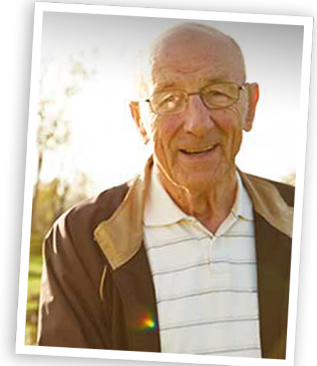


Ray McGinnis Biography

Heeding the call to preach, and having a heart to pastor people, Rev. Ray McGinnis (1929-2018) spent 48 years in ministry. Raised in Barboursville W. Va. and receiving his undergraduate degree from Roberts Wesleyan College in 1958 and his Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary (1967), the places of ministry included:

Monaca Free Methodist Church, Monaca PA (1953); West Hamlin United Methodist Church, West Hamlin W. Va. (1958-59); Gerry Free Methodist Church and Chaplain of Gerry Homes, Gerry NY 1959-63; Ayersville United Methodist Church and First Lieutenant Chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol, Ayersville OH (1963-68); Brockport Free Methodist Church, Brockport NY (1968-78); Pearce Memorial Free Methodist Church, North Chili NY (1978 -84); Gerry Free Methodist Church, Gerry NY (1984-94); Heritage Ministries Chaplain, Gerry NY (1994-2000); served years following in active retirement as an interim pastor at the Kiantone Congregational Church, Kiantone NY, the First Baptist Church, Jamestown, NY, and part-time chaplain duties at Heritage Village.



Pastor Ray had a passion to preach the Word, but never left the people without a pastor. Size of congregation mattered not to Pastor Ray. What mattered to him was delivering the Word of God to people who congregated by the hundreds in a large sanctuary and the handfuls who gathered in a chapel service. Even as his heart for ministry blessed all age groups, a special place he had for the aged led him to serve them no matter their state of mind.

Memorable sayings Pastor Ray often repeated included: “We can do together what we cannot do alone.” “Discouragement is not a terminal illness.” “Stand by the Church. The Church has many critics, but no rivals, for the Church stands head and shoulders above them all. Stand by the Church.”

Standing by the Church, he did. It started first in the home with his wife and his children. The priority of the family being his primary responsibility was highlighted in his Bible, with his pen inscribing these words: “May 10, 1969 - We are a Christian family,” to which it was signed Dad, then followed by Mother (Marge), Dixie, Melvin, Merlin, Mark and finally in 1987, Max who, born in 1970, added “wasn’t able to sign in the year of 69.”

In a tribute, retired Navy Chaplain Dean Cook remarked, “Ray McGinnis played a key role in developing the chaplaincy at Gerry and served as chaplain twice. His reputation as a compassionate pastor... drew added attention, helping to recruit volunteers to serve Gerry Homes. For many years, Ray McGinnis was the face and heart of Gerry Homes. He always spoke enthusiastically about Gerry Homes wherever he went.”

Retired Air Force Chaplain Rex Carpenter wrote, “Ray was an encouraging mentor to many pastors and chaplains. Many souls have been drawn to Christ through his life and ministry.”

Even as Ray was a committed Free Methodist pastor and chaplain, he gladly worked with anyone that lifted up the cross of Christ. Brenda Iaquinto, whose parents resided at Heritage Village, warmly expressed: “A Ray of light has gone to live in Light above, yet his influence lives on in life – in thoughts – in love.” Following in his father’s footsteps as a minister of the gospel, son Mel says, “When I go to a nursing home to preach the Word of God, that’s when I feel most like Dad.”