



Rev. Miley E. Palmer

MAR 20, 1937 - JAN 24, 2022



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FUNERAL HOME AND
CREMATION SERVICES

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Rev. Miley E. Palmer

MAR 20, 1937 - JAN 24, 2022

Decatur - Rev. Miley Embry Palmer, 84, of Decatur, died January 24, 2022. Miley was born March 20, 1937, in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of Guy E and Guion Palmer. He grew up in Hartford, Illinois. He graduated from McKendree University in Lebanon, Illinois, earned his master's in theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, and doctor of ministry degree at Christian Theological Seminary. He married Janet Elaine Kuhlmann of O'Fallon, Illinois on June 27, 1959. From 1955 until 2021, he served United Methodist congregations in Central and Southern Illinois, including Normal Calvary, Champaign Faith, Charleston Wesley, six years as Peoria District Superintendent, and nine years as directing pastor of Wesley UMC and Wesley Foundation Director at U of I. He came to Decatur as pastor of Grace UMC in 1994. He retired as a full-time pastor in 1998.

After retiring he became a full-time chaplain at Decatur Memorial Hospital, where he also served for 20 years on the Institutional Review Board and Medical Ethics Committee. He was involved in interfaith activities and enjoyed preaching across denominations from Unitarian to Roman Catholic. In retirement he served interim pastorates in seven churches, both United Methodist and Presbyterian. He most recently served as Minister of Visitation for First UMC, fully retiring on December 31, 2021.

Miley was the first recipient of the Peter Cartwright Lifetime Evangelism Award from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church. He received the Peter Akers Award for professional success in recognition of his outstanding service and loyalty to his alma mater, McKendree University: this is the highest honor an alumnus of McKendree can receive. He served on the alumni board, including as President. He was a Trustee for 24 years, and was recently named Trustee Emeritus. Miley also served on the board of Methodist Medical Center in Peoria for thirty years. He helped guide Decatur's Racial Taboo initiative and



Obituary

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received the local NAACP chapter's Joe Slaw Civil Rights Award. A Rotarian for 43 years, he was a Paul Harris Fellow and held every local leadership role in the Rotary Club.

Throughout his ministry, he was particularly involved in social justice initiatives. He fought for open housing ordinances in Bloomington-Normal. He was an advocate for peace, working in draft counseling during the Vietnam War. He has been a familiar face across Central Illinois for those engaged in social actions concerning race relations, troubled youth, civil rights, drugs and gun violence. In 2017 he received the Cramer-Heurman Social Justice Award from the IGRC.

Miley will be remembered not only for his service to various communities but for his dedication to his family, his keen sense of humor, superior preaching skills, and his endless empathy for all people.

He is survived by his wife Janet; children Elizabeth Best (James); Mary Kay Mace (Eric); Michael (Teresa); and Patricia Wegeng (David); four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and a granddaughter, Ryanne Mace.

Private burial services for the family will be January 29. A memorial service will be held at First United Methodist Church on Saturday, February 12 at 2:00 pm, preceded by visitation from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Due to Covid restrictions, limited seating is available for in-person worship and masks are required. Live streaming information and links can be found at decaturfirstumc.org. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First United Methodist Church in Decatur or McKendree University.




Moran & Goebel Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. Condolences and memories may be shared at www.moranandgoebel.com.






Events

Rev. Miley E. Palmer
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Visitation

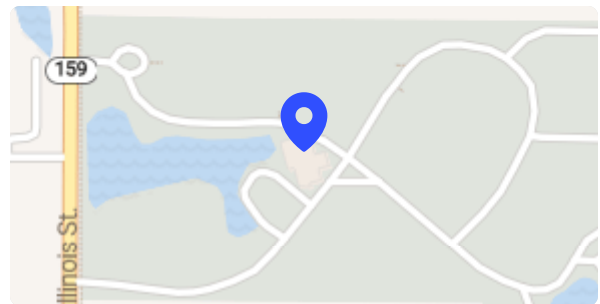
-  **Saturday**, February 12, 2022
-  11:00 AM - 2:00 PM CT
-  First United Methodist Church

Celebration of Life Memorial Service

-  **Saturday**, February 12, 2022
-  2:00 PM CT
-  First United Methodist Church

Cemetery Details

-  **Lake View Memorial Gardens**
5000 N. Illinois St., Fairview Heights IL 62208





Tribute Wall

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JK

Julie Nichols Kempe posted:

My Dad, Rev. Jerry Nichols spoke of your friendship so many times over the years. Thank you for being my Dad's friend. Julie Nichols

September 17 at 6:32 PM

TB

Teri Bailey posted:

To Rev. Palmers's family, please accept our deepest condolences for the loss of a great man. My husband and I had the honor of knowing Rev. Palmer. He was truly a beautiful soul who absolutely loved sharing his love and faith with the people he met. Richard & Teri Bailey

July 6 at 3:02 PM

JK

James Kotowski posted:

Rev. Palmer was a great minister, in my opinion. I, who was pretty uneasy in any Christian church as a younger man, found it easy to listen to his sermons and easy to talk to him. He convinced me that Jesus was concerned about child abuse, by quoting this passage: "But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea."--Matthew 18:6 He also convinced me that you have to follow belief with action. I don't know why I was moved to look him up; when I did, I found his obituary, and was saddened to find out that he had passed away. At least I can count him in as a member of my "spirit team" now....Rest in peace, Reverend Palmer.

May 6 at 10:08 AM

JP

John F. Pierce posted:

To Jan and family, I remember when Miley helped heal Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in time of need between pastors. I really appreciated how Miley brought our congregation together especially in closing our services by circling up and joining hands before we left the sanctuary. Miley and my Jan can now sing praises together from above. God Bless all of you in this next journey in your life. John and Molly Pierce

February 12 at 7:26 AM



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DJ

Daryl Junk posted:

Dear Jan, Our hearts go out to you and your family. Miley's death is a great loss but his life was a great blessing. We have always loved and respected you and Miley since we met at Calvary Methodist Church in Normal, IL in the 1960s. Miley married us on June 14, 1969, and we contacted him on our 50th anniversary in 2019 to thank him for marrying us. We will join you for the livestream of his funeral on Feb. 12. Please keep our love with you in the days ahead.

February 7 at 7:50 AM

KC

Karen Cheek posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with Miley's wife and family. I was saddened to hear of his passing. Miley served an important role as a member of the Decatur Memorial Hospital Institutional Review Board. He was an integral part of getting clinical trials available for our patient and served as great advocate for them. I have been gone from DMH research team for 5 years now, but I remember fondly all the monthly conversations he and I would have during our IRB meeting/lunch. Miley was a very compassionate, thoughtful, and giving man. Without a doubt, the world was a better place because Miley was part of it. Karen Cheek

February 3 at 2:28 PM

BB

Beth Barnwell posted:

Janet, Beth, Mary Kay, Micheal and Patti, So very many years ago, on Robinwood Drive, I would babysit you four lovely children. As a young teenager I loved to hang around your house (even when not working) having conversation and learning life lessons from your parents. I remember how "cool" I thought your dad was because he loved Simon & Garfunkel and played their album. (My parents didn't even know who S&G were.) Thanks to today's social media I heard of your dad's passing. My sincere sympathy goes to all of you and your families. We know he is in a better place and will see him again one day. Beth Eiler Barnwell

February 2 at 9:54 AM

CD

Carol Diehl posted:

David and I first met Miley at McKendree University in 1954 and became reacquainted when his ministry brought him to Decatur and eventually to FUMC. I will always be grateful that Miley was willing and able to officiate at David's service after already having done a good friend's service in the morning. What a wonderful pastor and friend. I pray for God's blessing and loving care on Janet and his family. Carol Diehl

February 2 at 8:31 AM



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Roger Cavitt posted:

Miley had his student minister in Woodland, Illinois and lived in the house that my Grandfather built. When we moved to Normal, my said you have to go to the church where Miley is the minister. The rest is history for the Cavitt family. Miley has his family were close to us and kids were near the same age. Loved Miley and the whole family. Love and prayers go to the family. Roger Cavitt

February 2 at 4:42 AM



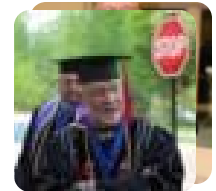
Trish Quintenz posted:

Dear Janet,What a special joy it has been to be able to spend time visiting with you and Miley in the last several months. To get to know better the woman behind the man--what a tremendous partner and helpmate you have been. We were so blessed that Miley was able to give the message at Mom's funeral. You are much loved. Praying for you and your family as you move through the days & months & years to come.The family of Dick & Joyce ReevesDick, Jim & Trish ❤️

January 30 at 9:56 AM



Maggie shared 2 photos to the **Memories Album** album.



January 28 at 6:38 AM



Sue Augustine Kowa lit a candle in honor of Rev. Miley.

I'm so saddened to hear of Miley's passing. He was a wonderful minister and person, a friend to all. My condolences and prayers to family.Sue Augustine Kowa



January 28 at 5:18 AM



Maggie shared 4 photos to the **Memories Album** album.



January 24 at 8:18 AM



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Sandy Dunn posted:

Sending thoughts and prayers for your loss of such a great disciple of God. I experienced more than a few of his messages, and always came away a better person. I worked with Janet at Durfee school in the 90's, and know that she and Rev. Palmer raised a beautiful family together as well as many church families. God Bless,Sandy Dunn

January 28 at 3:07 AM



Cathy Henson January 28 at 5:32 AM

Rev. Palmer preached both of my parents eulogies in 2001. He did not know them but came to talk to us about their lives. Beautiful sermon given by him. I heard him talk at First Methodist Church about his life and the loss of his granddaughter at Dekalb. You could tell his deep faith in God helped him to continue to live his life as a servant of the lord. May he Rest In Peace.



Rev. Thomas Eckhardt posted:

When Dr. Palmer was the Peoria District Superintendent, he visited Boston University in 1982 and recruited me to come to the Former Central Illinois Conference. He simply called and cared and followed through more than any other. It was truly the hand of God using Miley, and I have been grateful to God, and Miley, ever since. Rev. Tom Eckhardt, Peoria, Illinois

January 27 at 3:23 PM



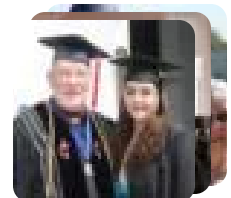
Pamela Zaresk posted:

So many wonderful memories of conversations with cousin Miley. Always joyful, stimulating and smart. My love and prayers are with Janet, Beth, Mary Kay, Michael and Patty. Y'all know that even though we Bussen can't be there physically you are in our hearts and prayers and we're sending virtual hugs with much love.Pam (Bussen) Zaresk

January 27 at 10:33 AM



Dan Dobbins shared 3 photos to the **Memories Album** album.



January 24 at 8:18 AM



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DD

Dan Dobbins posted:

Miley was a dedicated and loyal servant to so many people in so many ways including all of us at his beloved alma mater, McKendree University. He is missed greatly and loved and appreciated even more. Dan Dobbins McKendree University, President

January 27 at 7:51 AM

DR

Debbie Roberts posted:

Our hearts go out to Janet and the family. Miley was wonderful when George lost his mom and he conducted the funeral since her church had closed. He not only did a fabulous service for her although he did not know her, he was a major comfort to George as well. God's comfort and peace to all of you. George and Debbie Roberts

January 27 at 6:23 AM

SP

Sherry Parriott posted:

Pastor Miley was an energetic bastion of faith, love, knowledge, fun, tender concern - I felt blessed to be in the same space with him as preacher, prayer leader, teacher, sharer of faith. And his tie collection gave us all a lift just when needed. Blessings to you, Janet, and to your family. May you feel the love we shared with Miley and hold it close just now. Much love.

January 27 at 5:25 AM

LH

Linda And Ralf Henkel posted:

There are truly not enough words to describe the wonderful pastor and human being Pastor Miley was. We should all strive to be more like him and this world would be a much better place. His smile and kind ways will be missed more than we can even imagine. He has touched so many lives, never worrying about himself, but always concerned about others. Blessings to his family who shared him unselfishly to the rest of the world.

January 27 at 4:52 AM

DN

Debra Kelm-Novak posted:

Rev. Palmer was a wonderful caring man. When my husband would be a patient at DMH he would always come by and visit him. Usually everyday he was in intensive care and then in a regular room. We had many long talks. Such a Saint! Debra Kelm-Novak

January 26 at 1:39 PM



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Pamela Swisher sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Palmer family.



January 26 at 11:49 AM



Lynda Margerum lit a candle in honor of Rev. Miley.



I worked for him on Fridays and Saturdays morning as his secretary, at the United Methodist Church on Summit and Grand. I turned his sermons into PowerPoints for the congregation to see as he preached and lead them through prayer and songs.He was such a kind and brilliant man and will be missed by many.What I loved about him most was his willingness to stop and listen and his smile was contagious. I always left after a work shift with a smile because I was able to hear his voice while turning his notes into a tv screen shot that all his congregation could read along with and the deaf could be able to participate in. Rest in peace sir.Lynda MargerumHerald & ReviewNewsroom Assistant

January 26 at 7:46 AM



Jane Key January 26 at 4:52 PM

Beth and all the Palmer family,I am so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. He meant so much to me during those years in Charleston at University Methodist Church where he was my pastor while I directed the chancel choir. He was always supportive and appreciative of the choir's work. After we moved to San Antonio TX, I always looked forward to his Christmas letter. Although I did not see him again, he always held a special place in my heart.



Roberta Williams January 26 at 2:31 PM

I have such wonderful memories of Miley. We were madrigal singers together. He was kind, had a great sense of humor, and was a great social activist. We participated in Racial Taboo together, and I heard him preach many times. When I think of Miley, I smile. Such a fine man, he will be missed, but remembered fondly. Roberta Williams



Bob Morwell posted:

I first met Miley in 1974 at License to Preach School. I was so impressed with his character and wisdom that I said I would love to be his Associate someday. God must have been listening, because that was my first appointment after seminary in 1978. He was a wonderful mentor and example and truly an answered prayer. Later, he was my District Superintendent, and again, a blessing. His commitment to te Gospel in all its aspects was deep and real. He was a good friend and an inspiring preacher and pastor.I will always be grateful to have known him.

January 26 at 6:48 AM



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TB

Tim Lane-Bortell posted:

Miley was my first pastor who was not my Dad. My Dad was a UMC Minister who became a District Superintendent. Since my Dad would not be in church with the family much on Sundays my mother, brother and I chose Urbana Wesley as our home church. So in the middle of high school through my College Years at Wesley Miley was in a way my first pastor. I will never forget when I walked into Wesley on a week day as a college student feeling anxious and upset because of an emergency in my extended family at the time. When I walked in the door of the church I immediately saw Miley and told him what was going on. He asked me if I would like to go in the sanctuary and pray. So we walked into that big sanctuary, went up front and he prayed with me for the family situation. Miley made a big difference in my life that day and many others as well during those years at Wesley. He will be missed.

January 25 at 11:38 AM

SP

Steve Pyle posted:

A truly nice human being. God's speed, Miley.

January 25 at 7:41 AM

MC

Mary Cunningham posted:

Miley was my pastor in every way three years ago when I was laid-up. And he stepped in with MAROA UMC. He visited me and prayed with me - he was a true example of the type of pastor I strives to be. His pain is gone - Well done good and faithful servant.

January 24 at 8:18 AM



Maggie shared 2 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

January 28 at 6:38 AM





Maggie shared 4 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

January 28 at 4:38 AM



McKendree Graduate Commencement 2018



McKendree Homecoming Awards Ceremony 2018



McKednree Awards Ceremony Homecoming 2018





Dan Dobbins shared 3 photos to the **Memories Album** album.

January 27 at 8:29 AM



McKendree University Homecoming Celebration



Bothwell Chapel Service at McKendree University



McK Commencement with granddaughter, Margaret O'Connor



Memories only last if you share them

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



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