



John F. Abel Jr.

NOV 23, 1960 - OCT 9, 2024



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John Francis Abel, Jr, known as Jack, age 63, passed away on October 9, 2024, in Milton, Delaware, from complications of a preexisting condition. He was born November 23, 1960, in Geneva, Illinois, the fourth of five children of John F. and Irene (Bradley) Abel. He worked as Corporate Director of Spiritual Care at Caron Treatment Centers, in Wernersville, PA. Rev. Jack was recognized internationally as a chaplain supervisor and subject matter expert on addiction and interfaith spirituality.

His family moved to Belgium when Jack started grade school in 1965, inspiring a lifelong love of French culture and international travel. They moved to suburban Philadelphia in 1969, where Jack graduated from Harriton High School in 1977. He studied mathematics and music at Hampshire College, graduating in 1982.

Jack co-founded the family's Midway Office and Arts Supply in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware in 1983 and worked there for several years. Jack graduated with an M.B.A. from Wilmington College in 1994 yet sought a different lifestyle and career.

Jack's life changed dramatically when he got sober at age 28. By his own admission, he became envious of others who had grown in happiness and faith during sobriety. An avowed atheist with many questions, he dedicated his attention and then his life to spirituality. He earned his M.Div. at Wesley Theological Seminary, graduating Summa Cum Laude with an Award for Liturgical Scholarship in 1998.

Jack served as a congregational pastor for the next ten years. First at St. John's UMC in Seaford, DE, then at Hopewell UMC in Port Deposit, MD, in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. He was called as Senior Pastor to Epworth UMC in Rehoboth Beach, DE from 2001-2008. After leaving congregational ministry, Jack earned an Interfaith Ministry degree from the New Seminary in 2010.



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During his fifteen years at Caron, Rev. Jack supervised a team of chaplains as Senior and then Corporate Director of Spiritual Care. As principal presider of the Sunday Caron Chapel service, he welcomed client participation as a therapeutic strategy. Many of Rev. Jack's chapel talks are preserved on the Caron Chapel You Tube channel. He also helped design and launch Caron's clinical pastoral education (CPE) program for addiction-related spiritual care.

Called a visionary and a blue flame thinker by his colleagues, Jack felt most honored by the 1:1 relationship with clients and families in care whose suffering challenged him to become a better person, a more humble witness, and a tireless champion of hope and trust in the recovery process. Jack advocated for the professional recognition of addiction chaplains and for inclusive interfaith chaplaincy.

Jack married the love of his life, Judy Schrader in 2016 and one of his greatest joys was becoming a stepparent to Judy's two sons, Jason and Jared, and their extended families. He wrote, "I am grateful that I have been given time to wake up and make strides in my aspiration to be a 'family person.'" In his free time, Jack enjoyed playing piano, running, painting, beaching, family activities, and travel.

Rev. Jack is survived by his beloved wife Judy Schrader, stepsons Jason (Courtney) Cooper and granddaughters Lyla and Charlotte; Jared Schrader (girlfriend Kayla Myrbeck); siblings James Abel (fiancée Katie Boggs), Poteet, Texas, and Marianne (Harry) Abel-Lipschutz, Cedar Falls, Iowa; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and loved ones. He was preceded in death by his parents John F. and Irene (Bradley) Abel, and two brothers, David, and Stephen.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, November 16, 2024, 1:00-3:00pm at the Lighthouse Cove Event Center, 1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, De. 19971

In lieu of flowers: Donations can be made to the Caron Treatment Centers, <https://www.caron.org/donate>.

Attn: Development Dept. Chapel Fund.

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.



Tribute Wall

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PK

Patricia L. Kimm posted:

My deepest sympathy to Jack's family and to all who were blessed to have known him. May we meet again in heaven!

November 15 at 12:24 PM

TT

Todd And Caron Ny Tram sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Abel family.



November 14 at 12:17 PM

TT

Todd And Caron Ny Tram planted a Memorial Tree in honor of John.



November 14 at 12:17 PM

DB

Dean Drosnes/Sarka Baity posted:

Close friend, professional colleague, sponsor. Jack was all of these. Among the many blessings I've received from Jack, his presiding over Sarka's and my wedding 2 years ago was the most precious and most recent. He lives on in our hearts eternally. We will carry his message of miracles and faith forever.

November 14 at 11:06 AM

DB

Dean Drosnes & Sarka Baity sent a Medium Dish Garden to the Abel family.



November 14 at 10:54 AM

DB

Dean Drosnes & Sarka Baity planted a Memorial Tree in honor of John.



November 14 at 10:54 AM



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GI

George Iannacone posted:

My deepest condolences to Judy and the family. Jack and I go way back. We were roommates the first year of college at the New School in New York. We became great friends taking classes together, playing chess and just being kids. I was in awe of him: his grasp of physics and math, and his incredible piano playing. We fell out of touch as college friends do, but he reached out in 2008 when he began at Caron. Ultimately, I sent my son to Caron, where Jack watched over him and fostered his Recovery. He and I got closer still, visiting in NYC, and getting together last year with our suite mates from 1978. We last spoke on Tuesday before he passed, when he told me how lucky he was to finally have time to be at home with his wife. Judy, he truly loved you. Words fail me. It's time for prayers

November 14 at 6:29 AM

CB

Cathy Benson posted:

Jack, you are the reason I found Epworth. I kept hearing around the community "you've gotta meet Jack Abel, new pastor at Epworth. You've gotta meet Jack!" Susan and I finally visited Epworth and never left! I particularly remember a sermon about the 12-step program where you literally preached from a ladder in the middle of the sanctuary, and climbed step at a time as you described the step and its importance. I was struck by your courage and conviction as you delivered God's word in your own way and through your own stories. I know that the recovery community adored you, and your witness helped so many. I was delighted every time I encountered you after you left Epworth, whether it was at the grocery store, a random parking lot, etc. You impacted many, whether you knew it or not, and we collectively are grateful for your life and your leadership. As the Apostle Paul said, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord". Hallelujah. Bask in the light, my friend

November 13 at 11:36 AM

MK

Monica Kirk posted:

I am very sorry for your loss. I met him while my daughter was a Caron. We all benefited from Chapel and I appreciate all he did to support my daughter.

October 29 at 7:48 AM

BE

Beth Ewell lit a candle in honor of John.



October 28 at 1:28 PM



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Barbara Brewer posted:

Jack's inspirational sermons and stories during his time at Epworth moved me (often to tears) more than any church leader I've encountered in my long lifetime. It was with sorrow that I saw him leave Epworth and it is with great sadness that I learned of his passing. What a gift he was to so very many from every place and walk of life. My condolences to all who were fortunate enough to know and love him...

October 25 at 10:32 AM



Kathryn Rowesparks November 14 at 3:27 PM

There is so much to share about Jack, he was a dear friend, pastor, and confidant to our family The Doucette's, while at Hopewell Church in Rising Sun.Md. Our family was blessed to have had him close to our Dad, Arthur. I remember Jack asked me to do the eulogy at my Dads funeral, and I said I couldn't, it was a task that took all of my beliefs that I could not do but Jack knew I really could and I did. We as a family loved him for holding us together with faith and love. God bless his family with cherished memories and keeping Christ in his heart and life



Bishop Abrams lit a candle in honor of John.

Rev. Jack was dedicated to creating systems for our Mental Health Network board. As our treasurer he wanted to make sure that things ran smoothly and everything was accounted for properly. He also was very authentic and open whenever he had any challenges or struggles in life. Rev. Jack was a great spirit and his presence will truly be missed. As Board President, I could not have asked for a better Treasurer during my term in office. We appreciate Jack's great work and his legacy will live on with all of us at the Mental Health Network Board of the United Church of Christ. May God comfort the entire family and community during this time.



October 25 at 7:24 AM



Sturges Dodge sent a virtual gift in honor of John.

el think we met Jack and his family as far back as when they took over The Art Age on Rehoboth Avenue from the Shroeders. Art was our connection and then aspects of recovery as Jack evolved into a gifted seeker and helper. Though not connected in person for decades we watched his career path evolve with admiration, and have always thought of him with affection. We are so sorry this special man had to leave this plane this soon, and offer our condolences to his family, close friends and colleagues.



October 25 at 5:13 AM



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RL

Rev. Robert Lucas posted:

We wanted to extend our sympathy and prayers to all of Jack's family. Bob, spent many good years doing chaplaincy work at Caron with Jack. We were sad to learn of his passing. Rev. Robert D. Lucas and Dr. Robin A. Lucas, Ph.D.

October 24 at 12:50 PM

KJ

Kari Jones posted:

Jack and I carpoled to seminary in Washington DC and were on the church staff together at St. Johns. Lots of memories.

October 24 at 12:24 PM

TM

Terry Mirezni posted:

I am shocked to hear of the passing of Rev. Jack Abel, I knew him when he was pastor at Epworth church in Rehoboth, De. I am so sorry for his wife Judy, it is sad that they have not had more time together. Please know that you are both in my thoughts and prayers. Terry Mirezni

October 23 at 7:28 PM

SH

Shannon Harris posted:

Jack, I would not be the person or the pastor I am today without your faith, your example and your teaching of the Word! I have no doubt you have heard, "Well done good and faithful servant." I thank you for the difference you made in my life and AJ's life. God bless your family as they mourn this great loss.

October 23 at 6:28 PM

MD

Marie Dunkle posted:

Jack married us (Dayne and Marie) at Crave in womelsdorf on 9-22-09. We were honored to have him and Fr. Bill at our commitment ceremony. I remember Jack getting a kick out of 2 alcoholics getting married at a place called "Crave" which was on "High street. He was a beacon for many addicts and he will be missed. But his spirit lives on. Prayers for his family.

October 23 at 4:39 PM



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Tom Carter posted:

Jack was a friend and pastor First at my parents church (Hopewell) and he conducted my mother's funeral. My wife and I attended the services Jack led at Epworth. Prayers for Jack's family.

October 23 at 4:00 PM



Kenny Mahan posted:

Jack,I don't think you ever knew the number of lives you touched through your church ministries, your recovery ministries and your friendships. Your love for others was limitless. Thank you for sharing your life with so many of us.It is now your time to rest... rest in peace.Kenny Mahan

October 22 at 5:20 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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