In Memoriam

2015

A Celebration of Ministry

California-Pacific Conference
The United Methodist Church
June 18, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We join our hearts in giving God thanks for those servants who have journeyed on ahead of us to our eternal home. They have been for us and the world a visible sign of God who is full of mercy and grace. As servant leaders in the name of Christ Jesus they have challenged us to be reconciled with each other and with our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Let us remember their bold discipleship and honor them by choosing to be the people of God.

I pray that we will remember the lessons God taught us through them; the glimpses of the world as it should be that we received through the lens of their faithful hearts; and the inspiration that God’s Holy Spirit breathed through them unto us, inspiration that sustains us even now. While we miss them dearly, they remain with us, bound to us eternally through love. May God continue to comfort our hearts as we miss them.

Thanks be to God for our beloved brothers and sisters, for their faith and their faithfulness. Above all, thanks be to God who blessed us with and through them.

Your Sister in Christ,
Deceased Bishops

Bishop Martin McLee  
September 6, 2014

Bishop Hermann Sticher  
December 19, 2014

Bishop Rueben Job  
January 3, 2015

Bishop Charles Hancock  
March 13, 2015

Deceased Spouses

Mrs. Twila Bryan  
November 25, 2014

Mrs. Benja Lee Crutchfield  
May 31, 2015

Mrs. Janet Ott  
June 2, 2015
Clergy
Don Austin

September 24, 1945 - September 1, 2014

AUSTIN, DON (RLP) (99 Pearblossom: Community); (10 (Jan) Pearblossom: Community (3/4)); 11 RLP; (11 (Sep) Lancaster (1/4)); 14 (Jan 1) RLP

Don was quiet and unassuming, a strong friend and colleague. He accomplished a great deal but rarely talked of his accomplishments. There was a warmth and friendliness that was consistent from first meeting to deepening friendship and pastoral relationships. You knew you were known and appreciated by him.

May his tribe increase!

-R. Preston Price
The Rev. Jack F. Belton passed away peacefully after a long illness. He was 84. Reverend Jack was born in Akron, Ohio, where he became an active member of the United Methodist Church. After attending Iliff School of Theology, he went on to serve a number of Methodist Churches for almost 50 years. During his active years of ministry he was passionate about ministry to youth, Christian Education, and each congregation that he served.

He loved serving the Lord. His ministry goal was to make his parishioners think about their faith. He did things his own way and listened to his own drummer in the face of others who often engaged in “group think.” He was able to be part of a ministry team of clergy and to serve as solo pastor. Always he put together a team of lay persons who ministered and learned together with him in a creative and collaborative way. He told wonderful stories and listened to others’ tales with appreciation and good humor.

Preceded in death by his parents Edgar and Freda Belton, he is survived by his wife of 60 years, Millie; daughters Beth Ann McCarty (John) and Eileen; granddaughters Heather and Heidi McCarty; brother the Reverend Allan Belton (Ruth Anne); and nieces Erika Belton and Jessica (Belton) Carlson (Christopher). He loved his cats, too! Especially, KC.

In addition to his work in the ministry, Reverend Jack was an avid follower of the Los Angeles Dodgers and, after moving to Missouri, the Kansas City Royals. During his ministry in Southern California he had a number of television stars who were members of his congregation and over the years, one of his greatest loves became the westerns of the golden era of television in which those folks starred. Among them all, Gunsmoke was his favorite.

-Mildred Belton
Dick was born in Spokane, Washington. He married Esther in 1949 and was licensed to preach by the Evangelical United Brethren Church in the same year. He served three EUB churches before graduating from seminary in 1961 at Western Evangelical Seminary.

He served Palms EUB in Culver Palms, California. During that time he was a delegate to the Uniting General Conference for union of the EUB and Methodist denominations. He was also director of camps and leader of a Guatemala mission trip. While at Brea UMC, he served on the Conference Board of Church and Society and several Santa Ana District positions. While serving Huntington Beach: Community, he was a delegate to General Conference, a member of the General Board of Church and Society, was involved in Marriage Encounter, and was on the Conference Board of Ministry.

While serving Lancaster, he and Esther began motor home travels and became active in Walk to Emmaus.

Throughout his ministry he was known as a gentle and friendly spirit and as one who loved serving the local church. There was no higher calling! He was eager to learn by listening carefully to others’ experiences and opinions and by attending the Earl Lectures in Berkeley from 1953 – 1988. He valued educated laity through education in the local church and through Marriage Encounter and Walk to Emmaus. He valued his EUB roots and appreciated the new United Methodist identity.

Upon retirement, ground was broken for a retirement home in Tehachapi on land purchased more than ten years previously. He served part-time at Bakersfield Fellowship UMC and as interim pastor at the UCC Church in Tehachapi and began a book: Relational Theology – The Theology of Jesus Christ. The book counters the twisted view of Christianity that portrays God as a God of wrath and vengeance rather than the God of love as taught by Jesus. He also completed Reiki Training in 2000.

He had many hobbies and activities that included: fishing, hunting, church league sports, golf, tennis, photography (with a dark room), riding his Vespa Scooter and Honda motorcycle, and back packing. He traveled to many countries, and all over the States.

He was proud of his marriage, his three sons and three daughters, fifteen grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

-The Family

He married Jeanne Morrison on August 25, 1957, and became an ordained pastor and minister of music in the former Methodist Church that same year. They had three daughters together but later divorced.

Music was a passion and he was an accomplished piano and organ player. He loved to travel, but his condo overlooking San Diego bay was the place he enjoyed most.

Dick was a good pastor with a passion and joy for ministry. He was a grace-filled presence in the lives of his congregation. When others might have backed away, Dick stood faithfully with others. He was sensitive to the needs of the people, especially the older generation. As a pastor, he did not call attention to himself but carried on with his work. He was a loyal servant of Jesus Christ.

His leadership for the San Diego Strength for the Journey retreat was evidence of his compassion for others in need. Congregants and his friends knew that Richard had a pastor's heart.

In his later years after retiring from ministry, he attended San Diego: First United Methodist Church and enjoyed being a leader and member of the choir.

Dick was predeceased by his daughter, Kathy; parents Richard Paul and Evelyn Ewing, and brothers, Dennis and Gary. He is survived by daughters Julia Lewis (Larry) and Lisa Moore, two grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; and Don Kennedy who cared for him through his illness.

As per his wishes, his ashes will be scattered on his farm land in Illinois.

- Mrs. Julia Lewis
The Rev. Dr. Owen Ray Fitzgerald, born in Washington, Indiana, died at his home last December. His career spanned nearly six decades and included pastor, hospital chaplain, educator, and psychologist. He was a retired US Navy Captain, serving 25 years in the Chaplain’s Corps; an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church; and a lifelong learner who earned eight degrees, including three bachelor's, three master's, and two Ph.Ds. Although his work and travel took him to all continents but Antarctica, he deeply valued family and his Daviess County roots in Indiana. He returned frequently to visit family and friends as well as to worship in his home church, Pleasant Hill United Methodist in Washington.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Jean Eyre Fitzgerald; their three children, Dr. Anita Fitzgerald Henck (William, Jr.) of Azusa, California; Joy Fitzgerald Hilley (Joseph) of Houston, Texas; and the Rev. Dr. James Nelson Fitzgerald (Elizabeth) of Duncanville, Texas; seven grandchildren, Alayna Henck Effinger (Benjamin) of Glendora, California; Andrew Fitzgerald Henck of Pasadena, California; Erin Fitzgerald Cox (Philip) of Baltimore, Maryland; Kaitlyn Grace Fitzgerald of Duncanville, Texas; Laura Catherine Hilley of Cincinnati, Ohio; Joseph Reuben Guy Hilley of Houston; and Anna Linnea Fitzgerald of Duncanville; and two great grandsons, Nathaniel James and Jackson Edward Effinger of Glendora. He is also survived by two brothers, Jack Allen Fitzgerald (Dorothy) of Severn, Maryland, and Burke Hayes Fitzgerald (Roberta) of Washington; and many members of his extended family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Owen Gilbert and Alice Esther Meade Fitzgerald; and siblings James Nelson and Donald Arthur Fitzgerald, Mary Katherine Fitzgerald Baker Ruwe, and Phoebe Lou Ella Fitzgerald Allison (who died less than 24 hours before Ray’s death).

Ray donated his body to UCLA Medical School.

-The Family
Kent was born November 19, 1969, in Burbank, California. He attended local Burbank schools and graduated from John Burroughs High School in June 1987. He then attended Azusa Pacific University and graduated in May 1991. He continued his education at Fuller Theological Seminary and graduated with a Masters of Divinity in June 1995.

Kent began his ministry early, serving as youth director at North Glendale United Methodist after finishing high school. His internship was at Hollywood: First United Methodist, and from there he was appointed associate pastor at Laguna Beach United Methodist Church. His first appointment as an elder was to Indio United Methodist. After Indio he took a sabbatical in Canada where he served two United Church of Christ congregations. Upon his return to California he was appointed to Bardsdale United Methodist Church in Fillmore where he served the past 10 years.

Kent fought a six year battle with a rare form of childhood cancer and was an inspiration to everyone who knew him.

He is survived by his mother, Linda Fromer; brother, Robert "Bobby" Fromer; sister, Lynn Pagano; and niece, Alena Pagano.

-Linda Fromer
Albert Edwin Stephen Jansen was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on August 7, 1935. He moved to Long Beach, California, when he was 16 years old, along with his parents and two younger brothers, Jack and Brian. He attended Long Beach High School, and the University of Redlands. Upon graduation from Redlands, he entered the School of Theology at Claremont. On August 29, 1958, during his years in seminary, Al became a naturalized citizen of the United States. Al married Jackie Sterns from Tucson, Arizona, on June 21, 1959, and obtained his Master of Theology degree the following June, 1960.

Their first son, Neil, was born August 1, 1960, while Al was serving as Christian Education pastor in West Covina. Their son, Perry, was born September 5, 1962, shortly after Al was appointed to San Dimas United Methodist. Their daughter, Gayle, was born on May 19, 1964.

Al served several other churches in the Southern California Annual Conference, and became very active in the Christian Ashram movement founded by E. Stanley Jones. Brother Stanley, as he was affectionately called, became his mentor throughout his ministry. Al led many persons to a strong personal relationship with Christ, including his own children. His son, Neil, is currently serving a church in California, his son, Perry, is a missionary medical doctor serving as Founder/Director of a medical clinic in Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa. His daughter, Gayle, is in a Ph.D. program in Boulder, Colorado, with a strong emphasis in Christian media communication.

After retiring from 42 years in active ministry, Al and Jackie spent 11 years in Vista, California, sharing a property with Neil’s family. They moved to Phoenix, Arizona, in 2010, anticipating the birth of Gayle’s identical triplet daughters, Abby, Bella, and Simone Brisbane. Al loved his role of grandpa to those three girls as well as to Lauren, Stephanie, Melissa, Eric, Mallory (deceased), Nathan, Erin, Olivia, Kala, Alyssa, Angie and Danny.

Al spent five years writing a book, “Unchanging & Unshakable”, feeling compelled to reintroduce E Stanley Jones’ 28 books to a new generation of believers. Al died August 19, 2014, just one year after his book was published. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Jackie, his children, Neil, Perry, and Gayle (and their spouses, Jill, Brenda & Bert), his grandchildren, a great-grandchild due in September, 2015, and his brother, Jack.

-The Jansen Family
Ralph B. Johnson was born near Vinemont, Alabama. Ralph graduated from USC in Los Angeles, California. Ralph had a very successful ministry in the California-Pacific Annual Conference in the United Methodist Church. His major appointments in the conference were Escondido United Methodist Church in Escondido, the First United Methodist Church in Santa Barbara, Superintendent of the San Diego District, La Crescenta United Methodist Church, Hacienda Heights, United Methodist Church in Long Beach and Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Pensions, Pasadena.

Ralph always retained his Southern-learned manners and hospitality. He was thorough and careful in his duties and responsibilities. His integrity and love of the church was constant, as was his care for those for whom he was pastor – in local churches, on the District, and as Conference staff. Able to make tough decisions when needed, he trusted others’ abilities and judgment and allowed them to make important decisions without interference or second-guessing. His “mark” upon churches and the Conference is indelible.

Upon retirement he was Pastor of the United Church of Lake San Marcos, United Church of Christ, where he served for two years.

Ralph wrote the following books: The Beatitude of Jesus, What Jesus Did, and When We Say Our Father.

He is survived by wife Irene, children Ralph Lynn and Sharon, grandchildren Casey, Jenna, Justin, and Tiffany, and by a great-granddaughter Kaylee.

He will always be missed by family and friends.

-Mrs. Irene Johnson
Charles Jones

April 6, 1931 - February 15, 2015

Charles Edward Jones was born in North Tarrytown, New York. Charles became an active member of Saint Paul’s Methodist Church, Dayton, Ohio. With his mother’s encouragement, he discovered his lifelong love of singing. He joined the Dayton Boys Choir as a boy soprano. He sang the lead in several musicals performed at Wilbur Wright High. He sang at dances as a pompadour coiffed crooner!

Charles attended Ohio State University. He was active in the Wesley Foundation at OSU, and, along with his studies, became a highly competitive table tennis player. He enrolled at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Charles met and married Sarah Upson during his final year at Iliff.

A year later they welcomed their first child, Susan. They embarked on his ministry journey, taking his first appointment at the Methodist church in rural Keenesburg, Colorado. From Keenesburg, Charles moved his young family to Lander, Wyoming, to be the pastor at the Lander Methodist Church. In Lander, sons Richard and Marshall joined the family.

He and Sarah retired in 1992 to Lancaster. In retirement, he served as the minister of visitation for the Lancaster UMC for several years. He lost Sarah to pancreatic cancer in 2003. Charles met Helen Dorsey through Los Cancioneros Master Chorale, and they married in 2004.

Throughout his life, Charles loved to sing and perform. He sang with a variety of chorales and performed in many community musical productions. He also loved golf. He played weekly with a foursome of clergy colleagues. Upon retirement, he played up to three times a week. Charles enjoyed traveling. He and Sarah took their children and camped all over the United States. With Sarah and later, with Helen, Charles traveled the world visiting Hawaii, Alaska, Europe, and Central America, Asia, Alaska, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

Charles died of a heart attack on the evening of February 15, 2015. He had spent the day singing with a 1,000-voice choir that included Helen, Susan, and members of the Lancaster UMC Chancel Choir at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

Charles is survived by his wife Helen, brother Theodore (Sharon), sister-in-law Vivian Ferrell, daughter Susan (Fernando), sons Richard (Dianne) and Marshall (Margie), stepson Russell (Kathy) Jolley, stepdaughter Lisa Odaffer, 10 nieces and nephews, 13 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

He loved life and we will miss him.

- Susan Reyes
Rev. Dr. Pita Uelese Lauti was born in Vatia, American Samoa. He finished high school, worked in American Samoa, and moved to the Mainland to continue his education. He attended Junior College and University, and received his A.A., B.A., and a M.B.A. degree.

He began work as an accountant in California and moved to Houston, Texas, for a new job. Pita attended a United Methodist Church, became a member, and that's where he started to serve his Lord as an associate pastor at Aldine United Methodist Church for five years.

Pita moved back to California and attended Claremont School of Theology, where he received his Master of Divinity and his Doctor of Ministry degrees. He served as a local Pastor from 1989-2005. He served the Pacific Island Commission as a co-chair for four years, being a member until he retired. He served as Executive Director of the national Pacific Islander National Caucus of the United Methodist Church until he retired in 2005.

He was a loveable person and friendly to all. He was able to socialize in large and small groups and also told lots of jokes. He enjoyed being a part of the church. He loved the church.

He was called by his Father in heaven long before we were ready for him to leave us. He is already missed by his wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren.

We love you so much and miss you dearly. We will always remember you and you are forever in our hearts.

-Mrs. Vaiola D. Lauti & Children
(Feagai Lauti-Salevao, Lealoa. P. Te'o, Tolotea Cecelia Toa, Leafuafu T. Devoux, Tara M. Lauti(Deceased),
Pita W. Lauti Jr., Timothy Q. Lauti)
Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, René spent his high school years at Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso. Next, came Adrian College, where he spent summers working in migrant ministry and met his first wife Alice. They moved to Tulia, Texas, and began a family while planting the Methodist church there. During these years René was also teaching full time and earned his M. Ed.

In the late sixties, René studied for his M. Div. at Claremont School of Theology while pastoring several churches including Asbury, Temple, and St. Stephen’s where he also served as director of Frazee Community Center. Following seminary, René became the director of Plaza Community Center in East LA where he focused on implementing programs for youth.

In 1974 René was appointed as the first Latino Assistant General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries charged with Mission Education and Cultivation. From 1978-81 René served as the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Ministries Commission in Phoenix. In 1981 he was appointed to merge two Huntington Park churches into one. René met his second wife when she went to church with her mom to meet the new pastor.

René and Kathy married in 1988, and the following year René went back into full-time middle school teaching even while pastoring part-time in a series of small churches. Over 26 years he and Kathy lived and loved and ministered fully, with René often saying that of all the churches he had ever served, no community of faith had ever loved him so fully as the people of Hollywood United Methodist Church.

René deeply loved the United Methodist Church, even as its institutional structures did not always meld with his vision of what the church should be. He believed that there was always joy to be found in the struggle and ultimate victory will be found in Jesus Christ.

While that is our assurance, his family continues to grieve his sudden passing: wife Kathy; sons Andy and Ricky in Texas; daughter Rebecca and Robert in Burbank; sons James and Josh in Eagle Rock; and grandchildren Nicholas, Rebecca, Aaron and Lana.

With all the saints in heaven, and those gathered on earth, we say to our beloved René: well done, good and faithful servant, and a hearty Alleluia for your life on earth.

-Rev. Kathy Cooper-Ledesma, James and Joshua Ledesma, Rebecca Mamos
David Lehmberg was born to The Rev. Benjamin Lehmberg and his wife, Vivienne. Dave attended local schools in Houston, Texas. From an early age he wanted to follow his father in serving God, so after graduating from Southwestern University, he earned a Master of Divinity Degree from Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

Dave's first assignment as a United Methodist pastor was to start a congregation: Christ Church, in Tucson, Arizona where he moved with his wife, Shirley. In 1961, Dave was sent to St. Paul's UMC in Encino, California. While there he joined Covenant Players, a drama troop that presented plays at churches in the area. In 1964 he became campus minister at USC bringing his talent with guitar and his commitment to social justice. From 1967 until his divorce in 1971, Dave served Federated Church in Flagstaff, Arizona. He married Rachael Fallows in 1975.

In his second career, Dave became Chief of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention for the Arizona Department of Health. But the ministry was calling, so he returned as Associate at St. Mark's UMC in San Diego. Two years later he became senior pastor at Claremont UMC where he continued his commitment to social justice helping to make it a Sanctuary Church.

In 1988 Dave was appointed to Honolulu First UMC where his sermons were televised weekly. He gave the opening prayer at the Hawaii State Legislature and presided at the Easter Service at the Punchbowl Military Cemetery.

Returning to California in 1991, Dave served the remainder of his career as pastor at Christ Church by the Sea in Newport Beach, retiring in 1997. He then fulfilled his dream of living on a boat. Four years later, the Lehmbergs moved to Surprise, Arizona, where Dave enjoyed golf, softball, and theater. He also played trombone in local bands.

Dave met the diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease with faith and courage. He joined The Tremble Clefs, a choral group for people with Parkinson's, and sang with them in churches and community centers providing hope to other patients. During his full life, Dave earned a private pilot's license, learned to scuba dive, and participated in pulpit exchanges in England and the Bahamas. He is survived by his wife, Rachael, their combined six children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

We will miss this dedicated, joyful, brilliant, kind, funny, loving man and cherish his memory forever.

-The Lehmberg Family
During his 81 years, Rev. Bill Miller lived an extraordinary life. He was born in Modesto, California, the youngest of five children of Mae & Pierce Miller. He grew up in the United Methodist church and, after graduating from college at San Jose State, he went to seminary at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. Bill practiced what he preached every day. He spent his life fighting for social justice and equality and did all he could to help those in need. He had a sincere interest in the lives of people he met and a contagious joy about the goodness in day-to-day life. After seminary he spent two years in Scotland working with the Iona Community, serving in a poor working class church in Glasgow. His ministry from 1959 through 1997 served inner city communities in San Francisco and Los Angeles. After retirement, he continued to be active in many social justice organizations including participation in a protest of Walmart labor practices in which he was arrested in 2012. His family learned of this when great-granddaughter Laurray saw Gramps Bill on the news.

Bill shared his life with many special people. In 1959 he met Jeanne Ross and they married in 1963. They settled in San Francisco and joined in activism including marching with Cesar Chavez to establish the Farm Workers Union. In 1969 they had a long awaited daughter, Jenna, who was the light of his life. In 1982 Jeanne passed away from leukemia. Later, Bill met Ruth Lee Miller and not only did he find a loving wife but also added three grown children and eventually six grandchildren and three great grandkids to his family who gave him great joy. In addition to his family and his activism, Bill spent the last couple years writing a memoir about his father, Pierce A. Miller’s, collection of horse drawn carriages in Modesto, California.

Bill is survived by his wife of 30 years, Ruth Lee Miller, daughters Jenna Miller-Von Ah and husband Drew, Bobbi Wheatley and husband Ray, sons Skelly and David Miller, grandchildren Rachel, Marylinn, Dan, Peter, Laura, and Katie, and great grandchildren Laurray, Wyatt, and Josie Lee. He is also survived by his brother and wife Bob & Anita Miller, and nieces and nephews from California to New York.

We would love to share stories, photos, and are eager to stay in touch through Jenna Miller-Von Ah jdmillervonah@gmail.com.

-The Miller Family
Jose Luis Palacios was born in Puebla, Mexico. His mother, Maria De Los Angeles Palacios, taught her children to form a strong relationship with the Lord. At the age of 10, while Jose Luis was praying, he felt a warm hand press against his head. The hand of God brought the truth of the gospel to the life of Jose Luis and made him devote himself to the service of the Living God. Jose Luis Palacios began his ministry during that young period of his life. He was allowed to join the church’s evangelistic group and would preach The Good News to nearby cities.

Jose Luis was gifted with musical talents and taught himself how to play the piano and accordion despite his young age. As the group traveled to distant cities, Jose Luis participated in the worship group by playing the accordion. At the age of 18, Jose Luis was given a scholarship to obtain a college education in the United States. Determined to become a pastor, he traveled to Kentucky to pursue his education in Asbury University.

Jose Luis would later relocate to California where he would obtain his Master’s Degree in Divinity at Claremont School of Theology. He met a young lady named Rebeca Garcia and they fell in love. Rebeca had previously had a revelation that she would marry a pastor and knew that Jose Luis was the man that the Lord had reserved for her. They immediately married and have three children: Tammy, Jose Luis Jr., and Cindy. Jose Luis and Rebeca always taught their children that God is above everything else and that they should live a life that would honor and praise Him.

At every church that Jose Luis pastored, he preached about God’s mercy and justice. Full of compassion, he was a pastor 24-hours-a-day. God’s supernatural hand was demonstrated as the healing of hearts and bodies occurred throughout the congregation. Jose Luis continued to guide the worship group by singing and playing the piano.

Jose Luis retired in 2008 and would spend all of his time with his wife and children. Previous church members would still reach out to Jose Luis for advice and would frequently meet with him and his wife. In April, God decided that it was time to take his beloved and faithful child with him for all eternity.

- The Palacios Family
Benjamin Cruz Rodriguez was born in Tempe, Arizona. He was the youngest of five children, raised by his mother Elizabeth, who was a widow. His mother persevered as a strong Christian woman who instructed her children in the Christian principles that she lived. It was her legacy to her children. She knew it would help them to deal with prejudice, segregation and poverty. Benjamin attended the Tempe Elementary School. This was a segregated school where only Mexican students attended.

He graduated from Tempe High School in 1940. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Benjamin enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to a destroyer escort in the Adriatic Sea. He served on the USS Agenor [ARL 3] and USS Haines [APD84] with a rank of Yeoman, 3rd Class, and saw action in Guam, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. After an honorable discharge, he returned to Tempe and was employed in the Phoenix post office as a clerk typist for about two years. He attended Arizona State University School of Education, completing all course work by 1951, where he earned his degree and a teaching credential in secondary education.

On June 22, 1952, Benjamin married Damaris Camarena in Tucson, Arizona. Her father was a pastor who belonged to the former Southern California-Arizona Annual Conference. Together Benjamin and Damaris raised four sons: Benjamin, Jr; Joel; Leland; and Joseph. After 10 years as a school teacher, Benjamin felt the call of the Lord and, being encouraged by the Rev. Leland Scott, he pursued a divinity degree at Boston University School of Theology. He then moved back to California to begin his pastoral ministry. In all his appointments he served in both English and Spanish.

He moved to San Jacinto, California, for the remainder of his life.

Although he was formally retired, he continued serving a small Hispanic congregation at Hemet United Methodist Church, where he also served as Minister of Visitation and continued to preach when asked at Hispanic churches in Los Angeles and San Jacinto. He had a passion for visiting the sick and the elderly and continued doing so throughout his retirement years. In this way, he never retired from serving Christ. He and his wife Damaris were married 62 years.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

- Mrs. Damaris and Benjamin Rodriguez Jr.
Vernon Luther Story was born in San Diego to pastor Vernon Gordon Story and his wife, Ella Grace Cowles. He grew up in Salem, Oregon, the third of six children. He married his high school sweetheart, Barbara Jean Bignell, in 1960. They have a daughter, Angela Hagen, a son, V. Kent Story, and a granddaughter, Prescott Williams.

He graduated from Upland College in 1963 with a BA in sociology and English, and received his Doctor of Religion from Claremont School of Theology in 1969. He was ordained a United Methodist pastor in 1967 and became a licensed marriage and family counselor in 1970. He earned his certification in clinical hypnosis in 1975.

During his 39 years as a United Methodist minister, he served the churches to which he was assigned with integrity, intelligence, creativity, and compassion.

After leaving full-time ministry on disability for hearing loss in 2002, he served as interim pastor for St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Los Angeles. He retired in 2006 but continued as Pastor of Visitation, doing home visits for Orangethorpe United Methodist Church and sharing his love of gardening and earthworms with children.

Vernon was proud of his work for peace and civil rights. As a student in 1965, he traveled to Mississippi to help register African-Americans to vote and build a swimming pool for children who weren’t allowed to use segregated city facilities. Over the years, Vernon introduced hundreds of young people to sailing and canoeing through his youth boating program, Anchors Aweigh.

Vernon was an enthusiastic Frisbee player and sailor who loved books, swimming, bicycling, hiking and bird-watching. While his children were growing up, the family made numerous cross-country camping trips towing their tent trailer through 46 states. Vernon and Barbara eventually traveled to all 50 states, and also made trips to Israel, Egypt, Germany, Austria, Holland, China, Puerto Rico and Mexico’s Copper Canyon. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on a cruise to Alaska.

-The Story Family
Glenn G. Stover was born in Watsontown, Pennsylvania. He was the eighth of nine children. His father died when he was four years old, so he knew what it was like to be brought up in a single mom household. Their budget was very tight, and it gave him a lifelong appreciation for those who were less fortunate.

Fresh out of high school, Glenn, served in the Navy during the final days of WWII. After his enlistment he went to Mansfield State Teachers College in Mansfield, Pennsylvania. It was here that he met his wife, Catherine L. Lobach. Glenn received his Bachelor’s Degree in education in 1952, and his Master’s Degree in education in 1959. In 1959, he and Catherine moved their young family to San Diego where he was a teacher at Dehesa Elementary School. In 1965 they moved to Oceanside to accept another teaching position. The Oceanside School District was experiencing rapid growth due to the influx of Marine families during the Vietnam War.

Glenn felt the calling to go into ministry a few years before retiring as an elementary school teacher. After teaching 30 years, he began attending Fuller Theological Seminary. He graduated in 1987 with his Masters in Divinity. He was the oldest student in his class.

Glenn ministered at several smaller churches in California during his career. He served with a gentle spirit and generous heart. After he was mandatorily retired at the age of 70, he and Catherine returned to their home church in Oceanside. He continued to assist the ministers there with visitation of those who were shut-ins, in convalescent homes, and in hospitals. He averaged 300-400 visitations per year for the next 15 years. He retired from doing visitations when he could no longer drive or walk without the use of a walker.

After 58 beautiful years of marriage, Catherine passed away in 2010. In 2014, Glenn and his son, Keith moved to Spring Valley to the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Larry and Mary Bradley. After a series of mini-strokes, Glenn went home to be with the Lord two days after his 89th birthday. Glenn is survived by his son, Keith Stover, daughter, Mary Bradley, five granddaughters, one grandson, and three great-grandsons.

He lived a blessed, full life.

- Mary Bradley
Wes Yamaka, the youngest of five brothers, was born to Yuzuru and Teru Yamaka in Seattle, Washington. He graduated from Moapa Valley High School in Overton, Nevada. He attended and graduated from Chapman College, Pacific School of Religion and Harvard Divinity School.

While a student at Chapman College, Wes met his wife-to-be, Akiko Rose Sase, when both were choir members at Centenary Methodist Church in Los Angeles. The couple was married in August of 1953.

Wes served churches in Livingston, California; Seattle, Washington; San Jose, California; Monterey Park, California; and Portland, Oregon. In addition, Wes and his family lived in Columbia, Maryland, for 20 years where he worked with the Columbia Cooperative Ministry and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C.

To many, Wes is best known as a visionary graphic artist whose signature silk screen prints incorporated words and images to create powerful messages of social justice and peace. His artwork is still treasured by many. His lifelong passion for peace and social justice issues was formed, in no small part, by his experience living in the Japanese American internment camps as a teenager during World War II.

Wes was a caring and compassionate person and instantly a friend to anyone he met. He cherished the relationships he formed with friends from coast to coast and the time he spent with family—especially his adored grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Wes died on March 12 after a long-term illness. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Rose; sons, Matt (Jo) and Dave (Julie); grandchildren, Sara (Xavi), Stephanie (Michael) and Kevin; and two great-grandchildren, Ona and Nora.

-The Yamaka Family
Spouses
With the passing of Lois, the world has lost a shining beacon of love and compassion.

Lois was born in Peking (Beijing), China to Dr. Paul E. Johnson and Evelyn (Grant) Johnson. Lois's parents were serving as Methodist missionaries in China.

Following their return to the United States, Lois grew up in Iowa and graduated from Newton Wellesley high school in Boston where her father taught at Boston University School of Theology. Lois attended nursing school in Boston graduating as a registered nurse.

She married Rev. George Cummings in 1947, and together they served churches in Valier, Montana; Pullman, Washington; and others in this Conference.

Lois re-established her professional career as a home health nurse on Maui until her retirement in 1988. Lois relocated to Grants Pass, Oregon, following her retirement, where she met the second love of her life, Mr. Raymond Cole. They married and resettled in Fort Collins, Colorado to be near her family.

Lois had an amazing passion and vigor for life! From multiple trips crisscrossing the nation in a Ford van with her husband and four children, to her expertise at Hula dancing and square dancing, hiking and camping, boating, corresponding with all of her family and friends on a weekly basis, reading voraciously, knitting hundreds of Christmas stockings, sewing matching clothes for the entire family, four-wheeling, fishing, teaching swimming lessons, teaching Sunday school, teaching people ways to live, and helping them to die when it was their time. She was a gifted healer who was a powerful presence in the lives of all she met. The world is a better place for her having lived in it.

Lois is survived by her husband, Raymond Cole, her children Michael Cummings (Bernadette) of Maui, Hawaii; Martha Turner of Maui, Hawaii; Grant Matthews of Atlanta, Georgia; Mark Cummings (Brenda) of Fort Collins, Colorado; grandchildren Chisa, Marisa, Lesley, Mia, Phillip, Bobby, Billy, Mandy, Jessi, and two great grandchildren Victor and Madison!

A private memorial service was held for the family, officiated by the Rev. Dr. Mason Willis. Her ashes will be scattered on the Chetko River in Oregon, and in the waters off of her favorite beach on Maui.

All of us in the Cummings and Cole extended families ask for your thoughts and prayers as we adjust to a world without Lois.

- Ray Cole
Barbara Dallas
January 3, 1936 - October 21, 2014

Barbara Ann Dallas was born in Watertown, New York. She was brought to Watertown’s Aldersgate Methodist Church as an infant and, as she grew, became an active participant in that congregation. At age twenty-two she moved to California with her family and worked for a number of years at the San Bernardino County Hospital as well as the Credit Bureau.

Barbara met Jim in 1978 and they were married a year later. She became an equal participant in Jim’s ministry, starting various groups for singles and older adults while always being active in the choir.

Her love for animals was renowned and she rescued numerous dogs and cats over the years. She also trained Heidi, one of her beloved collies, to be a therapy dog and regularly took her to visit patients in hospitals and convalescent homes. In retirement Barbara became an accomplished horseback rider and also rescued several horses.

Barbara is survived by her husband, Jim; four daughters, a son, fifteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She was a deeply committed Christian and having an opportunity to share in her life was a gracious gift.

- Rev. Jim Dallas
From her earliest years, Eleanor Elisabeth Battin began a lifetime love affair with the keyboard of the piano. That strong focus was lived out as a student in the Academy at Haviland, Kansas, where her playing led eventually to a Senior Recital.

Elisabeth followed her Haviland piano teacher, Mildred Shafer, to Cascade College in Portland, Oregon. Majoring in keyboard - piano and pipe organ - she graduated with distinction. There followed graduate studies at Wichita State University where she received the Master of Music - Piano Performance degree.

Subsequently Ms. Battin was called back to Cascade College to be Professor of Music in keyboard and music theory studies.

In 1957, Professor Battin was married to David E. Edwards at the Friends Church in Portland, Oregon. In 1959, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards moved to Wilmore, Kentucky, where David enrolled as a divinity student at Asbury Theological Seminary while Elisabeth became the Seminary Organist and Professor of Music. Their residence in Kentucky extended to nine years with David serving as Assistant to the President of the Seminary.

In 1976, the Edwards family - which now included three children – Mark, Michael and Susan - returned to the West Coast, where Mr. Edwards began an active pastoral ministry in the United Methodist Church. The Edwards family resided in Taft, El Cajon, and Pomona, California. In 1980, the family moved to Claremont, when Dr. Edwards established a consulting firm with focus on hospital foundation major charitable gift development.

Mrs. Edwards was then engaged in building a private piano student practice, as well as serving three large congregations in their several locations as organist. Elisabeth became well known in the various communities in which she lived as a premier keyboard artist and was involved in many community and business programs.

In 2001, Mrs. Edwards retired from her piano teaching, and most other involvements. A series of health challenges finally came to impact her daily living. After a series of strokes, she was placed in Hospice Care and finally passed away.

-Rev. David Edwards
Lois Emelyn was born to William and Mahayla Lovelady in Texas. The second youngest of nine children, Lois grew up in a loving and faithful Methodist family. Mom would often tell stories of being at church or going to “camp meetings” where her mother played the portable pump organ and her father, “Pop,” would sing out with a strong clear voice rising above the others.

In the early 1940’s her sister, Virginia, and Virginia’s husband, Rev. Daniel Walker, introduced Lois to a young man preparing for ministry, Tom Farley. Tom and Lois married in 1944 and headed to Boston where Tom had completed his first year of seminary. In 1946, Tom and Lois drove across the United States to Southern California where they began a life and ministry together. Not long after they landed in California, the children began to arrive. Lois gave birth to four boys; Timothy, Daniel, David and John. As a mother she was loving, intentional, creative, spiritual, demanding, and then loving again. Dad may have been the pastor in the family but Mom was the spiritual backbone of our lives.

A healer at heart, Mom was an avid reader of articles on health and development. Countless conversations about ways to improve ourselves began with her saying; “I was just reading an article about…” followed by some suggestion of how we could eat better or improve in some way. Mom was also the epitome of biblical hospitality. Friends and family knew there was always a place at the table or a bed to rest their head, if needed, and many availed themselves of her grace over the years. College students in need of housing, missionaries in between assignments, and even wayward teenage buddies periodically found sanctuary in our home. No one knew Lois’ love better than her grandchildren whom she adored and showered with unceasing gifts of laughter and love, and occasionally cash slipped surreptitiously into palm or pocket.

Albert Schweitzer once said; “At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.” Lois, Mom, Grandma was God’s light to her family and everyone she met; she ignited faith, hope and love in us all. We will keep it lit, Mom!

-Her loving Children
When Virginia was to be born, her parents, Maurice and Pat Skates, lived in Fillmore. Her father took along some scissors in case the cord needed be cut before they reached the hospital located hours away in Hollywood. Virginia’s father was an operating engineer and found work in the Sunland-Tujunga area where they moved while Virginia was quite young.

During World War II, Virginia’s mother’s sister and her four children from Canada temporarily moved into the Skates home. These were happy times for Virginia. She and her parents were active in the Tujunga Methodist church.

In 1953 she graduated with honors and was awarded a $100 scholarship to UCLA which, at that time, paid the tuition for a year. The same year she met Tony and invited him to a young adult gathering at her home. Two years later they were married and in 1956 Tony graduated from USC and entered the Southern California School of Theology, now the Claremont School of Theology.

After Tony graduated from the Seminary, two sons were added to the family: Brian and Greg.

From 1960 to 1982, Tony served churches in Los Angeles, Santa Maria, and Arizona. While living in Arizona, J.C., a daughter was born. When Virginia’s mother was called about the birth and the name for the child, she said: “You're kidding!”

During those years of church appointment, Virginia was active in the former Women’s Society for Christian Service.

Tony’s last church appointment was a small congregation that provided a housing allowance that enabled them to buy a home in Glassell Park five miles from downtown Los Angeles.

Virginia was an avid reader and an excellent seamstress and knitter. She enjoyed touring many countries, US National Parks, and large cities with Tony.

She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2012 and succumbed to the disease.

She was well loved and respected by all who knew her and a large gathering at her service and the reception following the memorial service was a great tribute to her.

-Antonio R. Flores
Seda Fujishiro, 96, of Rocky Ford, Colorado, passed away peacefully, at Pioneer Health Care Center.

Seda was born in Rocky Ford a daughter of the late Mitsuko (Suetsugu) and Keitaro Mameda. She was the widow of Shuey Fujishiro. She was a homemaker and, in her own way, a minister of the Gospel. She was a member of First United Methodist Church in Rocky Ford when she died.

She accompanied her husband and assisted in his ministry for their years in Hawaii, on the Mainland, and after formal retirement while living in Colorado. They were a team that found creative and fruitful ways to be in ministry to church members and to the community.

She is survived by; son David, husband of Joan Fujishiro, of Honolulu; son John, husband of Shirley Fujishiro, of Pueblo, Colorado; grandson Mark, husband of Yume Fujishiro, of Honolulu, HI; grandson Matthew, husband of Toni Fujishiro, of Las Vegas, Nevada; granddaughter Madeline Fujishiro, of Ft. Collins, Colorado; brother Herb Mameda, of Rocky Ford; sister Yoshiko Togashi, of Palo Alto, California; sister Helen Takagishi, of Sunnyvale, California. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband: Shuey Fujishiro; brothers: Seiri Mameda, Seido Mameda; sister: Akiyo Mameda.

-The Family
Viola Fuller
June 1, 1918-January 16, 2015

Viola Wines was born and raised in a Quaker family in Adrian, Michigan. From an early age, Viola’s greatest interests were art and music.

Viola and Ed Krapf met in college and were married in 1938. They moved to Los Angeles to help out his newly widowed sister with her young child and decided to stay. After serving at several churches, Ed Krapf wanted to pursue his doctorate and get a closer look at the problems with race relations, so the family moved to Georgia for a year where he taught at Gammon Seminary (a school that served predominantly Black students) and he worked on his doctorate. In 1955, Ed and Viola moved their family to San Diego where Ed joined the faculty and staff of California Western University, while Viola worked part time on her college degree and together they raised their three children.

California Western University was growing into United States International University, which provided an opportunity for Ed and Vi to see the world. In the early 1970s they moved to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where Ed worked for the college at their campus there. Next they moved to the campus in Nairobi, Kenya, where they spent three years. Viola loved the travel, taught art at the colleges and painted many watercolors of the scenery, animals and the people they met there. From Nairobi they moved to the campuses in Evian, France and then to Maui, Hawaii. In 1975 they moved back to southern California where they retired. In their retirement, they enjoyed travel and golf and Vi continued her painting.

After Ed’s death Viola met and married Joe Fuller, with whom she enjoyed golf and traveling in their R.V. They spent many months each year traveling around to places Viola would paint and work on her family’s genealogy. Following Joe’s death, Viola continued to live at their home in Encinitas, continued playing golf and painting until her health no longer allowed. Her daughters moved her up to Washington State where they lived so they could be close if she needed them. She came to enjoy the Olympic Peninsula and yet another lifestyle, and lived there until she died in January, 2015 at the age of 96.

Viola is survived by her three children, Judith Cook, Russell Krapf of Phoenix, and Andrea Betts and seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. We all miss her sunny smile and positive attitude.

-The family of Viola Fuller
Christina Han

December 3, 1958 - August 13, 2014


Christina was born in Seoul, Korea, as the youngest of two boys and three daughters. She lived a difficult life, having been diagnosed with polio at 6 years of age. Despite her physical handicaps, she lived a bright life, helping those who were in even more difficult situations than she was.

In April of 1989, Christina married Rev. Han and moved to the United States in December of that year. They have four daughters in the States. She served with her husband (while he was a candidate for ordained ministry) at churches in San Diego (1990-1995) and Glendale (1995-2000). After ordination she was with her husband at Van Nuys, San Bernardino, Brea, and Montrose. Christina was diagnosed with breast cancer while she and her husband were serving in Brea.

Before she was married to Rev. Han, Christina was a visual arts designer. When she came to the States, she had brought some her pieces of artwork. Almost all of her artwork was inspired from the Book of Genesis. Genesis 1 states that God created the Earth with His words. The Bible says that before God’s creation, there was chaos. She was inspired by the process of chaos to creation. She also said that her pieces of artwork represent her life. She said that it was an expression or interpretation of the presence of God’s protection and guidance in her handicapped life of physical hardships. She lived in a chaotic world but through the presence and acceptance of God, sought to help those who were also in chaos and trouble as well. She has now returned to Heaven, the completion of creation. There, without her pains and hardships from her life on earth, her soul will rest in peace.

-Rev. Jin Ho Han
Sue was born in Pasadena, California, youngest of four children and the only girl. In school, she was a drum majorette, member of Girl’s Court, and president of Girl’s League. At age 15, she lived for a year with her oldest brother and his wife in New York. Sue returned to Pasadena to continue her education at Pasadena City College (PCC), worked in the Dean’s office, excelled at archery, was elected president of the Associated Women’s Students, and eventually served as president of the highest honor group on campus, “The Order of the Mast and Dagger.”

Sue attended First Methodist Church in Pasadena, as did future husband Dick Kendall. Through church and the PCC Student Christian Association they grew closer. Dick and Sue were married on August 31, 1943. Less than a week later, they were on a train headed for New York where Dick attended Seminary for the next three years.

Returning to California with daughter Beverly, they served their first church in San Diego. During the next 42 years of ministry, they added four more children, served five more congregations, and spent their last six years as District Superintendent for the Pasadena District.

Dick and Sue retired in July of 1984 and moved to Escondido for the next 16 years. Sue was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease, and as symptoms progressed, they chose to move to the Town and Country Manor in Santa Ana, a retirement community that has been their home since 2000.

Sue battled the deteriorating effects of Parkinson’s Disease for nearly 30 years. She lived a full and wonderful life, but finally grew tired and left us peacefully. She endeared herself to everyone at the Manor, and they cared for “Suzie” with gentleness and love. She leaves behind a legacy of beauty, laughter, and unconditional love.

Sue is survived by Richard, her husband of more than 71 years; their children Beverly and Richard, David and Gail, James and Nancy, Nancy and Gary, and Larry and Donette; grandchildren David and Wendy, Robyn and Rob, Kimberly and Cameron, Rebecca and Alex, Christopher, Paul, and Audrey; great-grandchildren Chad and Amanda, Evan, Grant, Kayla, Cassidy, Kennon, Madeleine, and Carter; and great-great-grandchildren Caleb and Jacob.

We all miss you – you are in our hearts always.

- Nancy Kendall
Marie Losh

November 18, 1925 - February 5, 2015

LOSH, KENNETH P. (F.85 American Baptist Church Ordination Recognized) 82 Pacific and Southwest; 82 Claremont, Associate; C-P 85 Fallbrook; 91 R’d

Her Journey’s Just Begun

Don’t think of her as gone away
her journey’s just begun
life holds so many facets
this earth is only one.
Just think of her as resting
from the sorrows and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days or years.
Think how she must be wishing
that we could know today
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.
And think of her as living
in the hearts of those she touched
for nothing loved is ever lost
and she was loved so much.

-Author Unknown
Helen Olivas

March 5, 1929 - April 21, 2015

Helen Dominguez Olivas passed away peacefully at home in Pasadena, California, with her daughter, grandson, and husband by her side. She was born in Phoenix, Arizona, to Miquel and Esther Grijalva Dominguez.

Helen was married to Mardoqueo “Mardy” Lopez Olivas in 1945 in El Paso, Texas. They were happily married for seventy years. Helen was happy to share with Mardy a wonderful life in ministry.

Helen was a gifted artist, singer and teacher. She loved tending her garden, loved birds and animals and she was also a great cook. She was giving and generous and loved to be with people, especially family.

Helen is survived by her spouse Mardy of Pasadena, California; her daughter, Priscilla, of Pasadena; son, Mardy (Mary Lou), of Whittier, California; daughter, Nancy (Jaime) Plata, of Glendale, Arizona; daughter, Katherine (Richard) Baca, of Avondale, Arizona; her grandchildren Richie, Steve, Olivia, Stephanie and Mardy John; great-grandchildren Omaia, Anaya, Elena, Ava, Oriane, Diego, and Paloma and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A beautiful funeral service was held in the Sky Rose Chapel, Rose Hills Memorial Park, Whittier on April 28, 2015 followed by internment. Bishop Beverly Shamana officiated.

- The Olivas Family
Carol Embree Pendell passed away quietly at her home in Salt Lake City. She was born Carol Maybelle Embree in Pasadena, California. Carol attended Pasadena City and Occidental colleges.

As a young woman Carol was active in her home church, Pasadena: Holliston, as well as serving on the boards of Epworth League and the National Council of Methodist Youth where she developed lifelong friendships and, most importantly, met Tom. Her work with the NCMY revealed an aptitude for diplomacy and leadership.

After marriage Carol embraced the role of pastor’s wife working, as she said, “behind the scenes.” Tom and Carol served eight churches in the former Southern California-Arizona Conference and its successors.

Carol was a devoted mother to her three sons and cherished being both a grandmother and a great-grandmother. Each of Carol’s grandchildren had an opportunity to live with her at the family home in Balboa and to travel to Europe with her. She loved having her family around her. The family tradition of everyone gathering together for the holidays was a highlight of her last years.

In the 1970s Carol served as international president of WILPF, the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom, and travelled frequently abroad in that capacity. Carol developed a strong connection with the people of the former Soviet Union, travelling there many times as well as hosting Soviet guests. Through her work with WILPF Carol met and worked with the Gorbachevs and Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space.

She was nominated for the office of “Secretary of Peace” in a 1975 Redbook article “44 Women Who Could Save America.” In the 1980s Carol participated in meetings of the International Committee for Security in Europe at the highest levels of the United Nations’ N.G.O., and was co-creator of the U.S.-Soviet Citizen’s Conference. In 1975 Carol was Co-Chair of the American Delegation of the International Women’s Congress.

After a fire destroyed Tom and Carol’s home in Balboa in 2002, they moved to Sitka, Alaska, to be near son Howard and family. Tom died in 2003 and four years later Carol moved to Salt Lake City to be near son David and his family.

She is survived by her brother, Weston, of Pasadena, California, her three sons: David Pendell of Salt Lake City, Dale Pendell of Penn Valley, California, and Howard Pendell of Sitka, Alaska; five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

- Dale Pendell
Eleanor was born in Mt. Carmel, Illinois and died in Snohomish, Washington, at the age of 103. She attended DePauw University for two years before marrying Ray Ragsdale in 1931. They moved to Massachusetts where Ray attended Boston University School of Theology. They lived in an apartment in Boston, and then moved to a small community and parsonage where she cooked on a wood-burning stove. In 1933 they moved to Holbrook in the then Southern California-Arizona Conference of the Methodist Church. In her early 90's she married George Norton, another United Methodist Minister, whom she met at their Claremont retirement home.

Eleanor is survived by daughter, Judith Lehman McAllister and son, Russell Hughes Ragsdale; by five grandchildren: Carrie Ragsdale Silverman and Justin Ragsdale, Rebecca Lehman Migdal, Christi Lehman-Starr, and Liesl Lehman Cotter; nine great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. She especially enjoyed her grandchildren and delighted in having them for overnight visits.

She loved people, animals, travel and camping, and horseback-riding. She served as President of the YWCA Board in several communities, President of Church Women United for several terms, and was active in United Methodist Women. She helped organize the Torrance, California Meals On Wheels program. She helped organize and co-lead with Dr. Ragsdale tours for up to 45 people to countries around the world from 1961 to 1985 and then continued to host tours on her own until she was 88.

She routinely gave money to environmental groups, wildlife and animal rights organizations, peace efforts, human rights groups, Claremont School of Theology, Special Olympics, public radio and TV, and various museums and historical societies. She frequently entertained pastors and their wives when Dr. Ragsdale was a District Superintendent.

She was physically active into her 90’s. For her 76th birthday the family took her on a four hour horseback trail ride in her beloved Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona. Her last camping trip was to the Canadian Rockies with her daughter when she was 93. For her 95th birthday she and her daughter sailed over Snohomish County in a hot air balloon for several hours. She continued enjoying socializing and bird-watching into her 10th decade of life.

-Judith McAllister
Betty Mae Skidmore, age 96, went home to her Father in heaven surrounded by her loving family in San Bernardino, California. Betty was born in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. She married Rev. Wyburn Skidmore following a brief courtship after meeting him while serving as a pianist for a revival meeting he spoke at in Ohio. Being a devout Baptist, Wyburn and the Methodist Church must have provided a powerful attraction in order to convince her to marry him knowing the demands a minister’s life compels.

During her life in service she served her Lord as a Sunday school teacher for children as well as adults, a choir director and pianist, and served on just about every committee the Church could conjure up. She partnered with her husband at churches in Dayton, Ohio, where her daughter Lynette was born; Ketchikan and Seward, Alaska, where her son Kimber was born; Flagstaff, Arizona, where her son Monte was born; Glendale, Arizona; and finally at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in San Bernardino where her beloved Wyburn was called by the Lord to His eternal home in 1969.

After Wyburn’s death, Betty served as a teacher in the Pregnant Minors Program for the San Bernardino Unified School District. Betty continued to serve at St. Paul’s until 2010 when ill health demanded she rest. Betty resided the remainder of her life at an assisted living facility where two of her most devoted caregivers happened to be her granddaughter and a former student. Divine providence graced Betty’s life in so many ways and she served as an example and a blessing to countless people.

Betty was a lover of literature, poetry and music. She wrote and directed plays, musicals, and Christmas oratorios. She wrote poems and church news for bulletins, newsletters, and special events. In every way, she was a partner in ministry with her husband, the church, and Christ Almighty in furthering the great commandment.

She is survived by her daughter, Lynette Dyal of Indian Harbour Beach, Florida; sons, Kimber Skidmore of Loveland, Colorado and Monte Skidmore of San Bernardino; seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; and a great number of other relatives and close friends.

-Skidmore Family
Takaua Itaulanga Tupou was born January 24, 1949, in Koulo, Ha'apai, Kingdom of Tonga. She went to school at an all-girls Christian school named Pilolevu College from elementary until her senior year. From there she attended Si'atoutai Theological School where she met her soon-to-be-husband Rev. Tofa Tupou. They married and moved to the US in 1980. Rev. Tofa then received his credentials that he needed and became a pastor in 1989. They served at the North Long Beach United Methodist church for 11 years. From there they relocated to Santa Ana Grand Avenue United Methodist and served there for eight years. Last, they were called to serve their last two years at Tolutasi United Methodist Church in South Central Los Angeles. After that they retired in 2010 and moved to Riverside.

They then decided to attend one of the churches they once served: the Santa Ana: First UMC. Mrs. Tupou was very active in the church. She had a big impact in the women's ministry and loved working with the women of the church. Her smile and laughter lit up the room every time she was present. She had a special gift in communicating with church members and always showed love to the youth and young children. She was wise and very much loved.

In mid-October of 2014 she was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and lost her battle on October 26, 2014.

She is survived by two children: Viliami Tupou and Salanieta Vaipulu, 10 grandchildren, and her loving husband.

We are at peace knowing that when Jesus comes to take the dead in Christ she will, indeed, be one of those who will rise and meet him in the clouds. Hallelujah! God is good!

May you sleep in peace Takaua Itaulanga Tupou, beautiful, God-fearing soul.

- Rev. Tofa Tupou
On August 4, 1929, God gave Loyce the gift of life. He then blessed her to be adopted by Aaron and Flora Abbott. She was an only child.

As a child, God blessed Loyce with the gift of music. She could play the piano and organ well at a young age; she used this gift to teach children songs about Jesus.

Loyce received a Bachelor of Music Degree from Washburn University (1950) and graduated Magna Cum Laude. She also received a Master's Degree in Education from California State University, Los Angeles (1958). It was there that she met the love of her life, the late Rev. Dr. James Ernest Williams. Loyce was also the Program Administrator for the Children's Theater and Senior Citizen's classes at Compton Community College for ten years.

Loyce's Christian journey spanned well over fifty years. She was organist, choir director, Minister of Music for choirs of all ages and put together musical performances for the church and community. Loyce served four churches in one or more capacities: St. John AME Church, Topeka, Kansas; Second AME Church, Los Angeles; Enterprise UM Church, Compton, and Hollypark UM Church, Gardena. She played for approximately sixty weddings, over three hundred funerals, and directed pageants and plays. She developed the youth camping program at Enterprise and was Tri-Church Youth Camp counselor advisor. She also organized the United Methodist Women's Prayer Breakfasts at Enterprise. In 1993 she and Rev. Mr. Williams travelled to the Holy Land. Loyce taught mission studies to the United Methodist Women of Hollypark, was United Methodist Woman of the Year 1998 there, and twice was the Women's Day speaker.

Loyce was very proud of her husband for being a hardworking, Godly man who made time for his family. She was also proud of her three children: Jodette, who became her loyal caregiver during the last few years of her life; her son James; and youngest daughter, Janelle, who purchased whatever she needed.

Her husband preceded her in death. She leaves to cherish her memory: daughters, Jodette and Janelle Williams, son James Aaron Williams and his wife, Francee Greer Williams; grandchildren, Joelle and Sean Hewitt Williams, and a host of relatives and friends.

-Loyce, Jodette and Janelle Williams
Mary Jean Word was born in Rankin, Illinois, the daughter of Calvin G. and Pauline Corbly Hubbell. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in music from Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois, where she was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha social sorority and Sigma Alpha Iota music fraternity. She also earned a Master’s of Library Science degree from San Jose State University where she was initiated into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

She taught music in public schools in several states, worked in Germany for the U.S. Army Special Services, and served as a high school librarian in El Centro and San Diego.

Upon retiring, she was a substitute reference librarian for 15 years for the San Diego County Library.

Mrs. Word believed in the Wesleyan emphasis of infusing the whole of society with the teachings of Jesus. When a high school student, she played the piano for Sunday school in her home church. In the churches served by her husband, she organized and led children’s and youth choirs. She was active in the League of Women Voters for fifty years and supported the struggles for women’s rights, social justice, and public schools.

She was an avid reader and passionate about travel, visiting over 40 countries.

Mary Jean had a gift of encouraging people to aim higher, grow in their faith and skills, and to give time to volunteer their services. One of her professional colleagues wrote: “Mary Jean was a remarkable woman. Her mild demeanor and fiendish wit delighted me. Her keen intelligence and vast knowledge impressed me. Her sense of moral outrage and willingness to act on it inspired me.”

She is survived by her husband, The Reverend C. Bill Word; daughters, Polly Cipparrone and Betsy Mueller; son-in-law Gary Halbert; grandsons, Nicholas and Clayton Halbert; her brother Calvin E. Hubbell, of Arizona; and her sister Suzanne Barr, of Illinois, as well as nieces and nephews.

- The Word Family