



Celebration of Life
For
The Reverend Dr. Paul Duaine Eppinger
May 7, 1933 — Nov. 10, 2016

A Service of Celebration of Life and Faith
December 3, 2016 1:00 P.M.

Gathering Music

Shared by First Institutional Baptist Choir

Welcome

Shared by Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart

Prayer of Invocation

Led by Rev. Ken Heintzelman

Special Music

Shared by The Shadow Rock
Cornerstone Chorale

I'll Fly Away Medley

Scripture Reading

Shared by Rev. Peggy Roberts
Shared by Rev. Amy Moore

I John 4:1-12, 18
I Corinthians 13

Congregational Hymn

For All the Saints

1. For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest—
Alleluia, Alleluia!
2. From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Participants in the Service

Forrest Bachtel, Choir Director at Shadow Rock UCC

Leann Basha, Latter Day Saints representative on AIFM Board

*Rev. Dr. Kelly Bender, Pastor at UMOM NEW DAY CENTERS
Homeless Shelters*

Rev. Renée Morgan Brooks, Soloist

Rev. Larry Fultz, Executive Director of AIFM

Brenda Hankins, Minister of Music at FIBC

Rev. Ken Heintzelman, Pastor at Shadow Rock UCC

Guru Kirn Kaur Khalsa, Sikh representative on AIFM Board

Rev. Amy Moore, Pastor at John Calvin Presbyterian, Dallas TX

Anita Rangaswami, Hindu representative on AIFM Board

Sherry Roberson, Co-Director of S.G.I Cactus Chorus

Rev. Peggy Roberts, Chaplain at Beatitudes Campus

Rev. Eldred Spain, President of AIFM Board

Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart, Senior Pastor at FIBC

Carolyn Thomas, Co-Director of S.G.I Cactus Chorus

Joyce Wood, Co-Director of S.G.I Cactus Chorus

Celebrating the Work and Legacy of Paul Eppinger

This is an opportunity for friends and family to share stories and reflections about their relationship with Paul.

It is a time for laughter, tears, endearment and sharing strength with each other.

Special Music

“We Are One”

Combined Choirs led by

Soka Gakkai International Cactus Chorus



Word of Hope

Rev. Warren Stewart

Congregational Hymn

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise,
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come treading our path through the blood of the
slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest, our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met
Thee,
Lest, our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget
Thee,
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

Pastoral Prayer

Led by Rev. Dr. Kelly Bender

Special Music

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Introduced by Rev. Ken Heintzelman

Shared by Rev. Renée Morgan Brooks

Accompanist Brenda Hankins



Benediction

Led by Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart

All: And we build a peace to all who we leave behind.

One: Paul, Into the freedom of wind and sunshine...

All: We let you go.

One: Into the dance of the stars and the planets...

All: We let you go.

One: Into the wind's breath and the hands of the
star maker...

All: We let you go.

One: There is one last word from Paul,

*To my wife and daughters, thank you for being such wonderful
human beings. To everyone else, "Love One Another."*

Closing Music

JOY!

Shared by First Institutional Baptist Choir

Thank you for coming today to honor Paul's life, mourn his death, and celebrate the promise of everlasting life. We appreciate the love and support you've given over the past eighteen months: the visits, phone calls, and text messages, the food, the assistance getting places that were only marginally wheelchair-friendly. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the ALS Association, Beatitudes at Home, Shadow Rock United Church of Christ, and Hospice of the Valley. Please join us in Fellowship Hall for food and fellowship where we can continue to visit, share stories, and celebrate Paul's life.

Sybil and daughters, Damaris, Priscilla, Stephanie, and Monica

Paul Duaine Eppinger
May 7, 1933 - November 10, 2016

Paul Duaine Eppinger was born in Norton, Kansas to Theodore and Gertrude (Anderson) Eppinger. During his childhood the family moved to Rocky Ford, CO. As a teenager Paul played on the High School football team, the "Meloneers."

Paul attended William Jewell College in Liberty, MO, where he majored in business administration. He early felt a calling to Christian ministry, and as a college student served as pastor of two small churches in rural Missouri. He was ordained when a young man of twenty-one.

Following graduation from college Paul offered himself for overseas mission service. It was during the six weeks of missionary orientation that he met Sybil Casbeer and soon fell in love. Having both signed contracts as single missionaries, the couple chose to fulfill their mission assignments before getting married.

Paul was initially appointed by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to mission service in Japan. He travelled to Japan via the Philippines, where Sybil had been appointed to serve with the Methodist Church. Paul spent 2-1/2 years in Japan teaching English. In his free time there he learned to speak Japanese, sang in the Yokohama Christian Choir, led a weekly Bible study, and made a study of other religions. It was a visit to the ruins of Hiroshima that persuaded him to a lifetime of pacifism and working for peace and justice.

Shortly after returning from the mission field, Paul and Sybil married. The newlyweds moved to New Jersey where Paul began seminary studies at Princeton Theological Seminary while serving as pastor of Ardena Baptist Church. While in seminary Paul accepted a call to Preakness Baptist Church in Wayne, NJ. As pastor he was alerted to the lack of religious opportunities for developmentally disabled people, so he organized a Sunday School class for mentally retarded children. One highlight of that era of his life was participating in the March on Washington and hearing Martin Luther King, Jr. preach his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. While Paul and Sybil lived in Wayne they started a family.

Seven years later Paul was called to pastor Calvary Baptist Church, and he and Sybil with their four daughters moved to Norristown, PA. There, he noticed the lack of safe space for teenagers and young adults, some of them runaways and drug users who were no longer welcome in their parents' homes. He repurposed the church parsonage to be a youth house for "hippies." One of his ongoing concern for civil rights and race relations took was an annual pulpit exchange with the pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, one of the African-American churches in Norristown. He also taught homiletics as an adjunct instructor at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. While pastor in Norristown Paul earned a D.Min. from San Francisco Theological Seminary. His dissertation was on marriage and divorce among American Baptist pastors.

In 1974 Paul was called to First Baptist Church in Topeka, KS, and the family made a cross-country move. In Topeka Paul continued the radio ministry he had begun in New Jersey, delivering a weekly message for "Life in a time of Crisis." He and Sybil, a marriage and family counselor, also hosted and produced a weekly television show called, "Today's Growing, Intimate Family." When a newly-divorced church member expressed consternation that divorced people felt out-of-place in churches, Paul started a ministry with single adults. From a group of half-a-

dozen the SASS class (Single Adult Sunday School) grew into a thrice-weekly ministry with an average attendance of 75 people and national conferences for single adults. Appreciated as an engaging preacher, Paul also served as adjunct professor of homiletics at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

After eleven fruitful years of ministry in Kansas, Paul was called as pastor of First Baptist Church of Phoenix. This was the 1980s, the height of the AIDS epidemic when being diagnosed as HIV+ was a virtual death sentence. Recognizing the stigma associated with having HIV/AIDS, Paul began the Joshua Tree ministry, hosting a weekly lunch for people living with AIDS. He also soon became aware that when homeless people who had needed hospital care were released to go "home," they had nowhere to go. Paul initiated a respite shelter at First Baptist Church, offering a place for recuperation for homeless men just out of hospital.

When Arizona was one of only two states without a holiday acknowledging Martin Luther King, Jr., Paul Eppinger accepted the call to leadership in the Victory Together campaign. As executive director he worked closely with campaign chair Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart. Victory Together was instrumental in establishing a statewide holiday honoring Martin Luther King and civil rights.

His desire for unity among Christians was manifested in Paul's taking up the position of Executive Director of the Arizona Ecumenical Council. His vision next expanded to inviting people from other religious faiths to join together in respect, understanding, and support for one another. Out of this gathering emerged the Arizona Interfaith Movement, an organization he led for 20 years following his retirement from the Arizona Ecumenical Council. As Executive Director of the Arizona Interfaith Movement Paul encouraged the legislature and governor of Arizona to enact legislation to adopt the Golden Rule, a variation of which is taught in every religious tradition. His interfaith work extended into participation in the American Baptist Churches' Baptist-Muslim dialogue, presentations at the Parliament of the World's Religions meetings in Barcelona, Spain (2004), Melbourne, Australia (2009), and Salt Lake City, Utah (2015), and service on the Board of Directors of the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Paul dedicated his life to peacemaking and reaching out to the marginalized. However serious the issues, though, he made his way lightly through life. He enjoyed traveling the world, and with Sybil led numerous tour groups to the Holy Land and Europe. He attended Baptist World Alliance congresses in Seoul, South Korea and Buenos Aires, Argentina. He had tremendous love for his family and was happiest when he had all of "his girls" with him. He adored his grandsons, and delighted in taking them to the Fiesta Bowl football game every year.

Upon receiving a diagnosis of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease), Paul Eppinger prepared to die as well as he had lived. He planned his memorial service and eagerly anticipated the moment when he would learn through personal experience just what happens after death. Through 18 months of physical deterioration he kept his optimism and sense of humor. He leaves behind his beloved wife of 58 years, Sybil, daughters Damaris Cooksey (Jerry), Priscilla, Stephanie (Lehan Crane), and Monica (David Menninger), two grandsons, Lyle Cooksey and Paul Cooksey, a sister, Osa Marie Wittenmyer, and nieces Leslie Eppinger and Jerri Trammel, nephews Bruce Wittenmyer and Terry Wittenmyer, and their families.

The family asks that memorial gifts be directed to the endowment funds of either the Arizona Interfaith Movement, the last of Paul's visionary ministries, or the American Baptist Historical Society, where his personal papers will be deposited. Thank You!



Arizona Interfaith
Movement
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interfaithmovement.com



Bringing our legacy to light

American Baptist
Historical Society
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