

Rev. James G. Deitz passed away peacefully at his Ohio home on May 11, 2022. He was 93.

Jim, as he was known, was a United Church of Christ (“UCC”) minister for more than 60 years. He was ordained in 1955 to the Christian ministry in the Evangelical and Reformed (“E and R”) Church, which became the UCC in 1957. He grew up in Philadelphia and St. Louis, graduating from Haverford College and Eden Seminary and earning his Masters in Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School.

Jim began his ministry as a part-time student minister while still in seminary, moving then to Ohio and serving five full-time pastorates there: Beaver UCC in Beavercreek, St. John UCC in Strasburg, Trinity UCC in Miamisburg, North Congregational UCC in Columbus, and Community Congregational UCC in Amherst. Jim then served part-time as Associate Minister for Pastoral Care at Avon Lake UCC, with interim pastorates at UCCs in Berlin Heights, Parma, and Oberlin, as well as Ely Presbyterian in Minnesota, finally retiring in his eighties. Rev. Deitz embodied his ministry, bringing a gentle and abiding faith to his everyday life.

Jim had a gift for friendship, making and keeping dear friends all his life. He served at various times on the Board of Directors for the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, Heidelberg College, and Family Promise of Lorain County; as Moderator for the Ohio Conference; Delegate to General Synod; Chairperson of the Ohio Pastors’ Convocation; and President of the Academy of Parish Clergy, finding these opportunities rewarding, and getting a chance to nurture cherished friendships as well. As recently as five years ago, Jim and his wife, Elizabeth, could still be found sleeping over on couches at the church, helping to make it possible for homeless families to get back on their feet.

Jim was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather who delighted in family life. He was an avid photographer, canoeist, hiker, pianist, singer, and scholar, who could always be found with a book in hand. He was inspired by several international sabbaticals, notable among them his pastors’ study exchange in Germany in 1969; his summer exchange pastorate at the United Reformed Church in Folkestone, England; and his time with some of his oldest family friends in Quito, Ecuador. His heart was always in Ely, Minnesota, where he and Elizabeth bought a cabin on Burntside Lake early in their marriage, and where he returned nearly every summer for the rest of his life.

He is survived by his wife of seventy years, Elizabeth (“Lou”); three children, Dorothy, Daniel (Linda), and Ruth (Robert); and eleven grandchildren, Bibi, Alec, Sarah, Julia, Buddy, Anna, Gabriel, Rebecca, Isaac, Theodore, and Abraham. He is preceded in death by one beloved son, Charles; his sister, Barbara; and his parents, Purd and Thisbe.

A memorial service will be held in Rev. Deitz’s honor at Beaver UCC on June 19th, 2022, at 3 pm. Faure’s Requiem, which Jim requested, will be played at 2:30 pm. Those attending in-person must wear a mask, and social distancing is encouraged. The service will also be accessible via Facebook Live, at <https://www.facebook.com/beaverucc>, and will remain on the site for those who wish to access it later (go to the above link and click on “More,” and then “Videos” from the drop-down menu, making sure the volume is turned up on the video itself). Please leave a comment for the family if you are able.

Memorial contributions may be made to the UCC Global Ministries at www.globalministries.org/donate, or to the charity of the donor’s choice. Those who wish to send a note to Jim’s family may do so at P.O. Box 213, Dayton, OH 45409.