



## Rev. David Peter Risseeuw

May 10, 1941 - April 30, 2022

Rev. David Risseeuw, age 80 of Millsboro, DE, passed away Saturday, April 30, 2022, at Beebe Hospital. He was born on May 10, 1941, in Sheboygan, WI, son of the late Lewis and Augusta (De Master) Risseeuw.

David received his BS from Central College, a small Dutch Reformed college in Pella, Iowa. There he excelled in speech, drama, student government, and a premedical curriculum which included original undergraduate research funded by the National Science Foundation. Somewhat of a surprise, David accepted God's call to pastoral ministry in his senior year. He enrolled at The New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, NJ, the oldest Protestant seminary in North America, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1968.

David's first pastorate was at the Clinton Avenue Reformed Church in Bergenfield, NJ. It was the worst of times and it was the best of times during the wild and evolving 1960s. Under his pastorate, he served the returning servicemen, both living and dead, counselled more than two dozen church members of the Bergenfield Police Department, and the flower power children.

After eight years David accepted the challenge to participate in a team ministry at the First Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York. It is an historic congregation dating from 1680, but it was church home to close to a thousand research scientists, engineers, and management who worked at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory. David's undergraduate work in the sciences gave his rapport as a minister additional credibility.

The last pastorate assignment was at the Six Mile Run Reformed Church in Franklin Park, NJ. This became the greatest challenge of David's career. Over his seventeen years as the pastor, he worked to transform the congregation into a multi-ethnic, multi-racial church that encompassed members from four continents and twenty-three nations of origin.

Beyond assisting patients and their families to meet their health challenges, David truly

enjoyed the fellowship of St George's congregation and the activities of the Dragon's men's group. While gardening, golf, and fishing were to be his retirement goals, they were effectively replaced by his gourmet and fun cooking for church social functions. David came to be called the "Cheeseman" because he manned his fine Wisconsin cheese booth at the annual Christmas Fair. His very traditional Christmas stollens sold quickly, leaving many people to wonder why they had not arrived earlier.

David's clergy service to the Reformed Church of America included leadership positions at the local, regional, national, and international levels: attending the 6th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, BC, inspecting mission-created hospitals and leprosy clinics in South India, chairing the trustees of the three Reformed Church seminaries, led workshops on multi-cultural ministry, chaired committees which processed candidates for ordained ministry, and screened candidates for the largest East Coast program that trains hospital chaplains.

In his retirement, David was also a part-time chaplain at Beebe Hospital.

If you were ever a patient there, you may remember, "Hello, I'm David and I've come to pray with you."

David is survived by his beloved wife, Marjorie Gird Risseeuw; his daughter, Sara Erickson (Hans) of Niskayuna, NY; his stepsons: Robert (Theresa) of Orlando, FL, John (Yvonne) of Glen Burnie, MD, and Garrett (Stephanie) of Beaverton, OR; his ten grandchildren and three great grandchildren; his brother, John Risseeuw (Linda); and his sister, Mary Risseeuw. David was particularly proud of all that his siblings have accomplished. John Risseeuw is a professor emeritus from Arizona State University with an international following for his work in print media and paper making. His life work was requested by the Library of Congress in 2018. Mary is a guru recognized for her extensive research in Dutch American history. She is well known for her writing and lecturing on all aspects of Dutch genealogy and the Dutch migration across America.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at 12:00 PM, at St. George's Chapel, 20271 Beaver Dam Road, Harbeson, DE. A reception will immediately follow at the Fellowship Hall.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions in David's memory to All Saints Church and St. George's Chapel, 18 Olive Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971.

Please sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.

FLORIST NOTE: PLEASE DELIVER ALL ARRANGEMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE FAMILY.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAY 14. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. George's Episcopal Chapel  
20274 Beaver Dam Road (Route 23)  
Harbeson, DE 19951

# Tribute Wall

DP

“ I knew Dave long ago in Schenectady, New York, at the First Reformed Church. I was struggling through the break-up of a marriage and ultimate divorce. Dave was always there to offer comfort and advice and we became friends. He had a great sense of humor and could tell the congregation good stories as well as preach. He was well respected and I'm glad he found his way at his church in New Jersey where some of us from Schenectady attended his installation, and that .he was happily retired in Delaware.  
God's peace and blessings to his family..  
(Ms.) Duane Plummer, now happy in Florida.

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Duane A. Plummer - May 15 at 09:12 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rev. David Peter Risseeuw.



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May 14 at 09:54 AM

JR

“ I first met David when we shared our senior year at New Brunswick seminary. There were several of us who had returned from field internships, armed with reality-based questions and observations about congregational service that enriched our seminary learning and which formed bonds of friendship that lasted for decades. We wound up in a variety of ministries, serving congregations, chaplaincies, ecumenical agencies, and training programs over a wide geography, but kept in touch as best we could. With David, reunions always felt immediately warm and supportive, picking up where we last left off. Insight, wisdom and humor marked his engagement with others. He listened and you were heard. He responded and you felt valued. David will be missed but we are thankful for the blessing of his friendship.

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Jim Reid - May 12 at 02:18 PM

JB

“ *"The Rev", as we lovingly called him was more than a friend and pastor, he was family. We were blessed to have him in our lives. Our hearts are heavy with his passing but comforted knowing he will have a special place in Heaven. He will always be remembered by us, our children and our grandchildren with love and admiration.*

*Marjorie, remember Rome and the great reception by the military parade, that you had in the middle of your first night, while recovering from jet lag?*

*We love you  
Janice and John Bellavia*

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**Janice Bellavia** - May 10 at 12:43 PM

LB

“ *I will always remember Rev. Risseeuw with fondness and love. His children's sermons with Henrietta the chicken, singing to Marjorie as she walked down the aisle on their wedding day, cooking for my bridal shower, and traveling to Myrtle Beach to baptize my daughter are just a few of the memories of him that I cherish. I am forever grateful for the positive energy he brought to our family.*

*Lisa Bellavia*

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**Lisa Bellavia** - May 09 at 11:56 AM

MR

“ *We are so very sorry to hear of David's passing.  
Keeping you in our thoughts and prayers*

*Marion & Robert*

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**Marion & Robert** - May 09 at 09:40 AM

JR

“ *We were so sorry to hear about the passing of David. He had a generous heart and we will miss him at St. George's.*



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**John and Janet Ray** - May 08 at 10:01 AM

RP

“ David was my early mentor in pastoral ministry. He was the leading force behind the creation of East Central United Ministries, which employed me as Youth Culture Minister in Bergenfield, New Jersey, from 1971 to 1976. My beat was the drug-ridden streets and parks of a town just a few miles from New York City. David set an example for me in terms of his tireless commitment to outreach, and his ever-imaginative and strategically innovative spirit. He was someone who made a genuine difference— in Bergenfield, AND far beyond. In the Spirit— Rev. Rand(y) Peabody

Rev. Rand Peabody - May 06 at 04:00 PM

PR

“ Enjoyed be part of a RCA committee and traveling with David. Great guy.

pastor Irving Rivera - May 06 at 03:55 PM

RL

“ We have known David for many years, most recently when I was the Pastor of the Reformed Church in Willow Grove, PA. some 20 plus years ago. My wife Karen (Hyink) grew up with him at Hope Reformed Church in Sheboygan during high school years. Even with her early stage dementia, she has fond memories of those years. I am from Baldwin, Wisconsin. We met at Hope College. May God's comfort be with all family and friends. Cordially, Pastor Ron Lokhorst

Ronald Lokhorst - May 06 at 11:51 AM

RS

“ In addition to all the many beautiful and accurate acknowledgements of David's gifts, I treasure the memory of his singing - with the choir, from the pulpit and most especially singing Margie down the aisle on their wedding day at Six Mile Run. Whether preaching or singing, his voice rang out like no other.

*I will continue to hear it as I remember him in the years ahead,*

*Robin Suydam*

Robin Suydam - May 05 at 12:01 PM

DP

“ There is a hole in our collective hearts made by David's passing that no one can ever fill. A beautiful soul who has left us far too soon, he left a part of himself with all he touched. Such sadness to lose him. Such joy to have known him.  
*Dee Pollard & George Pfeiffer*

Dee Pollard - May 05 at 11:50 AM