



## Michael Douglas Peterson

October 13, 1952 - October 31, 2020

Michael “Mike” Douglas Peterson, 68, of Madison Wisconsin, passed away on Saturday October 31st, 2020. Born October 13th, 1952, at Travis AFB in Fairfield, CA to Marjorie Ann (née Krage) Peterson and Herman Norin Peterson. A person of strong Christian values and conviction, Michael loved the Lord and celebrated with music and voice throughout his life (with perfect pitch and love of early music).

Contracting polio when he was just learning to walk, Mike began his fragile life with leg braces, then crutches, but ultimately ended up in a wheelchair. But where many would have been resigned, Mike was fiercely determined. He was fearless, and his strength of will as a boy scout, and his love of the great outdoors led him on numerous camping and canoeing trips, including a few two-day mission trips to Indian reservations where he would witness, sing, and play the guitar.

Michael was baptized in California at Travis Air Force Base and confirmed at Lutheran Church of the Redemption in Bloomington, MN, where he attended 1-6 (and winning a spelling bee!). After graduating from Kennedy High School in 1970, Mike continued onto Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN, where he earned his BA in Biology with a Concentration in German (1974), and then to Michigan State University, where he earned an MS in Botany and Plant Pathology (1978). Mike then went on to the University

of Wisconsin-Madison, where he earned a second MS in Plant Pathology (1993). At the time of his passing, Michael was working on completion of his Doctorate in Education Psychology / Rural Sociology (ABD, 2009).

Mike's early research focused on the development of strains of virus free potatoes, which were instrumental in him being invited to set up a potato laboratory in Bogor, Indonesia, and share the fruits of his research. A highly skilled botanist and researcher, he also had a stint at the Sturgeon Bay Potato Research Center. His most recent research, at UW-Madison, was using his research to help Wisconsin farmers control and defeat the Colorado Potato Beetle.

But his horticultural passions extend far beyond spuds and research. His green thumb was evident even when he was a toddler. And since 1997, he spent much of his free time in the Sheboygan community Garden growing his favorite heirloom tomatoes. And along with this his love for teaching novices and sharing not only his knowledge but also his fresh produce. Mike was also an avid collector of recipes, and he was instrumental in the publication of the Mount Olive 75th Anniversary Cookbook.

A man of many talents, Mike's love of music beginning in grade school would lead him to learn numerous musical instruments throughout his life. While he was in 9th grade spending the year recovering from spinal and leg surgery, he learned to play the folk guitar sitting on his body cast, only to be giving lessons the following year.

If research was Mike's vocation, music was his soul. Whether learning to play his left-handed banjo or working on the Sisters' Songbook of folk music, his musical achievements were his pride and joy.

Mike grew up singing with the Redemption Lutheran Church in Bloomington,

MN, and later, with the Madison Mount Olive Lutheran Church, where he sang with the Olive Branch.

Mike was also a member of the Madison Chamber Choir from 1993-2020 and had also performed with the Madison Choir group The Motets, as well as assisting in the Madison Early Music Festival. He had also combined his poem "West of Blue Dog Lake," setting it to music for the premier of "The Loving of the Land" Concert held in Madison in 2012, to great accolades.

Despite his disabilities, his sheer determination, strength, and courage was an inspiration to us all. Now freed from the bonds of the wheelchair, Mike is now a member of the celestial chamber choir. What a blessing Michael has been for us all. He will be so dearly missed.

The Peterson family shares our gratitude to all that have helped Michael with his life and his physical struggles, and thankful for how he taught us to persevere.

Michael is survived by his mother: Marjorie Ann (Krage) Peterson. The oldest of five, Michael is survived by siblings: Wayne Peterson, Cindy Ann Peterson and Pamela Peterson; as well as nieces: Lydia Hubert-Peterson, Heidi Scott; nephew: Matthew (Heather) Peterson; great nieces Kennedy Scott, Karina and Loryn Peterson and great nephew Finnley Scott; uncle: Leroy (Linda) Krage, cousins and many friends. His father, Herman Norin Peterson and his youngest brother Paul Herman Peterson preceded Michael in death.

On August 27th, 2022, a Celebration of Michael and his brother Paul's life, "Singing and Soaring with the Lord: A Celebration of Two Brothers' Lives," will take place at 2pm at Redemption Lutheran Church, 927 East Old Shakopee Road in Bloomington, Minnesota. Lunch will take place immediately following

the service. Internment for Michael and his brother Paul will follow at Washburn-McReavy Dawn Valley Memorial, In the Garden of Love located 9940 East Bush Lake Road in Bloomington, Minnesota.

A live stream of the event be available at <https://www.redemptionmn.org/peter-son-funeral>

In lieu of flowers, plant a fruit tree, and send us a recipe or consider a donation to Redemption Lutheran Church, Bloomington, MN.

Stop by the Sheboygan Community Garden, Madison, Wisconsin sometime to see Mike's plot and savor the bounty that is seen in Madison that is nurtured by Mike's friends and their love. [www.sheboygancommunitygarden.org](http://www.sheboygancommunitygarden.org)

# Previous Events

## **A Celebration of Life**

AUG **27**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Lutheran Church of the Redemption  
927 E. Old Shakopee Road  
Bloomington, MN