



H. Douglas Rathjen

August 18, 1938 - June 9, 2021

“We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again . . .” ~ Romans 14:7-9a

Doug Rathjen was born in Portage, Wisconsin August 18, 1938, and he lived to the Lord all his days. When he was only 8 years old, he wrote to the Lutheran seminary requesting admission, as he was called to ministry from an early age. Doug always had a gentle, servant’s heart, and it showed in all his service to the church, in Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and North Carolina. An incredible biblical scholar, with working knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German, in addition to English, he preached and taught the Good News to so many over his more than 50 years of ordained ministry. Countless lives have been influenced by his ministry.

After retiring from St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ridgeway, NC, he traveled to Virginia (where he always wanted to live) to support Linda’s ministry in Blacksburg. He did not quit ministry even then, and taught children and adults and served in liturgical roles in several churches, including Northside Presbyterian and Our Saviour Lutheran churches. He sang bass in Northside’s choir as well.

Doug always had a wide variety of interests and hobbies. He loved all kinds of electronic gadgets, and was an early adopter of computers (mostly Apple). He loved bird-watching, and could identify most species by their songs. He loved his cats and his dog, Keesha. He cherished Linda beyond all her deserving. Doug rejoiced in travel to Turkey, Greece, and the Holy Land, and was thrilled to see the places where Jesus and Paul walked. He was a gentle, humble man with a terrific sense of humor.

Seizure disorder stole much from him, and eventually led to his death. He is survived by his wife of 23 years, Linda J. Dickerson, his brother Elnathan Rathjen (Jan), and by the children that he and Linda claimed together as their own: Talitha Kay Ponder (Gene), Jeremy Donaldson (Tammie), Chris Rathjen (Heather), Tony Rathjen (Jenny), and Aaron Teller (Mary). He leaves behind many beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Others who loved him were his mother-in-law, Barbara Dickerson, sister-in-law Susan Walrond (Tom), and brother-in-law David Dickerson (Susan), and so many nieces and nephews and their children. Truly, everyone loved Doug and can recount sweet memories of the ways his made a difference in their lives.

Doug lived a full life answering God's call to ministry. A deeply spiritual person, he radiated the love of Jesus Christ in all he did.

The words from Revelation 14 are particularly appropriate for Doug: "Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them." We give thanks to God for the wonderful life of Doug Rathjen.

A memorial service will be held at Northside Presbyterian Church at 10:00 am on Friday, June 18, 2021. Seating is limited because of physical distancing, so you are encouraged to participate in the service on Facebook's page, Northside Presbyterian Church in Blacksburg, VA. The Rev. Dr. Gina Rhea will

be officiating. Following the service, the family will greet friends on the front lawn of the church.

Memorial gifts (in lieu of flowers) may be made to Northside Presbyterian Church in Blacksburg or Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Christiansburg or to Bread for the World.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN 18. 10:00 AM.

Northside Presbyterian Church

Tribute Wall



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of H. Douglas Rathjen.* ”



June 17, 2021 at 08:44 PM



“ *Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of H. Douglas Rathjen.* ”



June 16, 2021 at 09:22 PM