

**James R. Crumley Jr Archives
2026 South Carolina ELCA Synod Assembly**

Administration

Personnel and Hours of Operation

The Archives employs four part-time workers: Shannon Smith, director and archivist; Trudy Bouknight, office manager; Scott Reeves, digital archivist; and Ashley Ragland, assistant archivist.

Accessions

New and reoccurring accessions from Region 9 synods, congregations, and individuals are deposited in the Crumley Archives and are processed by staff. Accessions include historically significant records, media, and artifacts pertaining to Lutheranism in Region 9.

Special Projects:

“Unsung: A Chronicle of Black Lutherans”

The Crumley Archives, under the direction of Dr Harvey Huntley and Scott Reeves, has produced three segments in the feature film, “Unsung: A Chronicle of Black Lutherans”.¹ Filming began with pastors and laity from the South Carolina and Southeastern Synods who shared their stories and memories of Lutheranism in the South. The next series of filming will take place in the Caribbean Synod in Spring 2026.

This film is based upon the scholarship of Dr Huntley, who for more than three years has sought to compile and catalog congregation, mission, and personal records related to African descent Lutherans. These records are preserved in the Crumley Archives. Please check our website for updates as segments are produced. If you have a story or record to share, please contact the Crumley Archives.²

Archives Relocation

We are pleased to report that Newberry College has warmly welcomed the Crumley Archives to its campus. In Fall 2025, we moved most of our administrative operations and artifacts to the historic Dufford Home. In May 2026, we will relocate our records to Newberry. This is a monumental task. Please contact the Archives to see how you can get involved with this historic project!

Capital Campaign

In an effort to fund the preservation of Region 9 ELCA records for the future, we will launch a capital campaign in the 2026. We appreciate your prayers and the many ways that you support our mission.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon L. Smith

¹ See trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SobFCVCcF0I>.

² You can reach Shannon Smith at archivist@crumleyarchives.com, or by phone at 803-331-9985. Follow us on Facebook and on our website, www.crumleyarchives.com.



2026 Inclusiveness Network (INET) Report

Racial Justice, Gender Justice, Indigenous Peoples Accompaniment Network (IPAN)

Racial Justice team

The Racial Justice team has engaged in and lifted many opportunities to learn, talk, and grow in understanding and adapting our cultural biases this year.

- We completed book studies on The Autobiography of Malcolm X last fall and started a new study on Just Mercy in February. In November we followed up with a showing of the movie Malcom X at Orangeburg Lutheran.
- Supporting, inviting, and attending the Martin Luther King Service in January and Juneteenth with Black Opera at Ascension Lutheran. We led a prayer service remembering the tenth anniversary of the Emmanuel 9 shooting at the 2025 Synod Assembly.
- Conversations began early in 2025 that led to working with Bishop Ginny on Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) & Cultural Awareness learning for Synod Council and other leaders in the Synod including the Racial Justice team.
- Through conversations with Pr Jorge Leone, the RJ team has participated, supported and encouraged building relationships with the people of Cristo Rey Lutheran through inviting our sibling congregations to visit them in worship and fellowship, bring greetings from our congregation members, and support them in tangible ways through financial support and supplies.
- And this fall we are offering an Atlanta Human Rights Bus Trip, scheduled for September 15-16, 2026. The Bishop's Office has generously offered to pay 50% of the cost for the tour to encourage participation.

You are invited to become part of the RJ team. We hope that you will join us in any number of these and other upcoming opportunities as we continue to live into being better together as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Bruce Kreutzer, Chair

Indigenous Peoples Accompaniment Network, IPAN

The Indigenous Peoples Accompaniment Network was developed in 2019 and has included Indigenous Tribal Members and Heritage and Non-Indigenous persons of the SC Synod and other Christian Churches. Following the pause in Gatherings during the Covid-19 Pandemic, from 2023 to the present time the IPAN has met in-person and/or by ZOOM approximately quarterly. The recent Gatherings have included Pastor Greg Moore (Facilitator), Deacon Kimberly Heindl (Assistant to the Bishop), Deacon Kevin Burke, and Mr. Todd Bridge (Member of Episcopal Church of the Cross, Columbia SC, and Tribal Member of the Choctaw Indian Nation), The Rev. Dr. Daniel Richards (Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper SC), The Rev. Dr. David Hill (Consultant, SC Synod-Retired, and member of the Lumbee Indian Nation), and Pastor Bob Beaver (Consultant, SC Synod-Retired).

The IPAN helped Todd Bridge develop a Land Acknowledgement Statement for the November 2025 Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper SC. In the months to come we will be preparing to share with churches the first piece of information related to the truth and history of relations between Indigenous Peoples and Non-Indigenous persons. We have reached out to SC Tribal leadership for their input on topics to learn and share. We are also making efforts to partner with Lutheran Men In Mission with the Pee Dee Indian Tribe in SC. We continue to seek Indigenous and Non-Indigenous persons to work with us on the IPAN.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Greg Moore, Facilitator.

Gender and Sexuality Justice team

The Gender & Sexuality Justice Task Force has seen encouraging early interest, but our momentum has slowed in recent months. We believe this is not due to lack of care, but rather the need for renewed clarity, invitation, and shared ownership across the Synod. As we look ahead, our intention is to reinvigorate this work by engaging both clergy and laity in meaningful, accessible ways—centering education that is theologically grounded, pastorally sensitive, and attentive to lived experience. We also seek to move beyond conversation alone by identifying practical steps for congregations and leaders: creating welcoming and safe spaces, equipping leaders with resources for inclusive ministry, and fostering partnerships that reflect our call to justice and dignity for all people. We invite the Synod Council's support in helping us re-extend this invitation broadly, so that together we may more faithfully embody Christ's inclusive love in our shared life and witness.

In Christ,
Pastor Christopher Girardeau, Chair

Lutheran Disaster Relief, Carolinas Disaster Response Coordinators 2026 South Carolina ELCA Synod Assembly

Our work changed dramatically after Helene impacted the Southeast and our team has grown to help meet the needs of those impacted in both North and South Carolina. What began as one shared three-year term call has now been renewed for two additional years as our work expands.

We continue our work across both Carolinas to encourage and support preparedness and develop a network of individuals and congregations that are better prepared to respond when the next disaster occurs. We have attended the annual gatherings of Lutheran Men in Mission and Women of the ELCA, as well as synod assemblies in both NC and SC. We welcome the opportunity to visit congregations or conference events to preach, to teach about household and congregational preparedness, and to provide updates on the ongoing work of LDR Carolinas!

We participate in quarterly meetings of both NC & SC VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) as well as the National VOAD conference. We work closely with other local and national organizations as the work of response has moved into long-term recovery.

The first addition to our team was Pastor Emily Lemoine who provided administrative support through 2025. She provided acknowledgements for all financial contributions and donated items and helped us manage the distribution of these donations. (She returned to full time parish ministry at the end of the year, and Pastor Heather Bachelder recently joined us in this capacity.)

Amy Phillips joined us in January 2025 as the Western NC Response Coordinator, based at Lutheridge. During the year, she coordinated the schedules, housing arrangements, and work assignments for over 1000 volunteers who traveled from across the country to work with us in WNC! She meets regularly with partners at local events and county LTRGs (long-term recovery groups).

Kelli Fulmer joined our team as SC Response Coordinator in April 2025. She has worked closely with SCOR (SC Office of Resilience), the state agency handling disaster case management, and has been assisting us with the Lakelands LTRG which serves six heavily impacted counties in SC. This work is supported by grants from the American Red Cross and Central Carolinas Community Foundation.

Two additional positions were filled in early 2026 to provide Project Coordinators in the Asheville and Boone areas. Thom Pegg and Pastor Jonathan Weant will coordinate tools, building supplies, and projects for volunteer teams at work in those areas.

We are grateful to LDR (Lutheran Disaster Response) and other organizations and foundations for grant funding which continues to support our work. LDR funding provides for team salaries and also provides MESS (Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Support) Training for volunteer chaplains. Financial assistance from the NC Synod Michael Peeler/Virginia Casey Grant Fund and the SC Mission Fund has allowed us to continue other projects and events including preparedness mini grants and congregational preparedness workshops.

Our Bridging Together partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service continues to replace private bridges in western North Carolina that were damaged or destroyed by flooding during Helene. Twelve bridges were completed in 2025, helping 28 families get home safely. This partnership is supported by donations, as well as two large grants from American Red Cross and Community Foundation of Western North Carolina.

We continue to share information with others via our website www.ldrcarolinas.org which includes a resource page, blog, plus information on Bridging Together and volunteering in response to Helene. We share information on events, weather predictions, and disaster response by email to our LDR Carolinas Network, and on Facebook and Instagram at www.facebook.com/ldrcarolinas and @LDRCarolinas.

We encourage you to connect with us by visiting our display table, completing a Preparedness Survey, and joining the LDR Carolinas Network!

The Revs. Ray & Ruth Ann Sipe

Your Calling + Our Benefits

Portico Benefit Services' Report to 2026 Synod Assemblies

Your calling is to serve. Ours is to support you. As the ELCA's benefit ministry, Portico provides benefits that nurture holistic health, so you can live out your calling and serve with confidence and grace. Here's a visual recap of what our community of more than 52,000 plan members experienced in 2025.

52K
Members Served by Portico



2,829

Text/Virtual Health Care Visits
to 98point6®, with an estimated cost savings of \$263 per visit.



205
Births & Adoptions

11th

Consecutive Year

of our Customer Care Center being named a Center of Excellence by Benchmark Portal.



619
*Changes of Call**

1,702

Sword Health Enrollments

and nearly 42K total sessions in their Thrive, Move, and Bloom digital physical therapy and mobility programs.

\$157K

Debt Paid Off

by members via LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling, with over \$2.6M paid off since 2008.

16%

of Member Income

saved for retirement, on average, by members sponsored in the Traditional Benefits Program, thanks to employer and member contributions.*

\$232M

Made in Annuity Payments

and 533 retirements.



32

Beginning Disability Benefits

4,214

Members Worked with a Portico Financial Planner,

with a cumulative 95.5% satisfaction rate.*



1,927

Members Made Roth After-tax Contributions
to their retirement plans.

Nearly 10% of Our 10K ELCA Medicare-Primary Plan Members

participated in the SilverSneakers fitness program.*

We design our benefits to align with the needs of the church, pooling resources through a community benefits plan to deliver stable, sustainable support that enhances everyday life and brings value to those who serve. Follow us on social media @PorticoBenefits.

*Source: Traditional Benefits Program. All other numbers and percentages are drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.



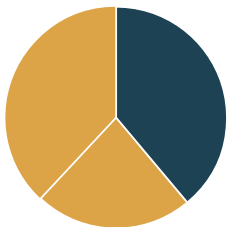
MISSION SUPPORT: WHAT DOES MY OFFERING DO?

South Carolina Synod

Every week, Lutherans across the country gather to worship. Many of us give to our congregation as part of this experience. ELCA members give about \$1.6 billion annually as regular offerings to ELCA congregations and worshiping communities. When you give your offering, most of it stays with your congregation to fund its vital work. A portion — about 5%, on average — becomes Mission Support, given by your congregation to your synod. In FY2024 the South Carolina Synod shared \$665,103 in Mission Support for ELCA churchwide ministries. Because of Mission Support, our hands can do God's work in more places than any one person or congregation could alone. Together we experience the way of Jesus; discover community, justice and love; and help more people experience the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.



Your **MISSION SUPPORT** funds a variety of churchwide ministries.

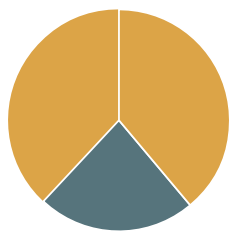


38% BUILDS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES in the United States by enabling us to:

Thank you for \$252,739 from the South Carolina Synod for these ministries!

- Plant and support hundreds of worshiping communities.
- Revitalize congregational ministries and reach out to their surrounding communities.
- Promote leadership opportunities, discernment and education through leadership initiatives.
- Support the work of seven ELCA seminaries and 27 ELCA colleges and universities.
- Host events and leadership opportunities for youth and young adults.
- Support regional work through directors for evangelical mission as well as candidacy and leadership managers.
- Prepare and implement a system for recruiting and assigning rostered ministers.

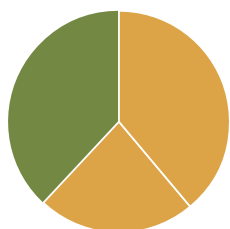




Another **23% GROWS THE GLOBAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** and addresses issues around the world, enabling us to:

Thank you for \$152,974 from the South Carolina Synod for these ministries!

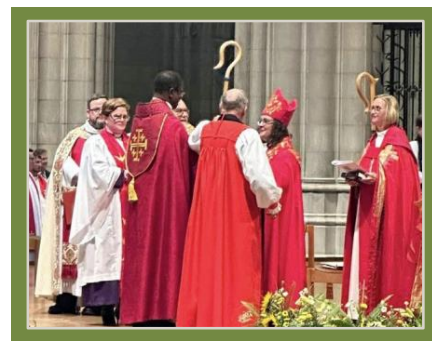
- Accompany new Lutheran churches, expand ministries and train leaders and evangelists.
- Send missionaries to accompany communities around the world.
- Address social inequities and work for justice.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with 149 other churches through the Lutheran World Federation to strengthen the church and its global work.
- Foster relationships between ELCA synods and 65 companion churches, for a total of 127 official relationships.
- Work with leaders and members of our African-descent, American Indian, Alaska Native, Arab, Middle Eastern, Asian, Pacific Islander and Latiné communities.



Finally, **39% STRENGTHENS AND SUSTAINS THE MINISTRY and MISSION** of the whole church, enabling us to:

Thank you for \$259,390 from the South Carolina Synod for these ministries!

- Offer ministry resources and opportunities to lay leaders for networking.
- Develop social messages of the ELCA as topical documents to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of concern to church and society.
- Sustain ecumenical and interfaith relations.
- Partner with congregations and ministries across the church as they explore new, innovative ways of being church in a constantly changing world.
- Invest in technology and communications.
- Engage in research and strategic planning.
- Create and share resources for faith, discipleship, prayer, stewardship and worship.



Thank you for your ongoing support and faithful partnership! For stories of your impact, visit LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA. To find additional Mission Support resources, visit ELCA.org/SOFIA. Scan the QR code to view the new Mission Support video "What Does My Offering Do?"



Dear Partners in Ministry,

Did you know there is a new project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the [Church Property Resource Hub](#)?

Developed in response to requests from synod and congregational leaders, the Church Property Resource Hub offers support in navigating the opportunities and challenges that buildings and land represent for congregational vitality and the wider mission of the church.



COURSES &
RESOURCES



SUPPORT
FORUM



SUCCESS
STORIES

Find **resources** and expand your knowledge of church property management through templates, guides, explainers; and **courses**.

Share advice and get support from colleagues with experience answering property management questions, all on our digital **forum** (forthcoming).

Be inspired by **success stories** of faith communities using underutilized space in exciting new ways to fulfill their missions.

The Church Property Resource Hub is ...

... an online platform that connects congregations and synod leaders to information, organizations and guidance on effective, faith-driven management of church property.

The Church Property Resource Hub is NOT ...

... an attempt by the churchwide organization to take control of congregations' property. Local churches hold the title and deed to their property; their right to make independent decisions about the use, management and future of their property is codified in the ELCA constitution and churches' individual constitutions.

The Church Property Resource Hub is led by the Rev. Sarah Jones (program director), Deacon Sarah Kretschmann (digital communications manager) and the Rev. Tim Brown (director of congregational stewardship). This team is reaching out across the ELCA, our sibling denominations and the many organizations and businesses that focus on church property, to collect, curate and disseminate information that synods and congregations need.

In these first months of the project, the Church Property Resource Hub team has:

- Invited all 65 of the synods across the ELCA to connect with the new initiative
- Published 15+ new FREE church property resources for faith leaders
- Hosted monthly webinars featuring experts in church property
- Sent monthly newsletters to leaders throughout out the ELCA and beyond
- Gathered 12+ stories of congregations' innovative space and land projects
- Launched the new Church Property Resource Hub online Support Forum for resource sharing and support
- Developed eLearning courses for rostered and lay leaders to building their skills in managing church property

We encourage you to access the following resources as you navigate church property opportunities and challenges:

- [Join the Church Property Resource Hub Online Community on LeadNet!](#)
- [Explore resources available to you today.](#)
- [Sign up for e-newsletters to receive invitations to future webinars and the latest resources.](#)

We are grateful to do this work together. Please reach out to CPRH@elca.org with any questions or to set up an individualized meeting.

Grace and peace,



**The Rev. Sarah Lyn Jones, Deacon Sarah Kretschmann and
the Rev. Tim Brown**

Church Property Resource Hub Team
[773.380.7443](tel:773.380.7443) | CPRH@elca.org

Barbara Dennis Corley

Barbara Dennis Corley, 96, formally of Orangeburg, SC, passed away on June 22, 2025, at the home of her daughter in Seneca, SC. She was the widow of The Reverend George Baylis Corley who passed away in June of 2024. They were married for nearly 75 years.

Barbara was born in Florence, SC, the daughter of The Reverend Junius Rhame Dennis and Ruth Hicks Dennis. She was a graduate of North High School and a 1949 graduate of Columbia College with a BS in Chemistry. She taught in the science departments of Cameron High School and Orangeburg High School.

After her retirement, Barbara and her husband Baylis were active members of the South Carolina Rose Society and the Orangeburg Rose Society. Barbara was known for her lovely rose gardens as well as being a talented flower arranger often winning blue ribbons for her flower arrangements at the Orangeburg County Fair. She enjoyed sharing her roses and arrangements with many. Barbara was a past member of the Moultrie-Eutaw NSDAR and the Walhalla NSDAR.

Barbara Corley is survived by her daughters Denise Corley (Steve) Godowns of Houston, TX and Edith Ruth Corley (Ed) Pekarek of Seneca, SC; grandchildren Amy Elizabeth Pekarek, Jeffrey Baylis (Lesslie) Pekarek, Andrew Edward (Carmen) Pekarek, and Franklin Dennis Godowns; great-grandsons John Baylis Pekarek, William Douglass Pekarek, and Patton Edward Paul Pekarek, and a number of nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, parents, and only sister, Jerry Dennis Fanning.

The memorial service for both Barbara and Baylis Corley was held on July 12th, 2025, at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Cameron, SC, with a graveside committal at West End Cemetery in St. Matthews, SC.



Ronald Lyell Diegel

Pastor Ronald Lyell Diegel, 88, of Lexington, passed away on July 3, 2025 and went to be with his Lord after a long battle with Alzheimer's. Born in Albany, New York, on July 3, 1937, he was the son of Lyell and Miriam Diegel. He was married to the late Charlotte L. Diegel.

In his early life, Pastor Diegel served briefly in the United States Navy following graduation from Colonie Central High School in Albany, New York in 1955. Following this, he earned an associate's degree in electrical engineering from Hudson Valley Tech and worked in turbine engineering for a time.

Realizing that engineering was not the path for him, he sold Watkins cleaning products door to door to earn money to attend Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1962. Following graduation from Hartwick College, Pastor Diegel, still unsure of exactly what path he would follow as a career, providentially became friends with a Lutheran pastor who mentored Pastor Diegel and led him to Jesus. By this time, his parents had moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, so Pastor Diegel attended the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, which was quite a change for a northern boy from Albany, New York, but it changed the trajectory of his life from that point forward. Prior to graduating with a seminary degree in 1965, and while in Columbia, he was introduced on a blind date to Charlotte Lesemann from Charleston, South Carolina, who was attending nursing school at the University of South Carolina. On September 11, 1965 they were married at St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Pastor Diegel's first call to lead a church was in Burlington, North Carolina, as he became pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church where he stayed for approximately 4 years. In 1969, Pastor Diegel joined the United States Army as a chaplain and was soon on active duty where he was deployed to serve in Vietnam and specifically in the An Khê province. Serving in this mountainous region of Vietnam from 1970-71, Pastor Diegel flew from mountain to mountain in a wartime helicopter and would preach sermons and give communion to the troops – never carrying a weapon but seeing much conflict and many casualties. While in Vietnam, Pastor Diegel earned three Bronze Star Medals for meritorious achievement and service in a combat theater, the Air Medal for heroic and meritorious service while



in aerial flight and the Army Commendation Medal for consistent acts of heroism, outstanding achievement and meritorious service.

Upon return from Vietnam, Pastor Diegel received a call to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Irmo, South Carolina in 1972. He also earned his Master's in Divinity from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in 1972. Further, while pastoring Bethlehem Lutheran Church, he earned a Master's in Education from the University of South Carolina in 1980. Pastor Diegel faithfully served the congregation of Bethlehem from 1972 until his retirement in 1999 – overseeing a major building addition to the church in 1976 and the church's 200 year anniversary in 1988. Upon retirement, Pastor Diegel and his wife joined St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Lexington where he enjoyed teaching Sunday school and making many new friends for many years. Golf was a past time he greatly enjoyed, and he also enjoyed keeping up with his beloved South Carolina Gamecocks and the Atlanta Braves.

Pastor Diegel is survived by his children, Ronnie Diegel (Ginger) and Becky Dezarn (David); his brother, Douglas Diegel (Helen); his sister, Eileen Posey; his grandchildren, Madison Gainey (Chris), Andrew Diegel, Ava-Coleman Diegel, Jackson Jernigan (Ellyce), and Ashton Whitt (Jacob); a step-grandchild, Shelby Johnson (Dustin); two great grandchildren, Caroline Gainey and Rhett Gainey; and one step-great grandchild, Walker Johnson.

Pastor Diegel's graveside service was held on July 11, 2025, at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Lexington, South Carolina.

Amanda “Mandy” Caughman Derrick

Amanda “Mandy” Caughman Derrick was born on August 11, 1959 and passed away on August 14, 2025. She was the daughter of the late Raymond and Lib Caughman.

Mandy was a 1977 graduate of Lexington High School and a 1981 graduate of Newberry College. She enjoyed a 29 year career in public education as a beloved second and third grade teacher. She loved teaching, South Carolina history, baking, and serving her church through working with children.

Her greatest joy, however, was her family. She is survived by her husband of 40 years, John Derrick, her daughters Anna Panning (Jonathan) and Sarah Menke (Josh), and her grandchildren who adored her: Jacob, Grace, and Isaac. She is also survived by her sister, Ann Alexander and brother, Ray Caughman.

Mrs. Derrick’s funeral service was held on August 17, 2025, at St. David’s Lutheran Church.



Patricia “Miss Pat” Shealy

Mrs. Shealy passed away Tuesday, September 9, 2025. Born in Greer, she was a daughter of the late Vernon Alvin and Essie Lee Wallace Massingale. She was an active member of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church where she participated in the Prayer Shawl Ministry, WELCA, Church Choir, Witness Committee, VIP Group, taught Sunday School, and was Church Secretary for over 20 years. She also sang with the Ridge Choral Society and retired from JD Lever Elementary as a Teacher’s Assistant. She loved God, her church, her grandchildren, baseball, cherry Coke, peaches, and the Clemson Tigers.



Surviving are her children, David Shealy (Suzanne), Judy Horton (Van), and the Rev. Jeff Shealy (Ashley); grandchildren, Caroline Shealy, Luke Shealy, Jacob Horton, Samuel Horton, and John Paul Horton. She was predeceased by her husband, the Rev. C. Louis Shealy; sister, Linda Stapleton; and brother, Vernon Massingale.

Mrs. Shealy’s funeral service and burial were held on September 14, 2025, at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.

John Cantey Nye

The Reverend John Cantey Nye, 88, of Charleston, South Carolina, entered into eternal rest on Wednesday, September 24, 2025. He was born in Columbia, SC November 20, 1936, the son of the late John Cantey Nye Sr. (J.C.) and Hazel Stillinger Nye.

Cantey was a graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne University and Lutheran Theological Seminary and was ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament on May 28, 1961. He faithfully served St. John Lutheran Church, Johnston, from 1961 until 1972, and Advent Lutheran Church, North Charleston, from 1972 until his retirement in 1999. Pastor

Nye's ministry was a blessing to so many in South Carolina and beyond.

In his spare time, Cantey was a world traveler. He journeyed across much of Western and Eastern Europe, the Holy Land, the former Soviet Union, and beyond. Germany held a special place in his heart, where he led Lutherland tours and attended the Oberammergau Passion Play multiple times. He loved sharing these experiences with others, opening windows into faith and culture.

Cantey will be remembered for his gentle smile, his strong hugs, and his unwavering faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in both word and deed. He knew always who and whose he was: a beloved, forgiven, baptized child of God.

Cantey is survived by his brother, Donald Morgan Nye (Betty Frick Nye); nephew, Donald Travis Nye; niece, Tiffany Nye Wood; and great-niece, Kelsey Addison Wood.

Pastor Cantey's funeral service was held on October 3, 2025, at the Lutheran Church of The Redeemer with a committal at Bush River Memorial Gardens.



Margaret “Maggie” Martha Cook and Boyd F. Cook

Death could not separate what 63 years of shared devotion had joined together.

Margaret “Maggie” Marth Cook, 85, died September 24, 2025, from complications of a stroke. On September 29, 2025, her beloved husband, Reverend Dr. Boyd F. Cook, 84, died from complications of Alzheimer’s disease, their final act of ministry performed side by side.

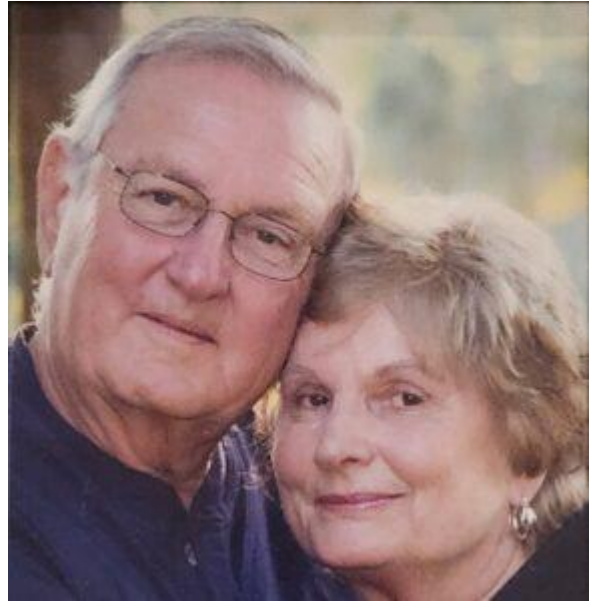
Born September 20, 1940, Maggie was the daughter of Arnold and Clara Marth. She was predeceased by her siblings Marilyn Donahue, Marcia Loadholt Ballentine and Richard Marth.

Born May 8, 1941, Boyd was the son of Floyd and Helen Cook. He was predeceased by his siblings Duane Cook, Bobby Cook, John Cook and Irene Candler.

For 39 years, they served as partners in faith and service. Boyd shepherded congregations at Mt. Pleasant Lutheran Church, Saluda, SC, Living Word Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN, Christ Lutheran Church, Hilton Head, SC and St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Chapin, SC and also founded and lead Lutheran Homes of SC while Maggie shaped young minds as an elementary teacher and librarian at Hilton Head Island Elementary and Chapin Elementary.

They are survived by their children Ronnie Cook (Louann), Diane Prewitt (Tom), and Amy Oliver (Scott); grandsons Brian Oliver (Lindsey), Daniel Oliver, and Drayton Cook; and great-granddaughter Baylor Oliver.

Maggie and Boyd clearly lived beautiful, meaningful lives of service and the fact that they departed this world within days of each other is a testament to their deep bond.



Joshua Robert Knutson

The Reverend Joshua Robert Knutson, 39, entered the Church Triumphant on Wednesday, October 22, 2025. Born on August 20, 1986, in Columbia, South Carolina, Josh was the beloved son of the late Mark Allen Knutson and Melanie Ballentine Knutson.

He married the love of his life, Roseann, in 2012, beginning a partnership rooted in love, laughter, and faith. Two years later they welcomed their daughter, Lexi, who was absolutely adored and cherished by her father.



Upon answering the call to ministry, Josh enrolled at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in 2011 and later attended Coastal Carolina University, earning his bachelor's degree in history. Following his graduation, he continued his studies at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenior-Rhyne University (formerly) in Columbia, SC, graduating in 2020 with a Master of Divinity. Then, on June 20, 2020, he was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Following his ordination, having been called by the South Carolina Synod, Josh became the Pastor and Mission Developer to Two Rivers Parish, a partnership of Christ Community Lutheran of North Charleston and St. Michael Lutheran Church, Moncks Corner, SC, where he served until the time of his death.

In addition to the love he shared with his family, his friends, and all who he encountered, Pastor Josh will be remembered for his powerful preaching, insightful teaching, empowering leadership, his constant drive to get things done, and, of course, his sarcastic wit.

He is survived by his wife, Roseann, and their daughter, Lexi, who were the joy of his life; his mother, Melanie Ballentine Knutson; his sisters, Amanda Kelsey Knutson and Sara Elizabeth Knutson; his paternal grandmother, Dolores Dunn; and a large, loving extended family of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his father, Mark Knutson; his sister, Melissa Knutson; and his maternal grandfather, Robert Riley Ballentine.

Josh's legacy will live on in the lives of all who were blessed to know him. His ministry, marked by genuine care, integrity, and joy, reflected his deep trust in the Gospel he preached. He leaves behind a world made better by his kindness and a faith community strengthened by his service. Pastor Knutson's celebration of his life and life eternal was held on November 6, 2025, at Pisgah Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC.

Pauline Elizabeth “Betty” Brunson Loadholdt

Pauline Elizabeth Brunson Loadholdt, affectionately known as “Betty,” passed peacefully into eternal life at the age of 91 in Newberry, S.C., on October 26. Born on October 11, 1934, in Clarendon County, S.C., she was the eldest daughter of the late William Alva Brunson and Margaret Stuckey Brunson.

Betty graduated from Summerton High School in 1953 and earned her Bachelor of Science in Home Economics from Winthrop College in 1957. That same year, she married The Rev. Donald Brantley Loadholdt, and together they began their life in Lexington, N.C.



As a devoted pastor’s wife, Betty shared her gifts by teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, and nurturing their four children. She also dedicated her professional life to education, teaching Home Economics and Special Education in North Carolina public schools until her retirement in 1994.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband of 55 years, and her sister Faye Brunson Sifford (2016). Betty’s legacy lives on through her children: Donna Childers of Rock Hill, S.C.; Bill Loadholdt (Robin) of Prosperity, S.C.; Cathy Lyons (Tommy) of Mooresville, N.C.; and Beth Hickman (Eddy) of Winston-Salem, N.C. She is also survived by her sister Mary Janice Toner (Cliff) of Manning, S.C.; grandchildren Jake Loadholdt (Caroline), Morgan L. Kaihara (Cameron), Harrison Hickman, Brantley Lyons; and great-grandchildren Liam, Miko, and Greyson Kaihara.

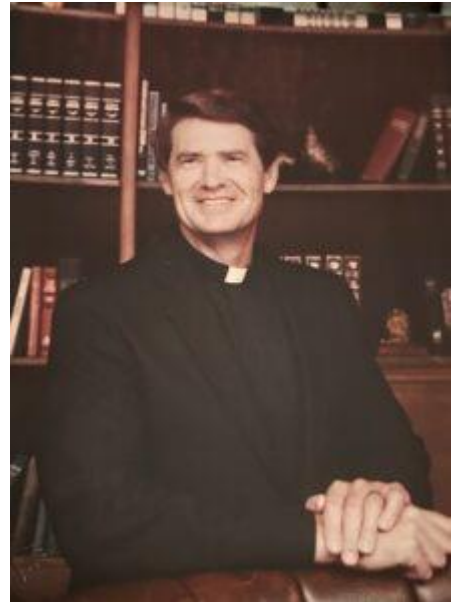
Visitation and Services:

Mrs. Loadholdt’s funeral service was held November 2, 2025, at St. Nicholas Lutheran Church in Fairfax, SC.

Mack Carison Branham

The Reverend Dr. Mack Carison Branham, age 94, of Columbia, SC, passed away on November 6, 2025, at his residence with his wife and loving family members nearby.

Dr. Branham was born on April 20, 1931, in Columbia, SC to the late Mack Carison Branham, Sr. and Laura Pauline Sexton Branham. He attended Columbia public schools and graduated from Columbia High School in 1949. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1953 from Clemson College which was then an all-male military school. It was during his years at Clemson that he met his future wife, Jennie Louise Jones. They were married in December the year Mack graduated.



It was in the 1950s that the two major forces of his professional life converged—a career in the Air Force and a career in the church as pastor and chaplain. He was ordained to the ministry in 1958, becoming the pastor of Lutheran Church parishes, Providence and Nazareth, in Lexington, SC. It was the Air Force, however, which would play a major role in where his career would take him and Jennie. Among the places where: Wichita Falls, TX; Columbus, GA; Dayton, OH; San Antonio, TX; Montgomery, AL; Tempe, AZ; Charleston, SC, Chateauroux, France . . . and finally, for Mack, Vietnam. Jennie has said that in their lives together, they've lived in over fifty residences.

When Colonel Branham retired from the Air Force in 1979, he joined the staff of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, eventually becoming its president from 1982-1992. Over the years of his military service, he had earned a Master of Divinity degree, a Master of Sacred Theology degree, a Master's degree in Business Administration, and a PhD in Education and Education Leadership. He was perfectly positioned to lead the Seminary in his decade of tenure there.

When they finally settled again in Columbia after all the years of having lived in faraway places—and with the children all grown, Jennie was able to finish her degree in art at Columbia College. One of Dr. Branham's proudest moments was to give the invocation at her graduation ceremony and then stand by to support her in her own career as an artist and as Chair of the State Fair Art Exhibitions, President of the Art League in Chapin, SC and Director of the Columbia College Art Gallery.

After his second retirement, there was time for a whole different set of experiences, including the presidency of the Rotary Club of Chapin Sunrise and serving as Governor of Rotary District 7770 during 2005-2006. In addition, there was a return to actual participation in sports. He had run track at Columbia High School, and now as a Senior Olympics participant, he was hauling home trophies for weightlifting, javelin, and shot put.

For a man who led such a busy life, Dr. Branham always had time to be mentor and advisor to those who needed his help. He was definitely the “go to” person for many who sought his calm and thoughtful guidance and reassurance.

Among his hobbies were weightlifting and reading. And the hidden talent most people didn't know about was his culinary skills! His famous “Mack & Cheese” was always requested—no matter what meal it was . . . and his sour cream pound cakes were legendary. His twenty-three children, grands and great grands speak of him as being “gentle, soft-spoken, and kind.”

Dr. Branham received many awards and honors in his lifetime, among them the Order of the Palmetto from the Governor of South Carolina, Paul Harris Rotary Club Award and an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from Newberry College. Also, there was an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from his alma mater, Clemson University.

Dr. Branham is survived by his loving wife of nearly 72 years, Jennie Jones Branham and their four children: Kenneth Gary Branham (Anne) of Greenville, SC; Charles Michael Branham (Teresa) of Vance, SC; Keith Robert Branham (Lisa) of Fairhope, AL; and Laurie Lynn Branham (Pamela Brown) of Shreveport, LA. The ten grandchildren include Alicia Richardson (Derek), Ryan and Matthew Branham; Tony (Erin) and Mark (Ann) Branham; Devon Reinhardt (John) and Kelly Branham; and Joshua, Zachary (Emily), and Jacob (Natalia) Bigby. The nine great grandchildren include Breck and Cohen Richardson; Cole, Anna Kate, Kennedy, Grady, and Hudson Branham; Sophie and Abbie Reinhardt. Also surviving is nephew Rick Barber, great nephews Stephen and Hart Barber, and great niece Marisa Barber. And brother-in-law, C. Robert Jones (Wes Heath) of Mars Hill, NC.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters and their spouses: Dorothy and Bernard Reyman and Caroline and James Barber (and their son Russell Barber.)

Dr. Branham was laid to rest with Full Military Honors at the National Cemetery at Fort Jackson, SC with a memorial service celebrating his life on December 5, 2025, at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Columbia, SC.

Elizabeth Cromer Carswell

Elizabeth Cromer Carswell, 92, of Flat Rock, NC, formerly of Columbia, SC, passed away on December 1, 2025, at Tore's Home, following a long period of declining health.

Born July 4, 1933 in Lincolnton, NC, she was the daughter of the late Dr. Voigt Rhodes Cromer and Sara Dreher Cromer. She graduated in 1951 from Hickory High School, Hickory, NC, received her B.A. degree in 1955 from Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory, and a Master of Librarianship in 1979 from the University of South Carolina.



She served as media specialist at A.C. Flora High School and Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia followed by 20 years at Chapin High School in Chapin, SC and retired in 1994.

In 1956, Elizabeth married Robert (Bob) Carswell. They enjoyed 53 years together, living in Columbia, SC, Warner Robins, GA, and Birmingham, AL, before returning to Columbia in 1966.

Always involved in her church, especially in the work of Lutheran Women, Elizabeth was the pastor's wife in Faith Lutheran Church, Warner-Robins; Shades Valley Lutheran Church, Birmingham and St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Columbia. More recently she served in various roles at Mt. Horeb Lutheran Church, Chapin and Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Columbia.

Whether known as Elizabeth, Liz, or Lib, she loved to be with people. Her energy and diligence went into every endeavor. She was a dedicated alumnus of Lenoir-Rhyne College, serving as president of the alumni association and receiving the Trustee Award in 1998. She was active in the Symphony League of the South Carolina Philharmonic, the Columbia Study Club, the Woman's Club of Columbia, Beta Omega Service Sorority, and multiple book and bridge clubs.

An avid traveler and hostess, her hospitality extended throughout the world as she and her late husband opened their home to international students through the Columbia Council for Internationals, which resulted in lifelong friendships with Dr. Craig Stephenson of Toronto and Marijn Tebbens of Amsterdam. They became a part of the family which she regularly drew together for dinners and vacations.

She resided in the Columbia, SC area from 1966 – 2019 until moving to Hendersonville, NC to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren.

Mrs. Carswell is survived by one daughter, Lynn Carswell Huffman (Allan) of Flat Rock, NC; grandchildren, Sara Schmidt (Andrew) of Brevard, NC, John Huffman (Kelsey) of Huntersville, NC, and Leigh Moyer (Will) of Memphis, TN; sister Rebecca Campbell (Richard) of Mt. Pleasant, SC, sisters-in-law Betty Royster of Lincolnton, NC, Shelvy Paysour of Gastonia, NC and Hope Sessums of Coos Bay, OR, five great-grandchildren, several nephews and numerous great nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband Dr. Robert Wayne Carswell and a son, David Voigt Carswell.

Mrs. Carswell's graveside service was held on December 6, 2025, at Hollybrook Cemetery, Lincolnton, NC. A celebration of her life was held on January 10, 2026, at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Columbia, SC.

Gary Ray Lyerly

Gary Ray Lyerly, 82, of Raleigh, NC passed into the Church Triumphant on 7 December 2025 with family by his side. He was born on the 19 June 1943 to Pearl Holshouser Lyerly & Carr R. Lyerly in Salisbury, NC. He began his Christian faith as a baptized child of God and through confirmation at St. Peter's Lutheran, Salisbury.



He was an honor graduate of both his high school in 1961, East Rowan, and in 1965 from Lenoir-Rhyne college. He continued his academic and faith journey by attending the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary where he graduated *cum laude* with a Master of Divinity. He was ordained into the gospel ministry by the North Carolina Synod in 1969 and obtain his chaplain certification in 1996. He served over 50 years in the Lutheran faith as a pastor, as a district dean, and chaplain in parishes of several states, including North Carolina (St. Timothy in Havelock, Shepherd of the Sea in Atlantic Beach, St. Johns in Asheboro), South Carolina (Cross and Crown in Florence, Lowman Home in White Rock, Good Shepard in Swansea) and Tennessee(Our Saviour in Johnson City). After retirement from full-time ministry in 2010, he served as supply pastor for many congregations, helping them through their transitions. His ministry was marked by his gifts as a communicator; he was a gifted storyteller who delivered the Gospel with compelling humor, profound insight, and clear understanding through his memorable sermons, biblical reenactments, and puppet scripts.

In 1967 he married Dorothea "Dottie" McCarter and they were married nearly 55 years until her death in 2022. They were blessed with one son, Cory Lyerly of Raleigh, NC, a daughter and son-in-law, Carla and Kurt Linebarger of Gainesville, FL and their children Aidan and Rylan. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Carlene Fink. He is survived by his brother-in-law Larry Fink, cherished nephews and their wives, Eric and Kris Fink, Dwayne and Catherine Fink, and great-nephew and wife Jacob and Elizabeth as well as many cherished aunts, uncles and cousins on both the Lyerly and Holshouser sides.

Pastor Lyerly's Celebration of Life & Resurrection was held on December 13, 2025, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Salisbury, NC.

Andrew David Eargle

The Reverend Andrew David Eargle, 83, of Newberry, died December 25, 2025 at Prisma Health Baptist.

Born on August 27, 1942 in Newberry, he was the son of the late Willie Andrew and Lurleen Halfacre Eargle.

Reverend Eargle was a 1960 graduate of Mid-Carolina High School and a 1964 graduate of Newberry College. He graduated from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in 1968. He was ordained by the South Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church of America in 1968 at Colony Lutheran Church in Newberry, SC. Reverend Eargle



served as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Gilbert, SC from 1968-1979. He then served as pastor at St. Jacob's Lutheran Church in Chapin, SC from 1979-2006. He was later made Pastor Emeritus at St. Jacob's. He served as necrologist of the South Carolina Synod for 25 years. Reverend Eargle was a member of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Prosperity, SC. He was proud to be a retired pastor with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Reverend Eargle enjoyed hunting and fishing. He loved helping others with projects and was an excellent story teller. He also enjoyed cooking and especially baking. Most of all, he was devoted to his wife Janie and to his family.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Janie Mayer Eargle; a son, David (Sarah) Eargle of Little Mountain; a daughter, Dee Ann (Dave) Tickner of Fincastle, VA; grandchildren, Alana (Owen) Eargle, Colin (Hailey) Tickner. Julia Eargle, and Gabriella Tickner.

Pastor Eargle's funeral service was held on December 28, 2025, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, in Prosperity, SC with interment at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church Cemetery, in Little Mountain, SC .

Mary Frances Brown Ritchie

Mary Frances Brown Ritchie, 93, passed away Friday morning at her home after a long and happy life.

She was born on Christmas Eve in 1932 to the late Mary Camille Sifford and Luther Clarence Brown in Danville, VA. She graduated from Lenior Rhyne University in Hickory, NC in 1955 and began a teaching career that lasted over 30 years. She was



a natural teacher and loved each and every student. She taught in multiple primary schools in North Carolina, Florida, and South Carolina giving special attention to those who had a harder time learning. She often laughed at herself saying after so much time in school, you'd think she'd be able to advance beyond the 4th grade.

She was married for 64 years to the love of her life, Rev. Carl L Ritchie who passed in 2019. She shared his deep passion for the Lord. She encouraged his ministry and was an integral part of the congregation in every church he pastored often teaching Sunday school and singing in the choir. Surviving daughters are Mary Woods (Lennis) of Goose Creek, Deborah Fox (Sheldon) of Raleigh, NC and Martha Mountain, her youngest daughter and roommate in Summerville for the past 10 years. Torstein Bremset of Norway, an exchange student that the Ritchies hosted in 1976, is also part of the family. Frances's legacy includes 6 grandchildren (Erin Cunningham (David), Josh Gilreath (Lydia), Bryan Fox (Angela), Shaun Mountain (April), Matthew Fox (Morgan), and Chelsea Riedmayer (Cory)) and 11 great-grandchildren (Sean, Andrew, JB, Payton, JR, Lillian, Michael, Holston, Cameron, Weezy, and Parker). The family has been enriched by her love, loyalty, deep faith and devotion to Jesus Christ. She had so much joy in spending time with them.

In addition to her parents and husband, Frances is preceded in death by her son, Luther Hubert Ritchie and her sister, Sue Brown Pickett.

Mrs. Ritchie's funeral service was held on February 11, 2025, at St Luke's Lutheran Church, Summerville, SC.

Scott Hampton Hendrix

The Reverend Dr. Scott Hampton Hendrix, the James Hastings Nichols Professor Emeritus of Reformation History and Doctrine at Princeton Theological Seminary, died on February 15, 2026, in Asheville, North Carolina. He was 83 years old.

Scott was born on December 26, 1942, in Columbia, South Carolina, to George LeRoy Hendrix and Sara Kaminer Hendrix. On June 27, 1965, he married Emilee Frick in Anderson, South Carolina. He is survived by his wife; his children, Selinde Lanier (Laird Lanier) and Giles Hendrix (Suzanne Sisoler); and his grandchildren, Amelia Lanier, Zoe Hendrix, and Maya Hendrix.

An internationally renowned theologian and church historian, Scott's work on Martin Luther and the Reformation shaped the field for decades. He earned a Ph.D. in Reformation studies from Tübingen University in Germany and was ordained to the Lutheran ministry by the South Carolina Synod on June 4, 1972. His academic career included teaching Church History at the Lutheran seminaries in Columbia (Southern), Philadelphia, and Gettysburg from 1971 to 1998. In 1998, he joined the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, where he served until his retirement in 2007.

Scott chaired the Continuation Committee of the International Congress for Luther Research and served on the editorial boards of the *Archive for Reformation History*, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, and *Lutheran Quarterly*. His major publications include *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (2004), *Luther* (2009), *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction* (2010), and *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (2015). Colleagues and students remember him for a friendly and engaging personality that bridged the gap between rigorous scholarship and accessible teaching. The Rev. Dr. Scott H. Hendrix Scholarship fund established in 2021 to recognize his contributions to Lutheran church history continues to fund continued research and scholarship in the field.

Jim Stroud Aull

The Rev. Dr. James “Jim” Stroud Aull of White Rock, SC passed away on Sunday, March 15, 2026.

Born in Winnsboro on March 3, 1931 to the late Ruth Bull and Luther Bachman Aull, Jr., he had just celebrated his 95th birthday.

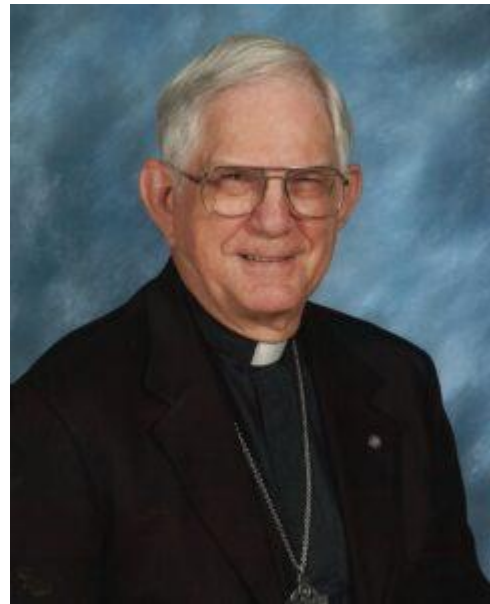
Jim spent most of his childhood years in Greenville, SC, graduating from Greenville High in 1949. He graduated from Newberry College with a Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude in 1953 and maintained close connections with the college all his life. It was there that he met his future wife, Ginny, with whom he shared 67 years of marriage. He went

on to earn three additional degrees: a Master of Divinity from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, a Master of Sacred Theology from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, and a PhD from Duke University. He also studied at Wayne State University in Detroit and at Union Seminary in New York. In 1988, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters from Newberry College for his ‘untiring service.’

In 1954, he was drafted and served with army counterintelligence in Korea for almost two years. After serving in the military, he entered seminary. He received a call to St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Camden, and shortly thereafter, was called to teach at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary where he taught and did administrative work for 17 years. In 1979 he was elected secretary of the SC Synod of the (then called) Lutheran Church in America. In 1988, he was elected the first bishop of the SC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and served for eight years before retiring in 1996.

In his service to the church, Jim also served as a trustee on the boards of Newberry College; the Board of Pensions, ELCA; Lutheran Homes and Lutheran Homes Foundation. Jim earned the distinguished honor of Eagle Scout and was a Paul Harris Fellow in Rotary. After retiring, he volunteered with the Friends of the Irmo Branch of the Lexington County library.

Jim is survived by his wife of 67 years, Virginia “Ginny” Kloeppel Aull; son-in-law, Paul Barton; grandson, Daniel Aull Barton; and sister, Margaret (Bo) Ella “Peggy” Werts of Ninety-Six.



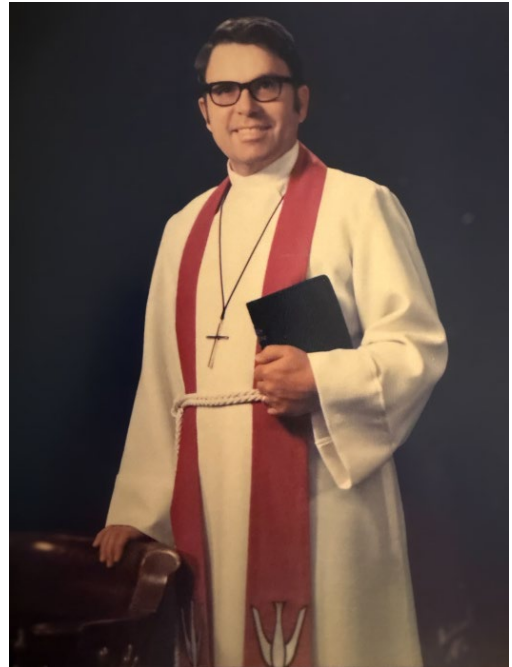
In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his beloved children, Diane Marie (Barton); James, Jr.; and Virginia Ruth and his brother, Luther B. Aull, III.

Bishop Aull's memorial service was held on March 21, 2026, at Bethel Lutheran Church in White Rock, SC.

Frank Lavaughn Keisler

The Reverend Frank Lavaughn Keisler died on May 8th, 2026. He was the first child of Frank Lever and Geneva Fraley Keisler of Lexington, South Carolina. His parents had him baptized the day of his birth, February 7, 1930. Those promises made and received remained with him until life's end.

Visitation will be held at Barr-Price Funeral Home – Lexington Chapel on Tuesday, May 12th, 2026 from 5 pm to 7 pm. Funeral Services will be held at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church, 1000 B Avenue, West Columbia SC on Wednesday, May 13th, 2026 at 2 pm with the Rev. Wade Roof and Rev. Rus Stilwell officiating. Burial will follow the service at Mount Lebanon Historic Cemetery, Cameron South Carolina. Serving as pallbearers will be Bayne Haigler, Wally Haigler, Mike Haigler, Ryan Haigler, Edward Shuler, Eddie Foust, Daniel Bundrick and Rodney Stone. Honorary pallbearers will be Tommy Smith, David Bedenbaugh and the Mt. Tabor Early Risers Breakfast group.



Pastor Keisler loved his churches and members. Newberry College was especially supportive of him. He began college with pocket change and completed his college and Seminary education with only a \$400.00 debt. After graduating from Newberry College he continued his education at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. He was ordained in 1954 and began his ministry as a mission developer at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina.

He continued his parish ministry at Bethlehem-St. John's Parish, Irmo, SC; St. Luke's Monroe, NC; Pilgrim, Lexington, SC; St. Paul's Hamlet, NC; Mt Hebron and Union, Leesville SC. Following his retirement, he served 10 appointments as an interim pastor and visitation pastor for Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church. He enjoyed both fishing and gardening and always shared with his neighbors and friends.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 72 years, Elizabeth Haigler Keisler; his sons, Frank Keisler (Stacey) and Kerry Keisler; his granddaughters, Dr. Caroline Snuffer (Daniel), Rebecca and Meredith Keisler and great grandchildren, Haden and Dahlia Snuffer. He is also survived by his sisters, Miriam Riley, Margaret Taylor and Sara Bundrick; and his brother-in-law, Joe C. Haigler (Elaine), along with a number of nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents; his brothers, Charles and Efrid Keisler and his brothers-in-law, Bobby Taylor, John Bundrick, Edd Riley, and Sonny Haigler (Mary Sue). He loved and treasured all of his family.

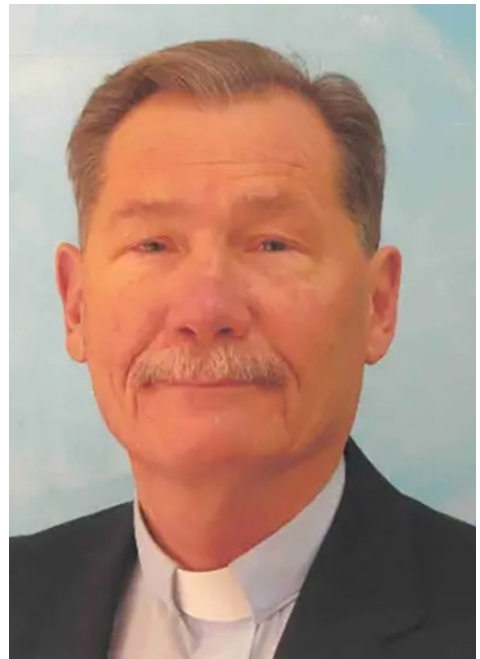
Memorials may be made to Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church or Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary – Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, NC.

Steven James Gellatly

The Reverend Steven James Gellatly, 69, of Marietta, South Carolina passed away on May 7, 2026, at home under hospice care after a courageous battle with spinocerebellar ataxia type 8 (SCA8).

Born in Alhambra, California on June 23, 1956, Steve received a bachelor's degree from California State University – Los Angeles. He graduated with a Master of Divinity from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1982. Steve spent 40 years serving and dedicating his life to ministering to multiple Lutheran congregations in Ohio, beginning with his first call in Portsmouth in 1982, followed by congregations in Hamilton, Tipp City, Russells Point, and West Milton.

Steve showed integrity, compassion, and faithfulness in all aspects of his life. He deeply loved his wife and family. He led by example and ministry was the very fiber of his being. Some of his favorite times were fostering the faith of our youth through the Youth Gathering, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. There his humor and love of fun were on full display. His desire to serve stretched beyond



the church and far into the community where he volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, Rotary, Hospice Chaplain, LSIM (Lutheran Saints in Ministry), and numerous other interfaith community events.

Steve loved exploring the world with his family, especially with his wife. Some of his favorite memories came from trips shared by just the two of them. He enjoyed relaxing with a good book or completing puzzles while listening to jazz music. Steve will be remembered for his sense of humor. One of his favorite things was making his daughters laugh, and he kept everyone laughing up until the end. His unselfish service to others, his devotion to the congregations he served, and his love of his family and those around him will endure forever.

Even in death, Steve continues his acts of service and care for others by donating his brain and spinal cord to research. He hoped that through his donation to the Brain Support Network, researchers could gain more information about his rare disease to benefit others in the future.

Steve is survived by his wife of 42 years, Loretta Jean Gellatly; two daughters, Christine Bristow and husband, Brook Bristow of Greer, SC and Sarah Miles and husband, Dr. Chris Miles of Marietta, SC; their "German daughter" Kristin Zimmerman; grandchildren, Knox and Millie James Bristow; brother, John Gellatly and wife, Jill; brother-in-law, Bill Leuby and wife, Marion.

A Celebration of Life service will take place at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Greer, South Carolina on May 16, 2026, at 11:00 am. with The Rev. Elise T. Stringer officiating. A visitation will be held from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. prior to the service. Since this is a celebration of Steve's life, the family would prefer attendees to wear colorful clothes.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation be made to one of the following organizations in honor of Steve: Brain Support Network, PO Box 7264, Menlo Park, CA 94026 or Prisma Health Hospice of the Foothills-Greenville, 440 Roper Mountain Road, Suite C, Greenville, or Redeemer Lutheran Church Youth Gathering, 300 Oneal Rd. Greer, SC.

Emma Lou Bossart Easley

Emma Lou Bossart Easley passed away on May 25th, the birthday of her beloved husband, Charles. She almost lived to her 96th birthday, June 8th. For the last nine years, Emma Lou lived at Laurel Crest Retirement Community in West Columbia, SC. The final member of her generation, she was our cherished family matriarch. Born in Arona, PA on June 8th, 1930, Emma Lou was the youngest child of five and only daughter of Irene Beck Bossart and William Kuhns Bossart. She graduated from Sewickley Township High School and attended Penn State University. While working as a summer intern at the Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Allentown, PA, she met Charles Ward Easley, a Newberry College student from Georgetown, SC. They married in 1951 and remained married until his death in 2022. Emma Lou worked and raised children while they lived at Newberry College and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. After seminary, they moved throughout Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia to serve Lutheran congregations. She supported her husband in his ministry, raised children and worked in public schools. Emma Lou enjoyed working with all children, especially her grandchildren and those with special needs. Throughout her life, she actively volunteered at church, in the community, with the Clemson Extension and at Laurel Crest. She loved living a healthy lifestyle, cooking, gardening, sewing and cleaning. Hard work and action was Emma Lou's way of nurturing - this was her love language. She was reliable, true to her word and quick with a smile and laugh.



Emma Lou was predeceased by her husband, Charles, and son, David. She was also predeceased by her parents and brothers, David, Wendell, Howard and Daniel. Emma Lou is survived by four loving children, Charles Ward Easley Jr. (Wendy), Irene Easley Moyer (Richie), William Teed Easley (Cheryl) and Penelope Easley Summer (Jay); eight grandchildren, Anna Maria Easley Hutchens (Chris), Benjamin Easley (Jill), Laura Moyer (Steven), David Moyer (Lisa), Charley Moyer, Jenny Kronner (Shawn), Ashley Heine (Nicole), and Shannon Burton Bolick (Nick); and eight great-grandchildren, Mia, George, Lillian, Stanton, Meredith, Noah, Henry, and Maggie.

A memorial service will be held on June 8th, 2026 at 2:00 PM in the Assembly Room at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church at 1000 B Avenue in West Columbia, SC. Enter at the corner of 10th and Augusta Streets. Visitation will immediately follow the service.

The family extends its thanks to the staff of both Laurel Crest Retirement Community and Abbey Road Hospice for their excellent love and care.

In lieu of flowers, Emma Lou requested that donations be made to the Corpus of the Charles and Emma Lou Easley Scholarship funds at either Newberry College, 2100 College St., Newberry, SC 29108 or Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 625 7th Ave. NE, Hickory, NC 28601.