

Necrology

The Rev. Sharon R. Brostrom

July 29, 1940 – July 8, 2017

Pastor Sharon R. Brostrom died at age 77.

She attended Augustana College in Rock Island, IL, and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. She was ordained in 1992.

She served Resurrection Lutheran Church, Roxbury, MA; as an interim pastor at several churches in Northern California; Salem Lutheran Home, Oakland, CA; and Grace Lutheran Church, Richmond, CA.

She was preceded in death by her husband, David. Pastor Sharon is survived by her mother, Caroline, her brother David, her four children, Peter (MaryClaire Robinson), Nathan (Caitlin), Molly Schaefer (Todd), Natalie Burney (Larz); and eleven beloved grandchildren.

The Rev. Warren A. Nelson

July 29, 1940 – July 8, 2017

Pastor Warren A. Nelson died at the age of 90.

He attended Augustana College, Rock Island, IL, and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He was ordained August 25, 1963.

He served Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Santa Maria, CA; Shepherd of Grace Lutheran Church, Sylmar, CA; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in San Pedro, CA; and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno. He attended the Air Force Chaplain School and served as a Navy Chaplain and Veteran's Hospital in Sylmar. He retired in 1989. He retired as Lt. Colonel from the Air Force Reserve. During retirement, he served as Interim Pastor to congregations in Merced and Chowchilla and as homebound and shut-in pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, for five years.

Pr. Nelson is survived by his wife Sharon, and their two sons Lonnie and Joseph, a granddaughter, Ariana Graves, a number of nieces and a nephew.

The Rev. Gordon E. Christiansen

September 16, 1963 – August 2, 2017

Pastor Gordon Christiansen died at the age of 83.

He graduated from Dana College, Blair, NE, and Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. He was ordained June 11, 1961.

He served Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA; Bethany Lutheran Church, Pasadena, CA; Bethany Lutheran Church, Kerman, CA; and Trinity Lutheran Church, Clovis, NM. He retired in 1998.

Pr. Christiansen is survived by his wife Kathy, and two daughters, Karie Harjo (Lee) and Wendy Zaborowski (Jeff); four grandsons, Ryan (Ashley) Block, Tevin Block, Ryland and Landon Zaborowski; one brother and sister-in-law, Ken and Grace Christiansen.

The Rev. Russell A. Bolm

December 20, 1931 – September 17, 2017

Pastor Russell Bolm died at the age of 85.

He attended Augustana College and Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, IL. He was ordained June 22, 1958.

He was a Mission Builder and developed two mission congregations concurrently in Livermore (Holy Cross Lutheran Church) and Tracy, CA. He also served St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Mount Jewett, PA; St. James Lutheran Church, Hanford, CA; St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ; St. John Lutheran Church, Kailua, HI; and Concordia Lutheran Church, Kingsburg, CA. He retired in 1996.

Pastor Bolm is survived by his wife Alyce, and their four children Daniel (Peggy), Steven (Deirdre), Paul (Sheri), and Ingrid (Dr. Greg Lott); ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The Rev. Dr. John H. Frykman

April 19, 1932 – October 21, 2017

Pastor John Frykman died in Los Angeles at the age of 85.

He attended Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, and Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary. He was ordained in 1960.

He served First English Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA; St. John's Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA; First United Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA; and Bukit Doa International Church, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia. He taught pastoral care and family therapy at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Madras, India.

Pastor Frykman was preceded in death by his wife Cheryl. He is survived by his daughter Kristin, and sons Lars and Erik; granddaughter Charlotte, and grandson Kyle; partner Barbara Larsen Clevenger; nieces, nephews, and cousins.

The Rev. Royce J. Scherf

October 19, 1929 – October 27, 2017

Pastor Royce Scherf died at home in Aptos, CA, at the age of 88.

He graduated from University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, and Chicago Theological Seminary, Maywood, IA. He was ordained June 6, 1954.

He served St. Peter Lutheran Church, Pilger, NE; St. Johns United Lutheran Church, Alliance, NE; St. John's Lutheran Church, Maywood, IL; and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Evanston, IL.

Pr. Scherf was preceded in death by his wife, Frieda, and his sons, Brian and Jordan. He is survived by his brother, James Scherf, four nephews, his sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

The Rev. Paul T. Valentiner

October 16, 1933 – November 11, 2017

Pastor Valentiner died at the age of 84.

He attended Wagner College, Staten Island, NY; Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary; and New York Theological Seminary, New York, NY. He was ordained May 24, 1959.

He served as a mission developer in Port Hueneme, CA; Advent Lutheran Church, Elmont, NY; Zion Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, NY; and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY; St. Peter Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY. He worked as an Urban Planner and Director of Planning. In 1989 he accepted a call to serve Grace Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA, where he served until he retired in 1998.

Pastor Valentiner was preceded in death by his wife Virgal in 2008. He is survived by three children, Michael, David, and Michele.

The Rev. Roy C. Hoch

August 2, 1927 – January 18, 2018

Pastor Roy Hoch died at home at the age of 90.

He attended Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, and Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary. He was ordained June 28, 1953. In 1979 he received a Master's Degree in pastoral counseling from Santa Clara University.

He served at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Ada, Ohio and as Lutheran contact pastor for Ohio Northern University, Ada, OH; Glenwood Lutheran Church, Toledo, OH; Zion Lutheran Church, Indiana, PA; Campus Ministry at San Jose State University, San Jose, CA; and Reformation Lutheran Church, Milpitas, CA. He retired in 1988.

Pr. Hoch was preceded in death by his wife Mary Jane and is survived by their three children: Dana, Beth, and Hans.

The Rev. William E. Leshner

May 24, 1932 – January 23, 2018

Pastor Bill Leshner died at the age of 85.

He was born in Pittsburgh, PA. He attended Wittenberg University and Chicago Lutheran Seminary. He received Honorary Doctorate degrees from California Lutheran University, Pacific Lutheran University, and Wittenberg University.

He was ordained May 1, 1958 and served Reen Memorial Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO; and St. Luke Lutheran Church, Chicago, IL. In 1970 he joined the faculty at Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago. In 1973 he was appointed President of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. In 1978 he was appointed President of Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago where he served until he retired in 1997.

Pr. Leshner is survived by his wife Jean, sons David and Gregory, and three grandchildren, Christopher, Timothy, and Samera.

The Rev. Eugene W. Jewell

December 12, 1934 – March 12, 2018

Pastor Gene Jewell died at the age of 83 in El Dorado Hills, CA.

He was born in Littleport, Iowa; attended Midland College, Fremont NE; and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA.

He was ordained in 1962. He served in Clovis, CA; St. Luke's Lutheran, Woodland Hills, CA; and Prince of Peace Lutheran, Saratoga, CA. During his career, Gene mentored 16 interns during their final year of seminary. He retired in 1995.

Pr. Jewell is survived by his wife, Judy; children Beckie (Mitch) Steller, Cindy (John) Valentin, Eugene W. Jewell, Jr., Stephanie (Pat) Jewell; stepchildren Debbie Allwine, Jeffrey (Debbie) Allwine, and James (Sherri) Allwine; 13 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; sister and an aunt; two sisters-in-law; many cousins, and various nieces and nephews.

The Rev. Merton R. Johnson

February 14, 1938 – March 19, 2018

Pastor Johnson died at age 80.

He was born in Havre, MT; attended the University of Montana, Missoula, MT and Luther Seminary. He was ordained in 1964. He was married for a short time to Donna Maria Stenseth and they had two children.

He served in Harmony, MN; Gig Harbor, WA; and Zion Lutheran Church in Kent, WA.

He married Mary Rowe in 1978. They served together at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Whittier, CA. When Mary was called to serve as the campus pastor at Purdue University, Mert took a job as a therapist working with children and adult victims of sexual abuse. He served as the interim at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore, CA; and as the called pastor to Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, South San Francisco. He retired in 2001.

Pastor Johnson is survived by his spouse, Mary; his four siblings, Chester, Lois, Owen, and Neal; children, Bradley and Kari; and grandchildren, Charlie and Isabella.

The Rev. Richard D. Bergman

May 14, 1926 – April 11, 2018

Pastor Richard Bergman died at age 91.

He was born in Hershey, PA; attended Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. He was ordained June 11, 1949.

He served three congregations in the Poconos of Pennsylvania; Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA; Trinity Lutheran Church, South Philadelphia; and Ascension Lutheran Church, Haddon Heights, NJ. He retired in 1988 and he and his wife moved to Chico, CA

Pastor Bergman is survived by his wife, Margaret; two daughters, Debbie Brooker (Alan) and Dodie Laconelli (Mike); four grandchildren, Julie (Jeff), Amy, Daniel (Debra), and Kristen; and one great granddaughter, Luisa Amy.