



David Walter Preus

May 28, 1922 - July 23, 2021

David Walter Preus, loving husband and father, Lutheran bishop and pastor, civic leader and World War II veteran, passed away peacefully on Friday, July 23, 2021, due to complications from heart failure.

Three of David's major themes in life were "Jesus, Justice and Joy." He came from a long family line of church leaders. He was born May 28, 1922, in Madison, Wisconsin. He spent most of his boyhood in Decorah, Iowa, where his father was a pastor and president of Luther College, and his mother was an accomplished musician and created a joyful and welcoming home.

He studied and played basketball at Luther College where his Coach Hamlet (Pete) Peterson called him his "bread and butter man." David graduated from Luther College in 1943. He and his four brothers enlisted in the U.S. armed services. He served in the U.S. Army Signal Intelligence until 1946 where he learned the Japanese language with overseas duty in the Philippines and Japan. Following World War II, he went to a year of Law School at the University of Minnesota and completed Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul; he was ordained in 1950. David took post-graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and the University of Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1951-52.

As a pastor and President/Presiding Bishop of the American Lutheran Church

(ALC), servant leadership infused his life's work. He served as a parish pastor for 23 years in Brookings, SD, Vermilion, SD and Minneapolis, MN. During his 15 years as Presiding Bishop of the ALC he also served as Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation and as a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. In 1988, he was appointed Distinguished Visiting Professor at Luther Seminary and Director of its Global Mission Institute. During his later retirement he continued to engage in preaching, writing, and other forms of service.

Long an advocate of participation by church members in civic and community affairs, David was a member and chair of the Minneapolis School Board, the Minneapolis City Planning Commission, and other civic organizations in the Twin Cities. He actively supported equal opportunities in housing, civil rights and civil rights legislation at city, state and national levels.

One of his special attributes was his ability to actively seek out people from all faiths and backgrounds to work together toward a common good. He was at home speaking with and working with local leaders, church leaders from all faiths, four presidents of the United States of America, and leaders from other countries. For example, he met with John Paul II about ecumenical opportunities, worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. to address social justice topics at a Lutheran youth event, and joined Vice President Mondale on work trips abroad. The Minneapolis Star Tribune named him one of the 100 most influential Minnesotans of the 20th century.

Over the years David received recognition from a wide variety of sources, including many honorary doctorate degrees, the Commander's Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav, the Torch of Liberty award from the Anti-Defamation League, the St. Thomas Aquinas award from the College of St. Thomas, and the Pax Christi award from St. John's University. Friends established an annual David W. Preus Servant Leadership Award.

Friends and neighbors remember his love of nature, stewardship and joyful spirit. With a cabin in northern Minnesota, David enjoyed tending to the land. Every summer one heard his chainsaw humming and saw his newly planted pine seedlings growing. At his home in Minneapolis he planted colorful tulips each fall, with hope for beauty in the spring. He literally whistled and sang while working outdoors. He loved a good game of golf.

David cherished time with his family. He enjoyed playing various outdoor and indoor games, doing crosswords, and making blueberry pancakes for his grandchildren. He is survived by his beloved wife, Ann Margaret Overgaard Madsen Preus, whom he met and married 70 years ago in Brookings, SD, and five children, Martha, David A. (Carmenza), Stephen (Martha), Louise, and Laura (Michael), nine grandchildren, Natalie (David John), Christian (Robekkah), Katharine, Andrew, Daniel, Brita, Johan, Nathan, and Annabel, two great-grandchildren, Raegan, Ryder, and many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

A service and inurnment will be held at 2:00 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in Laporte, MN, on Sunday, August 1. A Celebration of Life service will be held at Central Lutheran Church at 333 S. 12th Street, Minneapolis, 2:00 pm, on Thursday, August 5. There will be a visitation at 1 pm, and fellowship and refreshments after the service. Livestreaming of the 2:00 pm service on August 5 will be available at: centralmpls.org

Memorial Donations may be made to Luther College or donor's preferred designation.

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 5. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Central Lutheran Church (Mpls)
333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Memorial Service

AUG 5. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Central Lutheran Church (Mpls)
333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Tribute Wall

SS

“ A wonderful man he was, David Preus. He remained and lived life true to his Decorah and Luther College and family calling of a life of faith, love, service and joy. He was the face of what I knew as a youth to be the Lutheran Church and how we as Lutherans are to be, understand the faith and worship. I heard of his becoming the president of the ALC after the passing of its leader Rev. Kent Knutson, who passed too soon from life and is a great man to recall as well. I also came to learn over the many years of my family connection. As my mother's maternal grandmother, a Forde and David Preu's grandmother were sisters who had come from Norway and settled first in the Decorah area, Big Canoe church north of Decorah. My mother's side settled in Warren, MN after the wedding of Ingrid and Andrew Grindeland of Big Canoe as they met in church. Many pastors and musicians came out of the Forde families we have been blessed with. I recall fine sermon/homily in 1991 for the late King Olav V of Norway at the Mindekirken in Mpls. A fitting place and event it was. David Preus in meetings with one of my brothers assisted with and handed over several letters , blankets etc to the Vesterheim museum in 2011 when my parents home in Thief River Falls was being sold etc. To the entire family, my sincere condolences and blessed be the memory of Rev. David W. Preus. RIP, Steve Saetre.

Steven Saetre - August 05, 2021 at 04:24 PM

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“ Steven Saetre lit a candle in memory of David Walter Preus



Steven Saetre - August 05, 2021 at 04:13 PM