



John Lee Spicher

June 21, 2024

John Lee Spicher, age 88, of Woodcrest Villa, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, died from pulmonary fibrosis at home surrounded by family and under the strawberry moon, on Friday, June 21, 2024.

John was born September 12, 1935, in Belleville, Pennsylvania, the second child of Jonas Phillip and Rachel Ann (Yoder) Spicher. He grew up on a dairy farm during the Great Depression and attended Cedar Hill, a one-room country school. From childhood, he was intrigued with God's creation, curious about how things function and what his role in the process should be. Frugality, hard work, integrity, acceptance of evolving conditions, and respect for others are among the values he learned from his Amish parents.

John met Virginia Joy Peachey in seventh grade; they married 12 years later and reared three children in Irwin, Pennsylvania. John strove and advocated for education despite the distances it sometimes placed between him and his background, which he nonetheless respected. He graduated from Belleville Mennonite School, received a BS in Biology from Eastern Mennonite College, and attended the Medical College of Virginia. A certified American Society of Safety Engineers member, he enjoyed a 30-year career at the Research and Development Division of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation in Pittsburgh. On retirement, he earned an MA in Organizational Leadership from Geneva College, and for 13 years worked in various roles in the Science Center at

Eastern Mennonite University.

John deeply appreciated the Mennonite Church, and for many years drove 50 miles round-trip each week for worship and fellowship with congregations in Pittsburgh, and later in Scottdale. Service afforded him meaningful opportunities to exercise the abilities he believed God had given him, and he enjoyed sharing time and resources with organizations such as Scottdale Mennonite Credit Union, Laurelville Retreat Center, Allegheny Mennonite Conference, Eastern Mennonite University, and Harrisonburg Gift and Thrift. He especially liked working at Laurelville in support of youth camping. He sought adventures, learning, and travel for as long as he could, and treasured trips to the Atlantic shore with his family.

He is survived by Virginia Joy (Peachey) Spicher, his wife of nearly 65 years; children, James (Carol Burkhart) Spicher, Mountville, PA; Julia Spicher Kasdorf (Philip Ruth), Bellefonte, PA; and Jefferson (Jean Leaman) Spicher of Albany, OR; brother, David (Effie Yoder) Spicher, of Belleville, PA; sister, Salome (Charles) Yoder, Mount Morris, MI; sister, Rachel (Lee) Hershberger, Whittier, NC; brother, Thomas (Sharon Peachey) Spicher, Huntingdon, PA. John and Virginia's grandchildren are Jonathan (Jenny Hochstetler) Spicher, Klamath Falls, OR; Jason (Krista Nyce) Spicher, Fort Collins, CO; Amelia Kasdorf, Bellefonte, PA; Daniel Spicher, Denver, CO; and Ethan Spicher, Harrisonburg, VA.

John was preceded in death by brother, Kore Spicher, in 1940; mother, Rachel Ann (Yoder) Spicher, 1948; father, Jonas Phillip Spicher, 1977; and stepmother, Bertha (Peachey) Sharp, 1990.

A Memorial Service will be held at Landisville Mennonite Church, 3320 Bowman Road, Landisville, PA 17538 on Monday, July 29, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. with an opportunity to visit with the family for an hour beforehand. A private

burial will take place at the Locust Grove Cemetery in Belleville, Pennsylvania.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 in John's memory.

The family wishes to express gratitude to Hospice & Community Care.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Landisville Mennonite Church
3320 Bowman Road
Landisville, PA 17538

Memorial Service

JUL 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

Landisville Mennonite Church
3320 Bowman Road
Landisville, PA 17538

Tribute Wall

OB

“ In Virginia John & Virginia included us in several small group settings. When we were working on a shop/garage, the rain made the hillside slide onto the footers. John came and helped shovel the mud. He gave hope, receiving no pay except a few rocks which he hauled in his trailer to a place where he needed them. Bringing hope with a shovel... blessings John!
Owen & Ruth Ann Burkholder

OWEN BURKHOLDER - July 29, 2024 at 11:54 AM

JL

“ Thinking of you Virginia, Kids, and family, sending condolences on behalf of all of us who adored John at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center/Laurelville Retreat Center. John served faithfully as a Laurelville Board Member and as an interim Executive Director. John was always thoughtful and kind. He was passionate in sharing his knowledge and helping us create effective safety management plans. He was intentional in lifting staff up with encouraging words. We are grateful for his fine work. God be with you.

Jeanette Lahm - July 26, 2024 at 04:14 PM

JM

“ I am sitting here with my mother Mattie Yoder Miller and we are reminiscing about John. John was one of her favorite cousins. She has so many good memories of growing up in Belleville with him. She wanted to be sure and send her thoughts to the family and to Virginia.
-Jay Miller

Jay Miller - July 09, 2024 at 09:51 AM

SS

“ When we first moved to Harrisonburg, Va., late in 2010, John Spicher was a friend I had not yet met. A month or two later, I met John’s wife Virginia as she was walking on the street past our house, and she introduced herself as the mother of a poet I did know. She also told me that she was a neighbor.

A few months later, I met John as a co-participant in a men’s coffee group at Eastern Mennonite University. I learned that he was married to Virginia and also worked as a part-time faculty member at EMU. I was impressed by his friendly manner, interest in Mennonite history, knowledge of family connections, and fascination with scientific advances.

At some point, on an alternating basis, John and I began fetching a second cup of coffee for each other, he one day and I the next time. We eventually talked at some length about our commitments to the Mennonite Church and its institutions. John generously lent his support to many worthy causes.

We both moved to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 2021 while Covid was inhibiting social interaction. Nevertheless, we began meeting weekly for coffee in East Petersburg. We soon expanded our group to three people, then four, then five, and finally six. He seldom missed a meeting and actively contributed to our lively discussions. For example, a few months ago, based on an article he had just read, he told us about the amazing non-stop migratory flights from Alaska to Africa of bar-tailed godwits.

We were all privileged to benefit from John’s wisdom and to feel his support. Together, we reflected on ways to navigate health crises, better appreciate our families, and understand the confounding theological and political trends that affect our church and world.

Despite his health challenges, John maintained a positive outlook and exemplified courage as he faced the end of life. I will be forever grateful to John for his friendship.

Stuart Showalter - July 05, 2024 at 03:50 PM

JM

“ I never had a conversation with John at EMU without hearing a tidbit of wisdom from him. He was a kindred spirit whose advice I live into within retirement. His humble kindness and gentle spirit live on in my visioning of someone like him who “led from any chair”, as musicians know. He “sang” to us in the Science Center with and without words. I’m grateful to have briefly crossed his path.

Judy Mullet - July 03, 2024 at 12:39 PM

AS

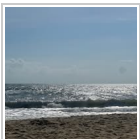
“ My condolences to Virginia and family in this time of loss. May the comfort of God be very real to you now and in the days ahead.
Alta Sharp Smith

Alta Sharp Smith - July 01, 2024 at 06:45 PM

ED

“ Virginia and family. Sending you condolences as you experience the passing of your kind and loving husband, father and grandfather.
Eleanor and Paul Derstine in Chevy Chase, MD.

Eleanor Derstine - June 30, 2024 at 02:36 PM



“ So sorry for your loss Virginia. I have missed seeing you two in Va and enjoyed you two over the years.

Nicole Cook - June 29, 2024 at 12:57 PM

JR

“ I learned to know John and Virginia when I worked at EMU (1999-2016). My first interaction with them was to provide technical assistance with their iMac. I was always impressed with John’s capacity for effectively using a personal computer, even as his age advanced.

As I got to know both John and Virginia I saw how generous they were with their resources and their wisdom. When John would setup an appointment to assist with a technical issue he was having, we would always have a rich conversation about family, faith and what was happening in the world.

I retired from EMU and moved to Boston in 2016 but in 2020 moved to Lititz for permanent retirement, not far from Woodcrest Villa where John and Virginia retired to a few years ago. I soon received a call from John to, again, provide computer assistance. Again, I found John to be capable with his computer and again had rich conversations during our visits. In recent months it became clear that John’s health was declining and I learned to know of the planning he was doing for his funeral. From his sharing of some of what he wanted to be included, I saw yet another depth to John’s generosity and the life-long influence of his faith. I count it a privilege to have been one of his friends.

Jack Rutt - June 28, 2024 at 05:44 PM

ET

“ Our thoughts and prayers with Virginia and family as you adjust to life without John. I have fond memories of discussions I have had with him over the years.

Enos Tice - June 27, 2024 at 08:35 AM

KW

“ The first word that comes to my mind when I think of John and Virginia is generous. I lived their furnished apartment and when they moved to PA they gave me most of the contents. I'm so grateful our lives crossed!!!

karen weaver - June 26, 2024 at 06:32 PM

TB

“ I first learned of John and Virginia through being referenced in various poems by Julia. To the encounter them later in life and become neighbors in Harrisonburg was gift and joy. I deeply appreciate the many visits with John along the street and on the Willow Run Farm on topics of the environment, events of the day both local and global and to hear of his life stories across the years in science and complex organizations. Sharing meals with Virginia and John in their home are great memories of their hospitality and their genuine interest to get to know each other. I appreciated John's gentle words of encouragement that he was off to convey in each of our encounters. My sympathies to Virginia and the family in this time of grief and loss of such a wonderful, kind and encouraging man. Much love. - Tom Brenneman

Tom Brenneman - June 26, 2024 at 09:21 AM

KW

The first word that comes to my mind when I think of John and Virginia is **GENEROUS**. I rented the apartment in their Harmony Drive home in VA. The apartment was furnished and when they moved to PA they gave most of the contents to me without charge. I'm deeply grateful to them ❤️

karen weaver - June 26, 2024 at 12:09 PM

ES

“ John was a neighbor just up the street from me for more than a decade, and we were members of the same church. I appreciated many things about John as a neighbor. He always kept his house and yard in good order and made some of his equipment, such as a pressure washer, available to me. He was generous with his snow blower, sometimes cleaning the snow off the driveway for us and other neighbors. We had numerous interactions and delightful conversations over the years. I was impressed by his pursuit of personal health habits. He was a humble man who cared for others through service and other acts of caring.

Ervin R Stutzman - June 26, 2024 at 07:26 AM