



Craig Monroe Shirley

March 12, 1949 - May 27, 2025

Craig Monroe Shirley, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and faithful servant of Christ, passed peacefully into the arms of the Lord on May 27, 2025 at the age of 76.

Craig was born on March 12, 1949, in Minot, North Dakota, to Helen and Ellsworth Shirley. Raised with strong Lutheran values and Midwestern grit, Craig's calling to ministry came early in life. After completing his studies at Luther Seminary, he embarked on a lifelong journey of spiritual leadership, serving as a campus pastor across the United States.

His ministry took him and his family to communities far and wide-including Columbia, South Carolina; Nome, Alaska; Pullman, Washington; East Lansing, Michigan; Kenosha, Wisconsin; and Minneapolis, Minnesota-where he faithfully served as a spiritual guide, mentor, and friend. His final pastoral role was at University Lutheran Church of Hope on the University of Minnesota campus, where he retired after many years of devoted ministry.

Craig met the love of his life, Carol, in 1973. What began as a friendship built on mutual respect and laughter soon blossomed into a deep and enduring love. They were married on September 4, 1976. Together, Craig and Carol shared a life full of joy, partnership, and adventure. One of their greatest shared passions was traveling, and over the years they visited 23 countries-

exploring new cultures, creating memories, and embracing the beauty of God's world together.

Even in retirement, Craig's passion for serving others never waned. He became a certified personal trainer at the YMCAs in White Bear Lake and Ridgedale, continuing his life's mission by helping others prioritize their physical health alongside their spiritual well-being. He believed strongly that honoring your body was a reflection of honoring God's gift of life.

Craig also had the great privilege of officiating numerous baptisms-including those of four of his grandchildren-as well as many wedding ceremonies throughout his ministry. Among the most meaningful were the weddings of his son Erik and daughter-in-law Laura, and his nieces Pam and Maggie, beautifully blending his role as a pastor with his deep joy as a father and family member.

Craig was a devoted family man. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Carol Shirley; his sons, Erik Shirley (Laura) and Joel Shirley (Crystal); and six cherished grandchildren: Karah (21), Brayden (14), Tyler (11), Sloane (10), Jack (6), and Ramsey (5). Craig never missed an opportunity to support his grandchildren-he was a familiar and loving presence on the sidelines of games, performances, and school events. He also treasured family dinners and holiday gatherings, always ready with a warm smile and a camera to capture the moment.

He is also survived by his sister, Julie Frisk, and his brother, Kent Shirley (Ginger), both of Fargo, North Dakota, as well as many extended family members, lifelong friends, and congregants from across the country who were blessed to know him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Helen and Ellsworth Shirley; his

parents-in-law, Richard and Jeanne Ramsey; and his brother-in-law, James Frisk.

A celebration of Craig's life and legacy will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 from 4 - 7 pm at Washburn-McReavy in Eden Prairie, followed by a funeral service on Wednesday, June 4, 2025, at 12:00 PM at Mt. Olivet Church - Rolling Acres Campus in Victoria, Minnesota. Visitation will begin at 11:00 AM, with a luncheon to follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests memorials be made to Luther Seminary or Mount Olivet Lutheran Church honoring Craig's lifelong devotion to faith, service, wellness, and love.

"Well done, good and faithful servant." - Matthew 25:23

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 3. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Eden Prairie Chapel
7625 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Visitation

JUN 4. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (Victoria)
7150 Rolling Acres Road
P.O. Box 153
Victoria, MN 55386

Funeral Service

JUN 4. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (Victoria)
7150 Rolling Acres Road
P.O. Box 153
Victoria, MN 55386

Reception

JUN 4. 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (Victoria)
7150 Rolling Acres Road
P.O. Box 153
Victoria, MN 55386

Tribute Wall



“ Thinking of you and wishing you moments of peace.

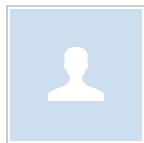
*Our deepest sympathies,
Lora & Mallory Marano
Carly, Rob & Gio Morrone*

Lora Marano - June 03, 2025 at 02:43 PM



“ Linda D. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

Linda D. - June 03, 2025 at 01:22 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



June 03, 2025 at 11:15 AM

AB

“ We have so many wonderful memories of Craig while he served as pastor at University Lutheran Church of Hope (Minneapolis). Our son, Elliott, had the privilege of going through confirmation during Craig's tenure. We are so thankful for Craig's deep faith and leadership while, at the same time, being able to weave in a sense of fun and adventure. Here is a special confirmation picture of Craig and our son, Elliott (now 33).

Our heart goes out to Carol and the whole family as you mourn this huge loss. Comfort and prayers, Ann and John Beane



Ann Beane - June 02, 2025 at 07:58 PM

RL

“ We have known Craig since high school, lots of fun memories. We finally met Carol at one of the reunions, what a lovely couple. We were hoping to reconnect this summer in MN. He will be missed. Our sincere condolences to the family. Eternal rest grant unto Craig, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.

RaNae Langness - June 02, 2025 at 05:02 PM

CH

“ Colleen H. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

Colleen H. - June 02, 2025 at 04:00 PM

TF

“ The Ewaskowitz & Holmes Families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

The Ewaskowitz & Holmes Families - June 02, 2025 at 02:54 PM

TF

“ The Ewaskowitz & Holmes Families purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



The Ewaskowitz & Holmes Families - June 02, 2025 at 02:54 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



June 02, 2025 at 12:26 PM

TF

“ The Erickson Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



The Erickson Family - June 02, 2025 at 08:45 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

June 02, 2025 at 08:39 AM



“ Love, Your Bearpath Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

Love, Your Bearpath Family - June 01, 2025 at 11:34 PM



“ Love, Your Bearpath Family purchased the Serene Reflections Bouquet for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



Love, Your Bearpath Family - June 01, 2025 at 11:34 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.



June 01, 2025 at 10:19 PM



“ I have known Craig since grade school in Fargo. . . he was a fine man and wonderful human being. I am glad I had the chance to know him. My sympathy to his family. Kathy Brant

Kathy Brant - June 01, 2025 at 09:42 AM

AT

Craig Shirley has been a gift to our family in so many ways. He provided a firm foundation of Christian faith for our three children, confirming them all over the years. He provided a solid and steady presence for our congregation when it needed it the most. He provided me with life lessons for personal fitness and health as I entered my older years. Alden Tetlie

Alden Tetlie - June 02, 2025 at 09:09 AM

JO

“ *So sorry to hear of Pastor Craig's passing. He officiated over our wedding which is coming up on 21 years. During our first interview with him, he agreed to let us have our dog sit at the altar during the service. I will never forget the expression on his face the day of the wedding. Come to find, he had forgotten what he had agreed upon and was genuinely surprised when we showed up with our dog and his handler. We all had a good laugh and a great ceremony. Both the Lindesmith and O'Brien families will never forget him.*

Thank You For Your Service

Jim & Julie (Lindesmith) O'Brien

Jim O'Brien - June 01, 2025 at 12:00 AM

DP

“ *Dick &Bev, Garland and Peggy purchased the Serene Reflections Bouquet for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.*



Dick &Bev, Garland and Peggy - May 31, 2025 at 07:02 PM

DS

“ God, we thank you for the life that you give us.

*The nicest place to be is in someone's thoughts,
the safest place to be is in someone's prayers, and
the very best place to be is...in the hands of God.*

*Our sympathies, prayers and love,
Dale & Janine Smith*

Dale & Janine Smith - May 31, 2025 at 02:37 PM

KG

“ What very sad news to hear of your passing Craig. Not only were you a dear friend to my parents, you officiated my wedding at ULCH. It was great to catch up again over ice cream last summer and hear stories of your family and travels. Rest In Peace. May your family cherish the wonderful memories that live on.



Karin Garduno - May 30, 2025 at 09:07 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Craig Monroe Shirley.

May 30, 2025 at 11:36 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.*



May 30, 2025 at 11:36 AM



“ *Craig welcomed our family to ULCH, and eventually officiated our wedding and baptized our son. He was very special to our son Aaron.*

I remember reading the Sunday paper one morning before church, and there was a Sack editorial cartoon showing Putin dumping a big vat of ice water over a gay couple outside a church. Aaron, who was then about 4, puzzled over the image for a moment and then said, outraged, "Well, Pastor Shirley would NEVER do THAT!" Over the years it became kind of a stock phrase in our family when witnessing or reading about an event where leaders did something cruel or unkind or just plain wrong. Pastor Shirley would never do that.

Craig's example of servant leadership, his humor, intelligence, and welcoming spirit, will abide with us and the countless other lives he touched. We were blessed to have him in our lives.

Serafina, Arnd, and Aaron Scheel

Serafina Scheel - May 30, 2025 at 11:33 AM

LF

“ *Love, Your BAEs & families purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Craig Monroe Shirley.*



Love, Your BAEs & families - May 29, 2025 at 08:33 PM

DS

“ *I worked with Craig for 11 years at University Lutheran Church of Hope. He was a collaborative colleague and great to work with. I am so sorry to hear of the loss of his energy, his curiosity, and his interest in healthy living. He will be missed by many.*

Diane Shallue - May 29, 2025 at 04:33 PM