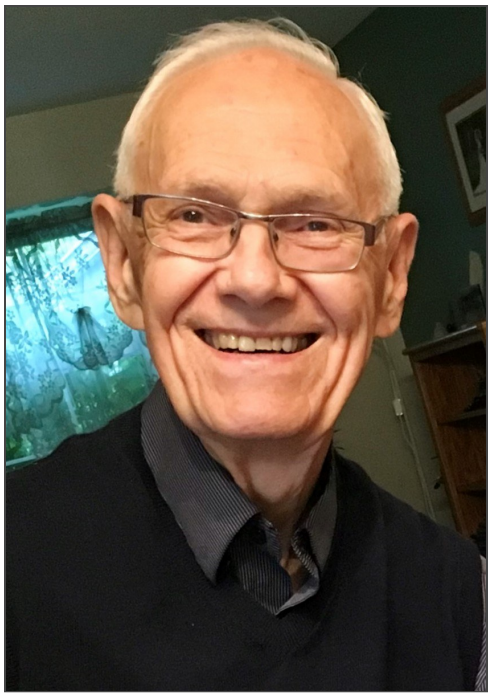
Mervyn Gerald Lutes



AUGUST 2, 2023

LUTES, REV. DR. MERVYN GERALD

JULY 4, 1935 - AUGUST 2, 2023

Mervyn was born in 1935 to Lydia and Ralph Lutes. He joined a large and loving family as the 4th of 6 children.

Life began in the “Dirty Thirties” and Merv often said that he was the only crop for his farming family that year. He grew up with a love of music and of faith in God.

After graduating from High School in Medicine Hat, Merv moved to Edmonton in 1955 to work with Canadian Pacific Airlines. He attended Robertson United church where he joined the choir and the Young Adult group. Here he met the love of his life, Barbara White. They were married in 1961. They joyfully welcomed 3 children to the family - Stephen, Sandra, and Margaret.

Merv wanted to use his life to help others and felt called to serve in Christian ministry. As a student minister he served at Pigeon Lake Youth Camp, Bissell Center (Edmonton) and at Salem United Church (Vegreville).

Merv completed his B.A. degree at the University of Alberta in 1962. He continued his studies at St. Stephen’s College and was ordained in 1965 as a minister in the United Church of Canada.

Over the many years of ministry, he served a number of pastoral charges. These included Gleichen Pastoral Charge - Gleichen, Cluny and Arrowwood. As well as several Edmonton area churches: McDougall United, St. Stephen's United, Castle Downs and Ardrossan. He also headed New Church Development for Edmonton Presbytery and assisted new churches in many communities in the Edmonton area.

In 1995 Merv and Barbara moved to South Surrey BC to serve at First United Church, White Rock. After retiring in 2000 Merv continued to aid and support his church, serving in many capacities.

His second calling involved "secular "work which arose from his experiences in the city centre of Edmonton. These illustrated the need (especially for young people) to be taught and guided in making positive, life-affirming decisions. With the advent of "family-life education" in the schools, Merv felt called to minister to young people through teaching and counselling. While still serving at St. Stephen's United Church, Merv returned to U of A to get his Teaching Certification so he could be part of the Career and Life Management Program in Edmonton Schools. He wrote curriculum, trained teachers, and did support programs for parents and communities.

This program is a required course for graduation in Alberta schools.

He went on to be a high school teacher and counsellor at several Edmonton area high schools including Eastglen, M.E. Lazerte and McNally.

In 1991 Merv was given a Doctor of Divinity degree by St. Stephen's College in recognition of his work in both the church and the community.

Music was always a large part of Merv's life as he sang in many churches, choral groups, Edmonton Light Opera Society and The Edmonton Opera Company. He sang with and conducted choirs in several of his churches. Here in White Rock, he continued to sing with the Peninsula Church choir and was also active with the

Kent Street Choristers for many years. At home he could very often be heard singing or whistling while he went about his day.

His other passion was plants, especially Orchids, which he grew for more than 50 years.

He was a founding member of the Alberta Orchid Society and was President of the Fraser Valley Orchid Society here in BC several times. He loved sharing his plants and his plant knowledge and was eager to help new growers. Working in his greenhouse and vegetable and flower gardens and sharing what he grew was a great source of happiness for him.

Merv and Barbara travelled to Singapore, Bali and, with Rostad Tours, went on to host a number of group tours to Israel, West and Eastern Turkey, Jordan, the Cook Islands, Australia. New Zealand, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Ecuador.

Family time was always important. Merv always enjoyed being with his children and grandchildren, whether in person, (visiting Edmonton, North Dakota), or on Zoom or FaceTime. Merv officiated at the weddings of all three of his children - Margaret to Leon Lewis, Steve to Lynette Jans, Sandra to Craig Buday. Three wonderful additions to our family. Hugs, stories, songs and adventures with four amazing grandchildren, Vanessa, Connor, Erin and Shayla were a constant delight.

After many happy years in their house in South Surrey, Merv and Barbara moved last year to a lovely apartment at Crescent Gardens and settled into a happy, caring, supportive community.

Merv was pleased to be able to make use of the greenhouse at Crescent and kindled the enthusiasm of other plant lovers to share their common passion.

Throughout his lifetime Merv was known for his warm and caring personality, his sense of humour and love of puns, his passion for serving others and improving the

lives of people in the community and around the world. All who knew him have benefitted from his willingness to share his many gifts. He will be lovingly missed by his family and many friends.

We would like to express our gratitude to the wonderful Crescent Gardens staff for their care and support. Thanks also to the staff at Peace Arch Hospital, the Cancer Society and the Kidney Centre for their medical care and expertise. We express special thanks to Merv’s wonderful family doctor Dr Ravi Beri for his exceptional care and compassion.

Merv’s life was guided by his love of God and was an expression of love for his family, his friends, and for this world in which we live.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Merv’s name to Peace Arch Hospital, The Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Doctors without Borders, or a charity of your choice.

Messages of Condolence

Barbara,

You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. I so enjoyed both you and Merv while I was singing with the Kent St. Choristers. Merv's smile warmed the heart. His sense of humor lightened a tense moment. His absence at a rehearsal was always noticed. Not only did he have a beautiful voice; he had a beautiful soul. I wish you comfort in your faith and joy in your memories. Sincerely, Mary Luethe

— Mary Luethe

Dear Barb and to all the family. I am sure Merv and Ed are duetting around Heaven in hopes of joining the angels' chorus for Christmas.
Time for a rest and reorganizing We shall really miss Merv in choristers and I do hope you will continue- new leader and new pianist - a new start for everyone- In your case Barb you have more hurdles to manage.
Please take care.
Big hug,
Sally

— Sally Stewart

Barb and family,
It was an honour to come to know you and Merv.
I so appreciated Merv, the generous gardener, the voice that grounded our Kent Street choir and the one with quick wit during practices. At Peninsula United I benefitted from his support for our amalgamation and his interest in our partnership with Tierra Nueva.
Both of you have gifted my life with your example and your smiles.
Sincerely meant, Cheryl Lightowlers

— Cheryl Lightowlers

Barbara- sending love and condolences to you and your family.

— Trish and Brent Levinson

I only knew Merv for a brief time but soon came to appreciate his cheerful disposition, his wit, his depth of knowledge as a gardener and his humanity. I wish I had met him earlier in life.

My condolences to Barbara and all the family.

— Lloyd Johnson

Dear Barbara and family. We have missed you and Merv ever since you left our neighborhood. It was always a pleasure to watch Merv and his green thumb nurturing your garden He will be missed by us and we would like to send you our sincere condolences!

— Frank and Susan Sommer

Barbara and Family

My sincerest condolences on the loss of one of my very first friends. We discovered our visions of ministry together in many long conversations as we sat, talking, in my car, after YPU meetings, or choir practice at Robertson United. We were also both working for CPAL at the time. He was also my treasured confidant in later years. I miss him.

— Gregory Milne

Dear Barbara and family, it is with great sadness that we have heard of Merv‘s passing. He was such a good man, with a great sense of humour and kindness to so many. Truly a life well lived, and such a great life partner to you. I am thinking of you in this very sad time.
With love, Nancy

— Nancy rosd

It is with deep sadness that I recently heard of Merv's passing. I had the pleasure of being on the same staff with Merv at M. E. LaZerte High School in Edmonton, Alberta. He had a very special way of reaching out to students and staff and always put everybody else first. I appreciated his great sense of humor and his sincerity. Sometimes I think of his office and all the piles of books and papers on his desk. Any time I went in to talk about a student and would mention our correspondence, all I had to do was say the student's name and Merv would respond very quickly and knew exactly where to find the sheet or sheets to which I was referring. It was really quite amazing to watch him. His love of music was evident when he started a staff choir. It didn't matter whether we could sing or not. We enjoyed the opportunity to learn from someone who was so passionate about music. Merv was a wonderful human being and left the world a much better place. My sincere condolences to Merv's wife and family.

— John Renfree

What a beautiful obituary. I just spotted Mr.Lutes name in the ARTA magazine. I was a student at Eastglen, and remember his quiet, thoughtful presence in the halls of that school.I spoke with him often. It sounds like he lived a wonderful and full life.

— Evelyn
