



Wayne Gail Reece

March 23, 1935 - February 12, 2023

Reverend Wayne Gail Reece, 87, left this physical world to go to live in his heavenly home on Sunday, February 12, 2023.

Wayne was born in Muncie, Indiana, on March 23, 1935, to Charles Sutton and Cleota Harbaugh Reece.

He attended DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in 1957 and went on to earn his master's degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, in 1960. He was ordained as Elder in the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) that same year.

Over his 42-year career, Wayne served two circuits of UMC churches in seminary and The First United Methodist churches of Marion, Indiana; Bangor, Michigan; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Big Rapids, Michigan; and Mason, Michigan. In each town, he was actively involved in social justice causes.

Wayne also served The United Methodist Church at the Conference, Jurisdictional, and International levels. As a Conference Staff member of the West Michigan Conference, he provided specialized training in Adult Education for clergy and laity. He also served as the Chair of the West Michigan Annual Conference Meetings for a number of years. He served two

terms on the General Board of Discipleship, appointed by the North Central Jurisdictional Council representing the West Michigan Conference. Wayne and his wife, Jo, also represented the North Central Jurisdiction at the World Methodist Conference meeting in Brighton England in 2000. While appointed to Mason First UMC in Michigan, they also served churches in Wigan, England, in 1997 on an exchange through the World Methodist Conference.

As an editor at the United Methodist Publishing House for nine years, he edited many educational resources for youth and adults including, "Faith link," "Adult Bible Studies," and "Adult Leader." He also wrote books at UMPH and for United Methodist Communications, such as "Giving Beyond Ourselves." He continued this work freelance for a number of years in retirement.

Wayne gives credit for the spark that led to his calling to serve God in these ways to his parents and his grandparents, who were part of the founders of his home church, Madison Street United Methodist Church in Muncie, Indiana, that nurtured and sent dozens of young people into ministry. Additionally, his role as editor of the yearbook, *The Munsonian*, at Muncie Central High School and his lead roles in high school plays taught him the importance of writing and using words effectively, along with the arts to act out scriptures and sermons, such as his first-person monologues that touched so many over the years.

In retirement, he enjoyed working with Dr. David Watson for two years creating Covenant Discipleship Groups among clergy and laity in The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The UMC.

Wayne also regularly wrote letters to the editor on social justice issues and won The Amy Crotts Award in 2005 "for exhibiting care and concern for fellow human beings," given annually by The Tennessean newspaper in Nashville, Tennessee.

His fun passions in retirement included ushering for the Nashville Sounds baseball team for 19 years and ushering for sports and musical events at the Bridgestone Arena and plays, musicals, and ballet at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

He especially enjoyed filling in for pastors in many places including Donelson Heights UMC and McKendree Village, where he and Jo have resided since 2010. One of his special joys was having the honor of being invited by his niece, Catherine Burns, artistic director at The Moth, an international story telling nonprofit, to tell one of his ministry stories at the opening of an exhibit on Three Faiths at the New York Public Library in 2012.

Wayne, along with his wife Jo, enjoyed travel around the world, especially cruises to the Mediterranean, where he preached along Paul's Journey in Athens, Greece, Central America, and the Panama Canal, where he served as Chaplain on three Princess Cruises. Their other joy was attending St. Louis Cardinals games each year, where he could visit his brick, a gift from his family celebrating 60 years of being a fan on his 70th birthday and meeting good friends at various baseball stadiums along the way (17 stadiums at last count).

Wayne was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife Judith Sharp Fenner, and his sister-in-law Rebecca Bentley Gay.

Left to cherish the many wonderful memories are Reverend Jo Bentley Reece, his wife of 50 years; C. David (Judi) Reece, his brother and sister-in-law; Wayne (Jean Griffin) Gay, brother-in-law; and four daughters and sons-in-law: Marcie (John) Mills, Angela Reece Pierce; Kirsten (Adrian) Goodnight, and Kendra (David) Gray. He also leaves behind 15 beloved grandchildren:

Heather, Jessica, Jillian, Jonathan, Daniel, Richard, Nick, Jamie, Shawn, Amanda, Ashley, Breanna, David, Jacob, and Samuel, and 17 great-grandchildren, along with all of their families, and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Wayne and Jo want to especially thank Brody Ray Runge, his very special caregiver and friend, and the staff at McKendree Village Health Center, Rehab 1 East and Long Term Care 2 North, for their wise, loving, thoughtful, and kind care.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at 2pm Sunday, February 19, 2023 in the chapel of Austin & Bell Funeral Home, Springfield, Tennessee, with Rev. Debra Smith officiating. The family will receive friends from 12pm Sunday until the time of the service at 2pm at the funeral home. Burial will be in Elmwood Cemetery, 1029 Richard St., in Springfield.

To send flowers to the family of Wayne Gail Reece please visit our Sympathy Store link at the bottom of this page.

For those wishing to make memorial donations in Wayne's honor, they can be made to the Donelson Heights UMC Pastor's Discretionary Fund, 84 Fairway Drive, Nashville, TN 37214.

Austin & Bell Funeral Home in Springfield is in charge of arrangements.

AUSTIN & BELL FUNERAL HOME, 509 WALNUT STREET, SPRINGFIELD,
TN (615) 384-1000

Cemetery Details

Elmwood Cemetery

1029 Richard Street
Springfield, TN 37172

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 19. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Austin & Bell Funeral Home Springfield
509 Walnut St.
Springfield, TN 37172
(615) 384-1000
<https://austinandbell.com>

Funeral Service

FEB 19. 2:00 PM (CT)

Austin & Bell Funeral Home Springfield
509 Walnut St.
Springfield, TN 37172
(615) 384-1000
<https://austinandbell.com>

Tribute Wall

DH

“ Jo,

Pigeon joins me in sending you our prayerful support in the recent death of Wayne. Over the years, we have thought often of you both because of our paths crossing in many and varied ways. I will never forget Wayne's call in early December of 1999, telling me of the decision for you both to retire and encouraging me to pursue going to Mason as Wayne's follow. I did ... and so did Wayne. It was a marvelous fit that he saw more clearly than anyone else. Nine good years followed. Both Wayne and you made every effort to make the transition as smoothly as any I have experienced. Sorry for the delay in writing. We were on vacation and did not realize Wayne had died until I read it in the Mason Newsletter. God be with you, Jo, in this significant loss and time of grief.

*Rev. Dr Robert Hundley
Grand Rapids, Michigan*

Dr. Robert Hundley - March 08, 2023 at 12:25 PM

JR

Thank you Bob and Pigeon, I appreciate your words and care. He went peacefully and we buried him decked in his St. Louis Cardinals gear with kids and grands wearing his hat or tie or t-shirt.as they walked with him as pallbearers surrounding his casket. Blessings to you two and your family, JO.....

JO Reece - March 10, 2023 at 12:06 PM

RW

“ *Deepest sympathy to the family. I so enjoyed being in ministry with Wayne. He was a wonderful man and a great pastor. As one of the early female pastors in the Conference, I especially appreciated his welcoming kindness and his encouragement. He will be missed. May God bless you all as you find comfort in the knowledge that he has now rejoicing in heaven with family and friends who have gone on before.*

Rev Karen Wheat - February 18, 2023 at 04:19 PM

JR

Thank you Karen for your wonderful images of memory. Blessings to you, JO

Jo Reece - February 19, 2023 at 10:17 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wayne Gail Reece.*



February 17, 2023 at 11:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wayne Gail Reece.*



February 17, 2023 at 07:46 PM

RP

“ *When I was Superintendent of the Lansing District of the United Methodist Church, I had the privilege of introducing Wayne to the Mason UMC as their new pastor. He was a very fine pastor with a keen mind and a loving heart. Wayne served the church faithfully, not only at Mason, but every place he served in his ministerial career. "Well done good and faithful servant!"*

Rev. Ed Perkins - February 17, 2023 at 10:38 AM

KG

Thank you, Rev. Perkins.

Kendra Gray - February 18, 2023 at 07:23 AM

JR

Thank you for your wonderful memories, Ed. He thought so much of you and appreciated sharing ministry during that time. Blessngs to you

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:20 AM

FM

“ *My deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the Reece family.*

Frank Baldwin - Muncie Mission - February 17, 2023 at 09:50 AM

JR

Thank you for your care! Muncie Mission was a passion of his dad, Charles, and all the family! Blessings to you!

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:22 AM

RL

“ Rev. Russell and Rev. Jane Logston wish to convey our sympathy to Jo and the family. I was the associate pastor at Mason UMC from 1996 to 1998. Wayne was the senior pastor. We pastored at Mason, and I learned a lot from Wayne. I was the pastor at Newberry UMC from 2001 to 2003. During that time, Wayne came up to Newberry to see a relative, and we had lunch together. It was nice catching up with Wayne. May God be with you, Jo and family, during this time. God Bless Rev. Jane Logston, retired UMC clergy

Rev. Jane Logston - February 17, 2023 at 12:47 AM

JR

Thank you Jane and Russ! He so enjoyed serving with you. Blessings to you,

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:21 AM

CS

“ David, Judi, Amy, Emily, and Reece family: Kindest thoughts are with you at this most difficult time. What a wonderful tribute to Madison Street Church and your family--especially Charles and Cleota. I have nothing but fondest memories of growing up as part of the church congregation. It was a special place indeed. May peace that passes understanding be with you and yours as you celebrate Wayne and his wonderful life. Charlotte O'Dell Shepperd

Charlotte J Shepperd - February 16, 2023 at 09:13 PM

JR

Thank you for your kind comments. Madison St. UMC was at the center of their lives and there are many fond memories of those who shared that special time and place. Blessings to you!

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:25 AM

KM

“ Wayne first and foremost was a Disciple of Jesus Christ. That commitment was reflected in all of his relationships. As a friend going to the early 70's, I will always remember his kind and gentle ways He could speak the truth in love to multiple issues of justice in our world Jo, please know how much you are loved in your grief Love to all who grief the loss of. Wayne Kent McNish

Kent McNish - February 16, 2023 at 08:44 PM

JR

Thank you for your thoughtful words, Kent! You are special to him and me and our family as we have been connected over the years. Love to you too!

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:27 AM

JS

“ My name is Joyce Smith, my mom was Caro Sue Stillwagon(smith) Mickey and George Stillwagon were my Grandparents, that being said I was raised at Madison St. United Methodist. Knew Charles and Cleota my whole life, remember Wayne and David Reece. The entire family were great folks and helped the community. Sorry to hear of Wayne's passing, prayer to the remaining family.

Joyce E. Smith - February 16, 2023 at 02:00 PM

JR

Thank you so much for sharing your memories. I remember your grand parents and know the special time you all had at Madison St. formed your life. Blessings o you!

jo reece - February 18, 2023 at 09:29 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wayne Gail Reece.*



February 15, 2023 at 01:30 PM



“ *Mary B. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Wayne Gail Reece.*



Mary B. - February 15, 2023 at 08:58 AM