

Gary trusted in God's plan and knew that God would provide for him and his family. He continued to preach the Word in truth and purity to several congregations. From June 1971-1976 he served at St. Pauls Lutheran in Rolfe, Iowa and from 1976-1986 at Trinity Lutheran in Merville, Iowa. During this time, Gary earned his private pilots license through the LeMars Airport. From 1986-1988 he served at Bethesda Lutheran in Jewell, Iowa and from 1988-1998 at Bethel Lutheran in Parkersburg, Iowa. In 1995, Gary received his Doctorate in Ministry from Drew University of Madison, New Jersey. Gary then served from 2000-2017 on staff at Trinity Lutheran in downtown Waterloo, Iowa, Chaplain at New Aldaya Lifescapes in Cedar Falls, Iowa, as well as part time at First Lutheran in Waterloo. He had a great love for the Lord.

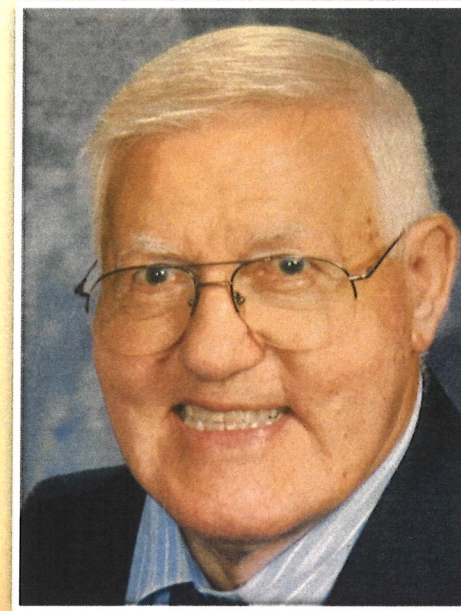
At the age of 82, Gary retired and in 2017, Gary and Ella moved to Spirit Lake, where they became active members of the First Presbyterian Church. Gary continued to work part-time until 2020.

Gary is survived by his beloved wife of 61 years, Ella Olson; son, John (Peggi) Olson; daughter, Gretchen Olson-Kopp; six grandchildren, Kasey (Trevor) Rohwer, Carter (Samantha) Olson, Abby Olson, Emily Olson, Eleanor Kopp and Eli Kopp; one great-granddaughter, Mara Rohwer; brothers, Forest (Romona) Olson and Bruce (Sue) Olson; sister, Sonia (Al) Scheele; and numerous other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents, his sister Mavis, son, Tim Olson in 2022, son-in-law, Sacha Kopp in 2024.

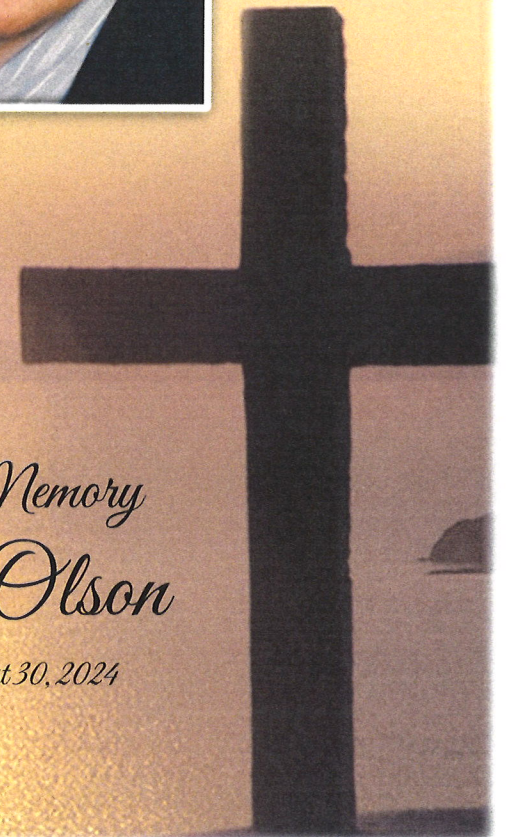
Gary will be remembered for his unwavering faith, dedication to his family, and his gentle and compassionate spirit.

Turner Jenness Funeral Home

Spirit Lake - Milford - Lake Park



In Loving Memory
Gary J. Olson
June 27, 1935 - August 30, 2024



In Loving Memory Of
Gary J. Olson
June 27, 1935 - August 30, 2024

Service

First Presbyterian Church
Spirit Lake, Iowa
Monday, October 21, 2024 10:00 AM

Clergy

Rev. Clint Loveall
Rev. Michael Gewecke

Prelude

Eli Kopp, cello

Hymns

Children of the Heavenly Father

It Is Well

Amazing Grace

Go Now In Peace

Phyllis Attema organist

Special Music

Blest Are They

Gannett Swan, soloist
Connie Swan, accompanist

Going Home

Eli Kopp, cello

Honorary Bearers

Gary's grandchildren

Kasey and Trevor Rohwer
Carter and Samantha Olson
Abby Olson Emily Olson
Eleanor Kopp Eli Kopp

Gary Jerome Olson, the son of Sylvester W. Olson and Beatrice (Hoff) Olson, was born on June 27, 1935, in Osseo, Wisconsin. He passed away on August 30, 2024, at St. Luke Home in Spencer, Iowa, at the age of 89.

He grew up on the Olson family farm and worked in a cheese factory, having his Wisconsin Cheesemakers License renewed by Sylvester for 12 years after Gary's ministry began, just in case this 'calling' was uncertain and he needed to have a job at the cheese factory to fall back on. Gary served in the United States Marines from 1955-1958, aboard the USS *Philippians Sea*, an aircraft carrier for eighteen months in the Pacific. After his honorable discharge, Gary felt called into the ministry and enrolled at Luther College, taking "pre-sem" courses. He graduated from Luther College in May, 1963.

On August 25, 1963, he married Ella (Rauter) Olson at the South Beef River Lutheran Church in rural Osseo, Wisconsin. The following month, he began his studies at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Gary and Ella welcomed their first son, John, in 1965. During this time, Gary was involved in SIM (Student Interracial Ministry) at Parkway Gardens Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee which was during the height of the racial unrest in the 1960's. He later served his internship at Grace Lutheran Church in Hilltop Heights, Sioux Falls South Dakota. Their second son, Tim, was born in 1966. After graduation from Luther Seminary in June 1967, Gary was ordained in Osseo, Wisconsin.

He was assigned to the Northern Minnesota district and served a 2-point parish: Grace Lutheran in Grygla Minnesota and Our Saviors Lutheran Church in rural Grygla just 50 miles from the Canadian border. Their daughter, Gretchen, was born in Thief River Falls, Minnesota in 1968.

In December 1970 Ella's brother, Gerhard, was killed in an explosion on the Rauter family farm. The main sparkplug of the farming operation was gone, leaving the elderly Rauter parents to take care of 100 dairy cows and 90 brood sows. Gary felt called in his inner most being "Bear one another's burdens" and truly felt he needed to "practice what he preached." In consulting with the Bishop, he was told, "if you take a leave of absence from the ministry, you may not be able to get back in". BUT he gave his 30 day notice and resigned at the Grygla parish and on January 30, 1971 (-25 temp), Gary rented a U-Haul to take his family of 5 in the front seat of the truck, to Decorah, Iowa to help out on the farm until an auction was in place.