

National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

NECROLOGY 2020-2021

The Rev. Mary Frances Miller - died 5/12/20

Rev. Miller was a longtime associate pastor at Church of the Oaks in Del Ray, CA. She was ordained Nov. 12, 1992 at Plymouth Congregational Church in Fresno, CA, later appointed to the Church of the Oaks. She was a recording artist and notable singer of Christian hymns and songs.

The Rev. Ed White - died 7/6/20

A member of the Sun City, AZ church, he served the NACCC on the Program Committee, 2005-06, the Executive Committee, 2002-06, and the Congregational Church Development Board, 1995-99

The Rev. Richard Liles - died 8/11/20

A youth minister for much of his career, Rev. Liles inspired many young people to become ministers. He served congregations in Plainfield, IL; Wauwatosa, WI; and Hutchinson, KS. He was active in the NACCC for decades, including service on the NACCC Executive Committee, 1996-2000. He was a recipient of the Harry Butman Award.

The Rev. George W. Linzey - died 8/21/20

Rev. Linzey was the Pastor Emeritus of Lemon Grove Community Church, where he served for 20 years. He completed a B.A. in Sociology (Vanguard University), Master of Divinity (American Baptist Seminary of the West), Master of Science in School Psychology (National University) and Doctor of Ministry (Fuller Theological Seminary) He served as a Navy Chaplain for 21 years prior to his pastorate at Lemon Grove Community Church. He is survived by his daughter, Aria Drexler.

The Rev. Dr. Steven Peay - died 8/31/20

Rev. Peay was ordained to the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church in 1982. He served on the faculty of St. Vincent Seminary and as Academic Dean. He left the monastic life and the Roman church to serve First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa as Assistant (1995-99) and then Senior Minister (2002-10) During that time, Dr. Peay was an active member of the NACCC, serving on the Library Board (1995-99), CFTS (1998-2002), the 2001 Annual Meeting Program Committee, and the Nominating Committee (2002-04). He authored the publication "What do Congregational Christians Believe?" and co-produced a DVD of worship resources. He was instrumental in the inauguration of the Congregational Symposia and hosted the Symposia in 1998 and 2006 at first Church of Wauwatosa. He wrote many papers on Congregationalism and was an organizer of the Wisconsin Association Theological Society Dr. Peay joined the faculty of Nashota House Theological Seminary in 2010, serving as Academic Dean from 2014-17. He is survived by his wife, Julie, and two stepsons.

The Rev. Mark Rustin - died 9/3/20

A native of Maine, Rev. Rustin was educated at Bangor Theological Seminary and ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1985. After an early career in law enforcement and business, he was called as lay pastor of the Veazie, Maine, Congregational Church. Following his ordination, he served NACCC churches in several communities in Maine, including Warren, Hiram and the North Deering Congregational Church in Portland, where he was pastor for 26 years. Following his retirement, he was made Pastor Emeritus of the Portland church. Rev. Rustin served in many capacities in the Congregational Christian Council of Maine, including Executive Secretary, South Region Ambassador, Moderator and Treasurer. He was a member of the Host Committee for the NACCC annual Meeting in Gorham, 2981, and in Portland, 1993. He is survived by his wife LaVerne, and their son, stepchildren, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The Rev. Harald A. Smedal - died 11/5/20

Rev. Smedal had a long career as a Navy aviator, flight instructor and safety officer, and as a navigator for Pan American Airlines. His minister urged him to consider a career in ministry, and he received his M.Div. from Bangor Theological Seminary. He began serving Saunders Memorial Church (NACCC) and the West Brooksville Congregational Church (UCC) as a seminarian, and continued with these churches for thirty years following ordination. He was named Pastor Emeritus of Saunders Memorial Church in 2014. Rev. Smedal is survived by his wife Susan, their children, and grandchildren.

The Rev. Roger Olsen - died 12/28/20

Rev. Olsen was the Pastor of the Cedarwood Community Church in Wetumpka, AL and also served as Director/Counselor at the Alabama Council on Compulsive Gambling. He studied counseling at Auburn University and earned a degree in Church Relations from Liberty Bible Institute. He is survived by his wife Kimberly, and their children and grandchildren.

The Rev. Dr. Vivian Jones - died January, 2021

Recruited from Wales to serve the Plymouth Congregational Church of Minneapolis, Dr. Jones was the Senior Minister for 1980 to 1995, and subsequently Minister Emeritus. He was known for his friendly manner, charm, and quick wit, as well as his pastoral skills and the ability to build consensus. After his retirement, he would come back each summer as a guest preacher. He spent his last years in Wales, and was 91 at his death. He is survived by his wife Mary and their daughters.

Warren Danielson - died 1/19/21

Warren is known to Congregationalists in the National Association and Michigan Conference as the "first spouse" of First Congregational Church in Portland, MI, and then at First Congregational of Lake Odessa, MI where his wife, the Rev. Dr. Marilyn Danielson served. Starting with the British Seminar of CFTS, he accompanied Marilyn to annual meetings of the NACCC, the Michigan Conference of Congregational Christian Churches, and the Central Michigan Association of Congregational Christian Churches. He was 96 years old at his death, and is survived by Rev. Danielson as well as his daughters and step-children.