

Rev. John Stanley Benson

January 11, 1928 – August 15, 2013



Pastor John Stanley Benson passed away at the Benedictine Living Community in St. Peter, MN on August 15, 2013 of complications of leukemia. He had been dealing with leukemia for five years as well as other health problems.

He was born January 11, 1928 in Omaha, NE to Pastor John S, and Doris Benson. Being a pastor's son Stanley and his younger brother Bud grew up in parsonages in Ault, CO, Aitkin, MN and Rosholt, SD. His mother died in 1943 when he was 15 years old. Ruth Bonander Benson became his stepmother in 1946. His father passed away in 1982 and his stepmother Ruth in 1983. He attended West Central School of Agriculture in Morris, MN graduating in 1946 and went directly into the military service. Part of that service was spent in the Philippines where he felt a call to work in overseas church service. Stan attended Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN graduating in 1951. He was encouraged by professors George Hall and Richard Reusch to teach overseas which was sponsored by the Augustana Lutheran Church. He and his classmate, Clarence Budke went to British North Borneo, now Sabah where Stan taught at Lokyuk School in Jesselton, now Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, for 2 years. After that they were transferred to their field of choice in Tanganyika, East Africa.

His first work in Tanganyika was accompanying his uncle Dr. Richard Reusch in work among the Maasai people, placing missionary families in stations at Loliondo, Naberera, and Karatu. In 1956, Stan finished his first term of missionary service and returned to the United States where he was married on August 4, 1956 to Marie Schafer. Their first home was in Rock Island, IL as he studied at Augustana Theological Seminary graduating in 1959. He was ordained on June 21, 1959 in the Augustana Synod Convention in Hartford, CT. His first call was back to Tanganyika to serve at Loliondo. In August, 1958 son, John was born and they celebrated his first birthday in Cape Town, South Africa as they sailed on a freighter ship to return to Tanganyika. In October of 1960, son Todd was born and in July of 1965 their 3rd son Jeffrey was born, both in Arusha, Tanzania.

Stan and Marie jointly served from 1959 to 1992 as missionaries in Tanzania. Their sending agencies were the Lutheran Church in America and, finally the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Stan served all peoples of Tanzania as both pastor and administrator, as an assistant to the bishop, leading the development and building department of the Diocese in the Arusha Region, friend of all.

After retiring on January 11, 1993 Stan and Marie moved to St. Peter. They became involved in the community and their church, First Lutheran, where Stan was involved in pastoral text study and Bible studies, congregational support ministry, social ministry, active in World Mission interest to congregations and visitation. Stan was involved with Kiwanis Club and the St. Peter Habitat for Humanity, directly involved with building Habitat homes with fellow volunteers. In 1999 he served as interim pastor at Trinity Lutheran in Gaylord, MN. He was also involved in the rehabilitation of the cemetery in St. Peter in the aftermath of the tornado. He also served on the Synod's Companion Synod Committee and the Board for Global Missions bringing his insights from his time as a missionary.

Surviving Pastor Benson is his wife, Marie, son John and wife Cindy and children Claire and Sam of Moorhead, MN; son Todd and wife Betsy and children Luke and Ellie of Washington, DC; son Jeff and wife Barb and children Carlee, Joel and Natalie of Bozeman, MT and one brother Sterling "Bud" Benson of Lindsborg, KS.

Funeral services were held on August 18, 2013 at 11 a.m. at First Lutheran Church in St. Peter, MN with Words of Welcome brought by Pastor Alan Bray. Pastor Don Holmstrom gave the meditation and Ray Hagberg a friend and colleague and John Benson, Stanley's son, both brought Words of Remembrance. Bishop Jon Anderson shared words from the Southwestern MN Synod. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in St. Peter, MN

Biography courtesy of Donna Ihrke, Redwood Falls

Rev. John W. Matson

April 27, 1927 – November 20, 2013



Rev. John Winton Matson passed away November 20, 2013 in Minneapolis. Pastor Matson was born on April 17, 1927 to James and Ettie Matson at Svea, MN He was the sixth and last of the Matson children. He was baptized on September 1, 1927 at Svea Lutheran Church in Svea, MN by Pastor F. J. Ellman and confirmed in June of 1942 at Bethel Lutheran Church in Willmar, MN by Pastor Clarence Johnson.

Pastor Matson attended the University of MN and graduated in 1950 with a degree in Business. He worked in the Accounting Departments of several companies in Minneapolis from 1951 to 1962. John married Marion Olson on June 25, 1960. To this union a son Philip was born.

He then entered Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1962 graduating in 1965 with a M. Div. and was ordained June 2, 1965 at Christ Chapel on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, MN by the President of the Minnesota Synod LCA, Rev. Dr. Leonard Kendall. He served congregations of First Lutheran in Trimont, MN; Kansas Lake Lutheran, Butterfield, MN from 1965-1975 and Faith Lutheran in Comfrey from 1975 to 1992. Pastor Matson also served as part-time chaplain at St. John's Lutheran Home in Springfield, MN. In 1981 John was elected as Dean of the Tyler District of the MN Synod.

Pastor Matson retired July 1, 1992 and he and Marion made their home in Bloomington, MN where they were members of St. Luke's Lutheran.

In his retirement he did volunteer work visiting at Martin Luther Manor in Bloomington. He was a member of PEP (People Enjoying People) Club an over 55 year old group. He also was involved in Bible Studies at his church as well as various other activities.

He and Marion enjoyed travels to the East Coast and Washington D.C., to Israel in 1974 as well as to areas on the West Coast. In 1997 they traveled to Alaska which was very special. Other hobbies included gardening, swimming, and stamp collecting.

Funeral services for Pastor Matson were held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bloomington, MN on Saturday, November 23, 2013 at 11 a.m. with Rev. Molly Brown officiating. Burial was at the Bloomington Cemetery following the service.

Biography courtesy of Donna Ihrke, Redwood Falls



Rev. Tenner Clarence Thompson, Jr. II

February 11, 1924 – December 23, 2013

Rev. Tenner Thompson passed away on December 23, 2013 at Grand Arbor memory unit in Alexandria, MN. Tenner was the second son of six children born on February 11, 1924 to Rev. Tenner, Sr. and Grace Thompson at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis. He was baptized April 13, 1924 and confirmed in the Lutheran faith on June 5, 1938 at Minnehaha Lutheran, Minneapolis, MN by his father. He attended Hiawatha Jr. High and graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1942. In April of that year he had surgery for a benign brain tumor at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. After graduation he worked for Grapette Bottling Co. and the Engineering Department of the Milwaukee Railroad doing survey work for 2 ½ years before attending Augsburg College in Minneapolis for one year.

He transferred to Concordia College in Moorhead, MN and graduated in 1949. He was a tenor in the Concordia Choir under Paul J Christiansen and lettered on the tennis team. In 1949 he enrolled at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN and served his internship at Bethel Lutheran in Chicago IL. He graduated from the seminary in 1953. He was ordained at Minnehaha Lutheran on May 24, 1953 by Rev. Herman A, Prues, PhD.

Pastor Thompson served the following parishes: English & Bethany Lutheran, Grantsburg, WI; Prince of Peace Lutheran, Milwaukee, WI; English Lutheran, Ellsworth, WI; Our Redeemer's Lutheran, Williston, ND; Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran, Sydney, MT; Our Saviors Lutheran Halliday and Marshall Lutheran, Marshall, ND; St. John's Lutheran, rural Starbuck, MN; and chaplain for the Minnewaska Lutheran Home, Starbuck MN. He received the Certificate for Clinical Pastoral Education in January of 1992 from Fergus Falls Regional Treatment Center in Fergus Falls, MN.

Pastor Thompson officially retired on January 1, 1991, however, he continued serving at Minnewaska Lutheran Home until 2003 and St. John's Lutheran Church until 2006. During his years of ministry he gave emphasis to Evangelical P.T.R. Missions, yearly Evangelical guest speakers, and World Missions. He took a 2 month tour of ALC's mission fields and gave many slide show presentations in support of World Missions. His congregations supported missionaries. His youth work included interim seminary students, bible camp boards and youth conference trips. He also enjoyed hospital and nursing home visits as well as chaplaincies and the prison ministries. He was an honored member of Hallinglag of America.

Pastor Thompson was married on September 8, 1956 to Roma Seaver at Capron Lutheran, Capron, IL. They met during Tenner's internship in Chicago. Roma's Pastor E. G. Burtness and Tenner's father officiated at the wedding. Four sons were born to this union. Tenner was known for 50 years of tennis playing, He also enjoyed speed skate racing, ski jumping and the month long family camping trips.

Tenner is survived by his wife, Roma and his children - Tenner III (Sheila) and their children Emma, Luke, Gabriel, and Kate of Inver Grove, MN; Mark and his children Taylor, Andrea (Andrew) and great-grandchild Everly of Williston, ND; Erik (Anita) and their children Ryan and Sean of Spokane, WA; Kirk (Mary) and their children Emily, Anna, and Ruthie of Stuttgart, Germany. Also surviving are his sister Grace (Lew) Hines of Billings, MT; sisters-in-law Amaryllys; Betty; Dorothy (Richard) Gildseth, brother-in-law Robert Seaver and many nieces and nephews.

A Service of Celebration was held at Shalom Lutheran Church in Alexandria, MN on Friday, December 27, 2013 at 11 a.m. with Rev. John Martinson officiating. Words of Remembrance were brought by his son, Tenner III.

A Family and Friends service was held Saturday, December 28 at 10:30 a.m. at the Thompson home church, Minnehaha Communion Lutheran, Minneapolis, MN with Rev. Dan Ankerfelt officiating with special music by his nephew Todd Thompson. Burial was at Acacia Park Cemetery in Mendota Heights, MN on the Thompson family lots.

Biography courtesy of Donna Ihrke, Redwood Falls

Rev. Paul L. Bortnem

April 29, 1942 – January 13, 2014



Rev. Paul L. Bortnem passed away on January 13, 2014 at the Sibley Medical Center in Arlington, MN.

Pastor Bortnem was born on April 29, 1942 to Harold and Victoria Bortnem in Volga, SD. He was baptized by Rev. Karl Kildahl on May 24, 1942 and confirmed on September 22, 1957 by Rev. David Halbakken at Lake Campbell Lutheran both in Volga, SD.

He attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD graduating in 1964 with a degree in Math and History. In 1964 he entered Luther Seminary in St. Paul and received his Bachelor of Divinity in 1968. He was ordained ALC on June 13, 1968 by Pastor L.J. Wylie at Lake Campbell Lutheran in Volga, SD.

On July 10th, 1966, Paul was united in marriage to Rosine Englund at her home church, First Lutheran in Karlstad, MN. To this union two children were born.

Pastor Bortnem's call to serve began in parish ministry as an intern at Bethel Lutheran in Wahpeton, ND. Pastor Marvin Hartman was his intern supervisor at Bethel where Paul enjoyed the freedom given him and the respect Pastor Hartman had for his work. As a result, Paul sought to develop the same in his relationships with parishioners. He followed that by serving in parishes in Foremost from 1968-1972, and Provost and Edmonton from 1972-1976 in AB Canada. Pastor Bortnem served at Grace and Immanuel Lutheran in Slaton TX from 1989-2000. His other ministries include Specialized Pastoral Care (Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling) in Edmonton, AB, Lubbock, TX, Thief River Falls, MN and Robbinsdale, MN. Beginning in 1989 he began several interim pastorates in Tyler, Olivia, Bemidji, Glyndon, Lester Prairie, Bernadotte, Lafayette and Swan Lake all in MN and Jamestown, Hillsboro, Wahpeton and Williston all in ND.

On June 1, 2005 Paul began his official retirement, however, continued serving as interim pastor in several locations. He and Rosine made their home in Fargo, ND for a time but most recently in Arlington, MN. Even though Rosine had been uprooted several times, she traveled with Paul through his years of ministry.

Paul was a faithful servant pastor, mentor, and counselor. He loved people and treasured the many friendships made during his years of ministry. His faith and belief in the Good News centered his life and touched everyone he met. He loved spending time with family and friends, listening to his grandchildren play violin and attending their various sporting events, woodworking in his shop, reading a good book and sharing quiet moments with Rosine.

He is survived by his wife, Rosine, children Peter (Kristin) Bortnem and their children Soren and Charlie of Cokato, MN and Rebekah (Mark) Lundstrom and their children Ella and Jens of Arlington, MN; sisters, Yvonne (Bob) Franseen of Duluth, MN; Veronna (John) Capone of Brookings, SD and brother-in-law Steve (Clara Strege) Englund of Lancaster, MN; and two nephews David (Heather Murphy) and Chris Franseen.

Services for Pastor Bortnem were held at Zion Lutheran Church in Arlington, MN on January 17, 2014, with Rev. James Carlson officiating. Rev. Joyce Piper, Synod Minister shared a message from the Southwestern MN Synod and words of remembrance were brought by Paul's good friend, former classmate and roommate from Luther Seminary, Rev. James Boyce. They both also were in each other's weddings.

Pastor Bortnem was cremated and inurnment of ashes will be on memorial weekend at South Cemetery of Lake Campbell Lutheran Church in rural Volga, SD.

Biography courtesy of Donna Ihrke, Redwood Falls