



Reverend David L. Gockley

November 2, 2024

Reverend David L. Gockley, 87, of Lancaster, PA went home with the Lord on Saturday, November 2, 2024. He was married to his beloved wife Mildred Miller Gockley, and they celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on August 27th. He was the son of Milton Evans Gockley Sr. and Avaline Barkley Gockley.

Born in Lancaster, he was a graduate of J.P. McCaskey High School in 1955 where he was salutatorian of his class. During his high school years, he was active in many activities including basketball, baseball, and soccer. He also won election as Youth Mayor of Lancaster for the day during the school's government program. As a child, he participated in the church choir and become a counselor for many years and then became an instructor for some of the bible courses.

In 1959, he graduated from F&M College with an A.B. degree in Philosophy with high honors. He prepared for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Divinity.

During his seminary years, he was a Student Assistant Minister at Trinity Methodist Church in White Plains, NY, and Saint John's Methodist Church in Newark, NJ. In 1962, he was ordained as a minister of the United Church of Christ. David accepted an assistant pastorate position at the Holburn Central

Parish Church in Aberdeen, Scotland where he and his wife spent a year. Upon returning to the United States, he assumed pastorate in Campbelltown for five years.

On October 5, 1969, he was elected Pastor of Faith United Church of Christ, Lancaster, PA. He became the president of the Lancaster City Youth Council of the United Christian Youth Movement.

In November of 1974, David was elected head of city redevelopment authority and was elected to serve as a chairman in 1976, a position in which he was re-elected year after year. In 1988, he was named the President of the board of directors for the United Church of Christ Homes. In October of 1989, Reverend Gockley was appointed by Arthur E. Morris to the governing committee of the Lancaster County Foundation.

David played a key role in the massive renovation of the newly acquired structure that would one day be the home of The United Church of Christ. This construction was made to accommodate UCCs mandate to community service. After the construction ended the congregation almost doubled in size and you could feel the renewed spirit in the congregation that helped this project become a reality.

In order to revitalize the city of Lancaster, especially focusing on the Southeast area of Lancaster. David, as vice chairman, under the Lancaster County Foundation, gave a grant to the city of \$125,000 which allowed for urban renewal.

He also took the lead in helping members of our community get jobs and modest loans to buy new homes by donating \$25,000 through Faith United Church of Christ.

He will be remembered as a “Talented Musician”, “Sensational Performer” and very detail-oriented. He was well-known locally for his leadership roles in youth sports activities.

In 2013, he retired after 41 years of serving as a pastor. He and his wife volunteered for the Lancaster General Hospital in the records department. They knitted 700 prayer shawls for the LGH patients and friends, a talent learned in Scotland where he began his pastoral career.

In addition to his loving wife, Mildred, he is survived by his son, Ted, husband of Mindy Gockley, and two brothers, Milton Gockley Jr., and John Richard, husband of Ann Gockley, all of Lancaster, PA. He was preceded in death by his brother, Michael E. Gockley.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to David’s Memorial Service at Trinity UCC, 2340 State Street, East Petersburg PA 17520 on Monday, November 11, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. with Rev. Dr. Christopher Rankin officiating. The family will receive friends from 10:00 a.m. until the time of service. Private Interment.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent in David’s memory to Water Street Rescue Mission, 210 S. Prince Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 or Trinity UCC, 2340 State Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 11. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity United Church of Christ
2340 State Street
East Petersburg, PA

Memorial Service

NOV 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

Trinity United Church of Christ
2340 State Street
East Petersburg, PA

Tribute Wall

HP

“ When Rev Gockley was a student at Union Theological Seminary, he served sort of an internship at St John’s Methodist Church in Newark, NJ. He and his wife were absolutely the kindest people. The church was predominantly black, but no one ever even thought about that. He was the youth pastor who did a terrific job. I am thankful he lived a wonderful life. May he rest in peace, and his wife and family live with loving memories.

Henrietta Parker - August 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM

ML

“ I remember Dave from St. Lukes he always said hello to me, and he sang the song at Christmas "Mary did you know" and I still have the knitted placemates that he made ,my mother Doris Leaman gave them to me..Our sympathy.

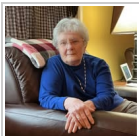
michael charles leaman - November 18, 2024 at 01:40 PM

BD

“ Condolences to Pastor Gockley's family. I knew the Pastor, during his service at Faith United. Wonderful Person, RIP Sir!

Bradley Ditzler

Bradley Ditzler - November 11, 2024 at 12:06 PM



“ The “baddest” one of all.

Barbara Steinmetz - November 08, 2024 at 09:27 AM

AN

“ Ted sorry for the loss of your Dad. Prayers to you and your family.
Love Chris and Anita Rahe

Anita - November 07, 2024 at 04:38 PM

JM

“ Aunt Mid, sending you and the family hugs and prayers. Uncle Dave was always sweet and kind and thoughtful. He will absolutely be missed. Love to all, Jen Brown (vanderMeij), Ruben and Violet

Jen Van Der Meij - November 06, 2024 at 02:43 PM

SB

“ "Stan" and I are filled with many family memories of which you and Uncle Dave are a significant part. Treasured family holidays, weddings, vacations, and shared interests have been a significant part of our lives over the years. Uncle Dave has always been so kind, humble, faithful, and giving. We are so thankful for you both. Prayers for you Aunt Mid, Teddy, and Mindy. Love you..."Susie and Stan"

Sue Brown - November 06, 2024 at 01:51 PM

RB

“ I remember Dave fondly as a member of the ministerium. He always had a smile and a good word for me as a younger pastor. May God continue to bless you and grant you peace. Bob Bailey

Robert Bailey - November 06, 2024 at 01:40 PM

DE

“ Dear Mid,

How well I remember both you and Dave from our years at McCaskey. You were two years ahead of my class, but as leaders in so many ways, the younger students easily remember their predecessors! We have not met in the interim, but I am a faithful reader of the Lancaster newspaper and have followed some of Dave's work in Lancaster. He leaves an outstanding role in support of his community and mankind. I can only imagine what a wonderful father and husband he was as well.

Just know I send deepest sympathy and yet, it was Dave's time to respond to that "higher calling." Will keep you and your family in my thoughts and prayers in the coming days.

*Sincerely,
Deborah Benson Everett (formerly Shertzer)
North Andover, MA*

Deborah B. Everett - November 06, 2024 at 11:49 AM

LP

“ *So many fond memories of Uncle Dave...from him marrying me and Woody to him marrying our daughter Michelle and her husband Christopher. A lifetime of wonderful family memories. May he rest in peace and no longer suffer pain. Our prayers are with you Aunt Mid, Ted and Mindy. We love you all... Lisa and Woody*

Lisa Peters - November 06, 2024 at 10:22 AM