear companionship in the person of Judith Taylor, who had also recently lost her spouse. They were married in a joyful celebration at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Camdenton, Missouri, their shared home congregation. Judy's daughter, Nancy Nixa, was her matron of honor, and Duane's son-in-law, Allen Hibbard, was his best man. Judy's sister Geri sang "Oh Perfect Love" to the happy couple, and Duane's granddaughter, Alexandra, was acolyte. Duane promised his bride that day, "10 good years, I hope." They had 15 years of family times, travel, love, and devotion. Together, Duane and Judy moved back west to Bellingham, to be close to family. Then a trip to sunny Phoenix had them putting down new roots, at least for a time.

After more than a decade of dealing with symptoms of Parkinson's disease, Duane found that the decline was becoming steeper and Bellingham called Duane and Judy home for the last chapter. Rev. Thompson was surrounded by the love and comfort of his family and the kind memory-care unit staff at Spring Creek Assisted Living. He leaves behind his wife, Judith Thompson; his children, Nora Hibbard (Allen), Darin Tennesen (Adam Kufeld), Michael Thompson, Naomi Stimson (Stephen), and Rachel Smersh (Bob); four

grandchildren, Melanie Cashin, Adam McGary, Dashiell Hibbard, and Alexandra Hibbard; as well as three great grandsons, Chase, Will, and Eli, and a great granddaughter on the way. Duane Thompson was brother to Dorothy Hansen, who predeceased him, and Phyllis Peterson (Truman "Pete"), and uncle to eight adored nieces and nephews and to their families.

Duane Thompson's life touched his family and countless parishioners and friends with his warmth, love, and wisdom. A memorial service to be held at Christ the Servant Lutheran, Duane and Judy's home church, will be scheduled at a later date.

Tribute Wall

SA

“ Thank you for a beautifully written summary of Pastor Thompson’s life. He was a blessing to all he served, of which were my parents Emil and Selma Olsen and daughter Maxine of Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Bellingham. It was indeed an honor to have met him.

Solveig Apt (Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church)

Solveig (Olsen) Apt - July 05, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ We are so sorry to hear of Pastor Thompson’s passing. I was the choir director at Our Saviour’s in Bellingham from 1968-1978 while Pastor Thompson was serving there. He was such a nice and devoted person. If I remember correctly Nora, Darin, Mike, and Naomi also sang in the choir while I was there. In the early 2000’s while I was organist at Our Saviour’s Pastor Thompson would fill in on Sundays when we needed a pastor. It was always so nice to see him again. He was a very caring person. Jeff Fox, Rapid City, South Dakota.

Jeff Fox - July 05, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ My wife and I were blessed having Duane & Judy as neighbors in Arizona. Duane had a unique style of humor and quick comebacks that made life enjoyable. We were truly honored having his presence.

Ron & Vonnie Sleight - July 05, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ We are so sorry to hear about the passing of Pastor Thompson. He married Jim and I in Fairfield, Montana. We were able to see him and his new bride Judy in Bellingham about 9 years ago. He was a wonderful man, father figure and Pastor. RIP

Jim and Sarah Guyton - July 05, 2015 at 12:00 AM