

“Autumn teaches us the beauty of letting go. Growth requires release—
it’s what the trees do.”

—Ka’ala

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— *Colleen McSpirit-Brush, Editor*

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In 1993 he pursued the calling. He graduated from Sioux Falls Seminary with a master's in divinity degree and holds a doctorate degree in Theology and Apologetics from Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity.

Rev. Kilbourne recounts his first year in ministry. "I had the shotgun approach. Maybe it would work and maybe it wouldn't. Some things did of course work." Then he got the best advice of his career to date.

A pastor of 50 years uttered the Dakota area expression, "Grow what is grain."

"Don't waste too much energy on what isn't growing," Aaron said. "People accepted Christ, or they didn't. Plant seeds and what starts to grow—go with it."

In addition to serving at First Baptist Church, Aaron is proud to have also helped to develop and teach certificate, undergraduate and graduate programs at Colorado Christian University's Lee Strobel Center, a small university for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics.

"Again, it was a God thing," he said. "This was nothing I sought out."

He also served as faculty mentor for Kairos University in Sioux Falls, SD. Rev. Kilbourn has also been a member of ABC of the Dakotas Region Policy Board. He is most proud his marriage is intact, and his children are believers. Aaron and Michelle have two children, Aubrey, 21, and Zack, 18. "Life is going to throw lots of things their way," Aaron noted. "But I know Christ will be there with them."

Celebrations



The Rev. Muriel Johnson, who has a long history in ministry in the Great Rivers Region, spoke at the commencement ceremony at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis on May 19, 2023 and was granted an honorary doctor of divinity. Rev. Johnson is CEO

of Bishops INK, LLC. She is retired after 20 years as Executive Regional Associate Minister for the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region.

Dr. Charles and Patricia Kiker recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. The couple was married August 24, 1953, in Vigo Park, TX and served several American Baptist Churches in Colorado City, AZ, and Kansas City, MO. Charles and Patricia

now reside in Arlington, TX with their daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Alan Bean, who also served American Baptist Churches.



The Rev. Dr. Donna Osterhoudt Schaper celebrated her 50th

ordination anniversary on October 21, 2023 at the First Congregational Church in Salisbury, CT. She is a graduate of both the University of Chicago and Gettysburg Lutheran

Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. After seminary, she sought ordination in her Lutheran tradition, however, after attending seminary for six years because she was instructed to return for additional courses, Donna decided to seek ordination with the United Church of Christ. (UCC).

Donna offered to work at 18 different churches with no success. Winifred Johnson, who helped found UCC Open and Affirming Coalition, hired her and alerted Senior Pastor Kendall Baker of the First Congregational, Tucson, AZ that he had a new associate. Rev. Schaper was ordained on Reformation Day, October 31, 1973. It was deeply meaningful to her that the nuns from her women's group laid hands on her alongside the male clergy, even though she was originally told they couldn't participate. Donna described the moment as "an act of joyful disruption." Her mother, Eleanor Clara Osterhoudt,



read the lessons and her mentor John Vannorsdall preached the sermon, entitled “Turn Back.” “Both are gone now but were spiritually present at the 50th anniversary celebration,” noted Donna.

Rev. Schaper served as Associate Pastor/Chaplin in Tucson, AZ and Philadelphia, PA and at Yale University in New Haven, CT. She was a Pastor in Amherst, MA, Riverhead, NY, Miami, FL and New York City. Donna also served as Area Minister for the Western Area of Massachusetts Conference, Executive Director of Urban Academy in Chicago, and Bridge Pastor in Orient, NY, Tivington, England and currently Shelburne Falls, MA.

Following the luncheon celebration, there was a panel on the last 50 years of her ministry. Rev. Schaper humorously reflected on the “absurdly estimated numbers,” that during her 50 years of service she performed 474 weddings, 244 funerals, 114 baptisms, and 335 ordinations. She preached 1,594 sermons and guided 205 students in classes, nine youth groups and 112 interns.

After the celebration, Donna left for San Miguel de Allende, Mexico where she is a Pastor in Residence at the American Church for the winter.

people in her life and always had a smile and kind words for anyone she met.

The Rev. Dr. Sara Day described Dee Dee as “a joy to work with as we raised funds to support clergy in their time of need. Her expressions of gentleness and her sense of compassion shown in all that she did. Her leadership was centered in God’s Spirit and her care for those she worked with was evident. “



Born in Gainesville, FL, on September 16, 1951, she was the child of Rocco Esposito, Sr. and Alice Esposito. Dee Dee met Don, her future husband, in 1970 at the University of Florida. They were married in 1974. She graduated from the University of Florida in 1974 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism, followed by a master’s degree in political science at New York University in 1975. She then studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, receiving a Master of Divinity Degree in Biblical Studies in 1987, graduating first in her class and being awarded the Union Seminary Traveling Fellowship. She then attended the joint Union Seminary-Columbia University Ph.D. program in Religious Studies, receiving her Doctorate in 1989.

In 1976, Don and Dee Dee moved to New York City. When their son, Donnie (Ralph III) was born in 1988 they moved to New Jersey. In 1991, they joined the First Baptist Church of Westfield, NJ, with Dee Dee serving initially as Minister of Christian Education and Evangelism. She became the senior pastor in 2000 and continued in that role until her retirement in 2010.

Dee Dee and Don moved to Palm Coast, FL in 2011 to be closer to Dee Dee’s parents. She became active in the Hammock Community Church in Palm Coast, serving as Minister of Spiritual Life, Healing Prayer Minister, Superintendent of the Children’s Church, teaching in the Sunday School, running its Vacation Bible School, and serving on its Board of Deacons. She was also a volunteer Chaplain at Advent Hospice Care, active in the Alpha Women’s Center, and led local bible studies and support groups.

Throughout her life, she was a strong supporter and mentor of women in ministry. She held leadership roles

Calling MMBB Centenarians

Do you know a current MMBB member who is celebrating a 100th birthday this year or has celebrated the century mark? Let us know. We’d like to feature them in *News and Notes*. Send an email to communications@mmbb.org including their name, age, birthday and a highlight of their career or vocation.

In Memoriam

Rev. Darla “Dee Dee” Turlington, PhD, 71, transitioned from this life on June 22, 2023, in Palm Coast, FL.

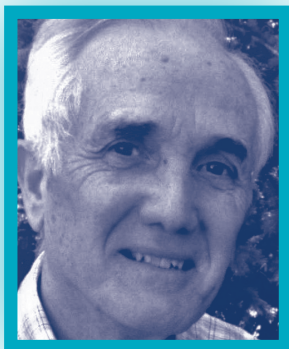
Dee Dee was a faithful wife, mother and a friend to hundreds. She loved the Lord, her family, church, and community. She was a kind friend and mentor to many

in ABCUSA (American Baptist Churches USA), Ministers Council and American Baptist Women Ministries. Additionally, Dee Dee was active in the Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) Foundation and served as its local President. She was on the Board of Visitors of the Divinity School at Wake Forest University, in Winston-Salem, NC. She also supported non-profits through The Darla Dee Turlington Charitable Foundation.

“I appreciated and valued Dee Dee’s steadfast commitment to MMBB’s *Heritage of Sharing* campaign. Through her leadership, MMBB has raised funds to support ministers who are experiencing financial need during their retirement years. The MMBB family will miss Dee Dee,” remarked Louis Barbarin, MMBB CEO. She is survived by her husband, Don; son and daughter-in-law Donnie and Melanie; granddaughter, Sophia; brother and sister-in-law Rocco Esposito, Jr. and Susan Esposito; niece Elizabeth Lambert-Oswald; nephew, Rocco Esposito III; great-nieces, Catalina and Rosella Lambert-Oswald and great-nephew, James Lambert-Oswald. She was predeceased by her parents, Alice and Rocco Esposito, Sr. and brother, Kevin Esposito.

A Memorial Service celebrating Dee Dee’s life was held at Hammock Community Church in Palm Coast, FL.

The Rev. Frank E. Girdwood, 82, of Lewes, DE, passed away peacefully on August 5, 2023, at his home. He was born on September 7, 1940, in Pittsburgh, PA, son of the late Frank and Elizabeth Girdwood.



Rev. Girdwood earned his bachelor’s degree in philosophy at Eastern Baptist College (now known as Eastern University) in St. Davids, PA. There he met his wife of 59 years, Susan Scamman of Augusta, ME. Frank went on to earn a

Bachelor of Divinity degree at Eastern Theological Seminary and a Master of Divinity degree at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

During his 33 years of ministry, Frank and Susan served churches in Pennsylvania, including the First Baptist Church of Oxford, the First Baptist Church of Bellevue,

and the First Baptist Church of Greensburg, in addition to the First Baptist Church of Waterbury, CT and the First Baptist Church of Bangor, ME. He was also active in missions work, traveling on mission trips to Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, and enjoyed his work with the housing agencies, Habitat for Humanity and CREDO. Frank retired from ministry in 1999 and spent 15 plus years living in Brewer, ME, enjoying driving a school bus, canoeing and exploring the lakes and ponds of Maine, taking up a woodworking hobby, and camping up and down the East coast from Maine to Florida. In 2016, Frank and Susan moved to Lewes, DE to be close to family, enjoying life in the coastal community and hosting family for vacations and holidays.

In addition to his parents, Frank was preceded in death by his infant brother, David. He is survived by his wife, Susan; his children: Lisa Naldzin (Brian) and Stephen Girdwood (Deborah); grandchildren: Ian Girdwood, Michaela Girdwood, Emma McLaughlin, and Natasha Naldzin; brother, Donald Girdwood; sisters: Janet Morphy, Lois Riggle, and Beth Ann Dunlap; and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Frank’s Life was held at the First Baptist Church of Greensburg, PA.

Editor’s Note: The following obituaries were received this year, but, both ministers died in 2021. However, MMBB would like to honor their service to the community and Our Lord.

The Rev. David Lotee Higgs, 84, went to his Heavenly home on January 2, 2021. Born in Brattleboro, VT on November 5, 1936, Rev. Higgs was the son of The Rev. Vivian G. Higgs and Louise Lotee. David attended the Rochester Institute of Technology, Kalamazoo College and Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He was ordained by the New York State Baptist Convention.

He served as pastor of Morton Baptist Church in Monroe County, NY, the West Baptist Church in Oswego, NY, the Kingsbury Baptist Church in Washington County, NY and the United Church of Canada on Wolfe Island, Ontario.

Pastor David also served on the Board of Managers and the Division of World Mission Support of the New York State Baptist Convention. He was a managing partner of the development company Higgs and Crayford in

Kingsbury, NY. A lifelong Biblical scholar, he continued preaching and teaching throughout his life.

A celebration of life was held October 9, 2021, at the Pultneyville United Methodist Church in Williamson, NY. David is survived by his wife of 63 years, Barbara, three sons: Robert V. and his wife Lisa, David K. and his wife Ruth and Theodore J. and his wife Heidi; two grandsons: Ian R. and Colin D. as well as several nieces, nephews and cousins.

The Rev. Robert “Bob” Dale Hanthron, 81, passed into the arms of Our Lord on Nov. 26, 2021. Rev. Hanthron was born January 15, 1940, in Lincoln, NE. He was the son of Clifford Earl Hamilton and Dorothy Bell



Fowles. Bob graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1962. He received his bachelor of divinity degree in 1965 from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, KS. He later completed the master of divinity program. He was ordained into Christian ministry in May 1966.

While making his home in Kansas City, Bob served on the staff of the Bethel Neighborhood Center. In 1968 he entered pastoral ministry and served churches in Denison, LeMars and Plainfield, Iowa. His final pastorage before retirement was in Augusta, KS.

Rev. Hanthron was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Richard. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Virginia. A memorial service was held December 3, 2021, at First Southern Baptist Church, Kansas City.

Lifestyle

The Art of Mindful Bread Baking

During the pandemic it seemed like everyone was baking their own bread. There are many reasons to continue to bake bread—it's more affordable, contains less sugar and salt, and uses no preservatives. Baking is not just healthier for your body, but also for your mind as a way to find calm and a form of meditation.

There are many different types of meditation. They all have in common the goal of clearing the mind, often by focusing on one thing. The goal of meditation is not always about trying to reach a higher state of consciousness to connect with God, but instead to quiet the mind, which is helpful in managing mood and anxiety levels.

The very act of making something with your hands takes you out of our head and into your body. It forces you to concentrate on the recipe. All your senses are involved as you go through the process. Kneading dough takes time and is a meditative act as you shape it. The mixture starts off wet and sticky and gradually gets drier until it's firm and smooth. You can feel its springiness and smell the fragrance of the flour. The smell of the bread baking brings feelings of comfort and coziness.



To bake bread, you need patience and acceptance because the final product outcome may not look quite the way you envisioned. You need to slow down and measure the ingredients then knead the dough until it's just the right consistency. These acts keep you in the present moment.

You can take this meditative practice to the next level by consciously creating a mindfulness practice around baking bread. Create a time to bake when there will be no distractions. Choose one of the five senses to focus on or just to be open to what comes to you. Let go of all judgements and perfectionism. Think about the ingredients and where they came from. Thank God for this beautiful bounty to assist you in the baking process. Connect with others by sharing the delicious and healthy finished product with friends and family.