



Reverend James Ralph Nelson

October 8, 1934 - November 15, 2020

Nelson, Rev. James Ralph James Ralph Nelson was born in Chicago, Illinois on October 8, 1934 to Oscar and Anne Nelson. When he was six months old, he, his parents and older sister, Lois, moved to South Minneapolis where they joined his Swedish immigrant grandparents in the house his grandfather had build near the Mississippi. As a young boy Jim explored paths along the river, built model airplanes and tinkered with crystal radio sets, from which he devoured news about the Second World War. Jim graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1956. He worked stints as a social worker in Rochester, MN and also at Dayton's and Honeywell until he felt the call to enter the ministry. He attended Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Il where he also interned at Gardner Memorial Methodist Church in Milwaukee, WI. Jim also did graduate work at Drew University in New Jersey, and received a MTh degree from Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul. After his seminary graduation he returned to Minnesota to serve several United Methodist churches. His first appointment was a 3 point charge in Lafayette, New Brighton, and Winthrop, MN. Next he was appointed to Brooklyn Park, MN to plant a new church. Later he served at Lake Harriet United Methodist, North United Methodist, a summer serving several Methodist churches in North Yorkshire, England and finally at Portland Avenue United Methodist in Bloomington from which he retired, after serving 35 years in the ministry. In the fall of 1972 Jim met and fell in love with Sandra (Sandy) Hansen, a Richfield Public School teacher. They were married on June 30, 1973. Their

only daughter, Annalise, was born in 1980. Jim delighted in being her Pa. He was her mentor and taught her to love reading, history and, art. He also taught her to have a good sense of humor. Jim loved being a minister and he was beloved by his parishioners. He enjoyed the scriptures and it was a joy for him to prepare his weekly sermons. Jim was a true Renaissance man with many and varied interest that competed for his time after retirement. He continued to teach and write. He presented book reviews to various groups and taught clergy seminars on reading selections and sermon preparation. He also taught classes for Augsburg College of the Third Age on a variety of topics. He was an expert craftsman and had an extensive workshop where he build furniture he largely designed and also restored antiques. He collected antique woodworking tools, and lovingly restored a 1940 Buick. Jim and Sandy loved to travel both in the US and Europe. They visited Annalise as she studied and worked in France and the Netherlands. They had many trips visiting Annalise and her young family in their Washington, DC home. Jim is survived by his loving wife Sandy, of 47 years, devoted daughter Annalise Nelson and her husband Lee Drutman, and his cherished granddaughters Elsa Freyda (7) and Chava Karin Drutman almost 5. He is also survived by his nephew, Kevin Caldwell and wife Sandy Schoenecker, and by many other beloved relatives and friends who mourn his loss. Though his journey with dementia was long and difficult, he still retained his love for his faith, family and friends. His family is grateful for the wonderful care he received at Presbyterian Homes and Emerald Crest of Shakopee, as well as the compassionate and courageous care he received from Grace Hospice. We are so grateful to the kind and supportive caregivers who accompanied him on the last steps of his journey. Peace be to his memory. A private celebration of life for family will be held on Sunday, May 23 at 4:00 p.m. at Richfield United Methodist Church, Minneapolis MN. The service will be livestreamed at: youtube.com/richfieldumc. Memorial contributions may be made to Richfield United Methodist Church. Washburn-McReavy.com Werness Brothers 952-884-8145

Cemetery Details

Hillside Crematory

2610 19th Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418