



THE REVEREND ROY ALMQUIST

IT STARTED IN A FIRE HOUSE

Several months after his confirmation in 1954, a blonde teenager (he had hair then) set up chairs for a Lutheran mission congregation in a fire house in Wyckoff, New Jersey. This primal missionary endeavor encouraged this second-generation Swedish-American toward a life of fascination with Jesus Christ and his Church. The history department at **Muhlenberg College** did their best to direct him toward an academic career and a possible doctorate at **Indiana University** (not in PA). But the siren song of the theological muses enticed him back East to the **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia** and a life-long love affair with the Delaware Valley.

Roy's time in Indiana did not put "Dr." in front of his name but it did bring Nancy Shannon Smith into his life. They married in 1964 and Shannon shared two years of the Mt. Airy experience, teaching at Cheltenham High School. After seminary graduation in 1966, a **Lutheran World Federation** fellowship gave the Almquists an opportunity to spend a year at **Oxford University** in England back when they had pounds, shillings, and pence.

The call of **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church** in New Milford, NJ, was the prelude to Roy's ordination in 1967. The people of Gloria Dei helped him become a pastor and celebrated the birth of the two Almquist daughters, Ingrid (1968) and Karin (1970)... and the death of their son Erik (1969). In 1973 the Almquists moved fifteen miles to the north to serve **Zion Lutheran Church** in Saddle River, NJ.

In 1984 an exciting opportunity to develop a staff ministry persuaded Roy to change synods and accept a call to **Calvary Lutheran Church** in West Chester. Thus began ten very satisfying years of service with wonderful colleagues in grand congregations. During this time Roy was an active Rotarian, a member of the SEPA Candidacy Committee, and Chairman of the Board of the **Lutheran Home at Germantown**. In 1992 **Muhlenberg College** conferred on him the honorary degree of *Doctor of Divinity*

Life took a very different direction for the Almquists in 1994 when the Synod Assembly elected Roy to a six-year term as **Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod**. In May of 2000 Roy's call was renewed, providing him the honor of serving this Synod for a total of twelve years. This was an exciting opportunity for him to experience the national and international dimensions of the Church, working to deepen relationships in Tanzania and Czech Republic and to gain acceptance for *Called To Common Mission*, an ecumenical agreement that brought Lutherans and Episcopalians into a spirit of cooperation.

Retirement from the Office of Bishop launched Roy into a final career as an Interim Minister, serving **St. Peter's Episcopal, Malvern**, a short, second tour at **Calvary Lutheran in West Chester**, and since 2009 as Interim Rector and now Priest-in-Charge at **Washington Memorial**

Chapel, Valley Forge. Last year Roy was honored by the **Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia** with the *Distinguished Service Award*.

Thus the experience of setting up the folding chairs for a mission congregation in 1954 set a pattern and direction for Roy's life and ministry that continues to this day, a journey that has been blessed and shared by his wife and partner in ministry, Shannon.

The Rev. Roy Almquist

THE REVEREND FREDERICK HENRY HOPKE, JR.

1964

Graduate of Upsala College

1967

Graduate of The Lutheran School of Theology at Philadelphia

June 9, 1967

Ordained at Oneonta, NY –UNYS



1967

Called to serve as Co-Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Hatboro, PA

1972

Called to serve as Pastor, Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Endwell, NY

1979

Called to serve as Senior Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Hatboro, PA

August 1997

Retired

Currently

Doing Financial Planning

Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Liberty Lutheran Services.

Married to Joan A. Hopke and living in Glenside, PA



THE REVEREND DR. ROBERT H. LINDERS

50th Anniversary of his Ordination

I was in the sixth grade and for reasons I shall never fully understand decided to stay for church after Sunday school. My parents were not churchgoers. Something happened during that Sunday service which changed my life. A few years later, three members of our 1956 confirmation class decided to study for the ministry. Our pastor, Glenn H. Rudisill, surely played a major role.

After sixth grade, my life moved on at a much faster pace. My dad had been a national sprint champion at Cornell in the 1930s and in the 10th grade, without pressure, I took the risk of going out for track. This venture opened doors for me that I had not anticipated. My senior year I was recruited by Brown, Duke, Michigan and Georgetown. I accepted the full ride to Georgetown. I made lasting friends as a Hoya, but soon realized in 1960 that the nation's oldest Jesuit College was not a good fit for me. Leaving Georgetown meant I would be ineligible to compete for one year; thus the other track scholarships offered me were no longer available. Yet I had the fever to run. It was in blood.

Moving apprehensively forward, I transferred to Gettysburg College, after much soul searching and the council of my home pastor, Glenn Rudisill. Since track is an individual sport, I was fortunate to compete against all levels of competition. To my surprise, after 53 years I still hold the 800 meter record at Gettysburg College. In 1964 I was able to represent the United States in a dual meet against Great Britain in London. Since hanging up my running shoes, I've been inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at both my high school and college.

After my ordination, I served Holy Trinity Church in Leonia, New Jersey from 1967—1970 and Reformation Church in West Long Branch, New Jersey from 1970—1977. During this decade, I earned an M.A. in English from Monmouth University and master's and doctoral degrees from Princeton Seminary. My dissertation, "The Theological, Psychological and Homiletical Dimensions of the Theodicy Question," was favorably reviewed by Martin Marty and my findings published in several journals, including Theology Today.

In 1985, I was invited to teach Homiletics at Catholic University and have also preached or lectured at Princeton, Cornell, Penn State, and our Philadelphia seminary, as well as conducting numerous seminars on preaching. This past year I've enjoyed being a guest lecturer in the English department at North Penn High School in Lansdale.

Today, I feel as lucky as the fellow who played the bass tuba the day it rained gold! This August, I mark my 40th year as pastor of St. Paul's Church in Doylestown. I still eagerly anticipate each Sunday when it is my privilege to preach to this wonderful, astute congregation. My wife reminds me of the wisdom of "leaving when they want you to stay and not staying when they want you to leave." I'm a sucker for clever aphorisms (especially when I've used them myself on other people!) but I'm quick to remind her that Grandma Moses did her best work at 80 and "old" Tom Brady is still at the top of his game!

Robert H. Linders



THE REVEREND RALPH E. PETERSEN

Ordained June 18, 1967
Niobrara, Nebraska

In the hours, when most of the city slept, a bus driver completed her rounds. She turned off her sign and headed back to the terminal. The temperature was well below freezing. Snow was piled along the street. Though tired at the end of her shift, she was quiet comfortable in her heated bus, wearing her heavy jacket. She stopped at an intersection and from the corner of her eye she saw a five year old boy, barefoot, wearing only his underwear. She stopped opened the door and picked up the shivering little boy, wrapped him in her jacket and brought him aboard. She fed him and learned later that he had simply gotten up from his bed and decided to go for a walk.

If you caught the event on network news, perhaps you remember her comment to a reporter. "God puts us in a place to do his work."

The story is a reminder to us all, pastor and congregant, God puts us in a place to do his work, even retired pastors whose shift is ended.

Upon retirement my wife and I became more heavily involved in the community. Her shift in the corporate world ended and I hung up my alb and stole. Judy combined her skills as a corporate leader with her art and organized the local artists in the Oxford areas for mutual support. She now is the managing director of the Oxford Arts Alliance that inclusively reaches out to the community with its various groups to teach and exhibit the arts from the fine arts to the performing arts. It is a mission that becomes increasingly more important, enhancing self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment in children, as public schools cut back on the arts.

I took up real estate because there are too many families and individuals who know what it means to be in the dark and all alone. They struggle to find adequate shelter; some living in their cars. And on my side of the equation it gives me a meaningful opportunity to serve others.

We live in an area with various immigrant groups, high opiate addiction and human trafficking. Sometimes, I admit, we are tired and just want to get some rest and we need to remind ourselves that we need balance. Then it happens again. We catch someone in our peripheral vision or smack in front of us and we stop because God has put us in this place to do his work.

Someday we'll retire.