



Rev. Richard P. Fehnel

March 19, 2023

Rev. Richard P. Fehnel, 92, of Willow Street, passed away on Sunday, March 19, 2023, at Lancaster General Hospital, following a brief illness. He was born on June 27, 1930, in Allentown, PA, the youngest of three sons of his parents, Mamie Alice (DeLong) and Eugene Elmer Fehnel, and was raised in Greenawalds, PA.

He grew up in a Sears Catalog home built by his father and grandfather. As a child, he attended Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church and later become the first member of the church to become an ordained minister. He graduated from South Whitehall High School in Allentown in 1948, where he was elected Class President.

In 1953, he married Arlene Mae Hershey, RN, of Manheim, at the Lancaster Theological Seminary Chapel. They met when she was a nurse at the Franklin & Marshall College infirmary. They had three children, the late Elaine Zartman (Carl), Glenn (Laurie) and James.

He is also survived by four grandchildren, Kristin Fenty (Matthew), Matthew Zartman (Emily), Melanie Stoltzfus (Gentry) and Grant Fehnel; two great-grandchildren, Charlotte and Jack Fenty; his stepsister, Dorothy Strohl and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brothers, Henry and Charles Fehnel, stepbrother, Charles Dankel and stepsister, Marjorie

Christman Derr.

He earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Franklin & Marshall College in 1952. He received BDiv and MDiv degrees from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1955 and 1976, respectively. In his 70's and 80's, he enjoyed singing in the F&M Alumni Chorus.

In 1955, he was ordained into the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ. He served as pastor of Christ UCC churches in Cavetown and Funkstown, Maryland; associate pastor at St. Paul's UCC in Lancaster (now Church of the Apostles); and pastor of Zion UCC in Millersville.

In the early 1970's he completed certification in healthcare chaplaincy and served as the first intern chaplain at Lancaster General Hospital, where he also worked as a counselor in the Addictive Disease Unit. In 1974, he was named the first Director of Pastoral Care and Chaplain of Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee, IL, where he served for 22 years. In 1990, the UCC honored him as Chaplain of the Year.

He was very grateful for his wonderful marriage with Arlene, who passed away shortly after the celebration of their 50th anniversary. Upon his retirement, he and Arlene moved back to Lancaster County to be closer to their grandchildren and their lifelong friends in the area.

Over the years, he served as a board member for many organizations serving the church, hospice, addiction recovery and community theater. He was an early champion for organ donation in Illinois.

Through his ministry and community activities, he was known and loved by many. Family members learned how to artfully extract him from the long conversations he seemed to end up in every time he left the house. Young

couples without a church home often chose him to officiate their weddings and would stay in touch with him for decades after.

He was a popular cast member of Kankakee Valley Theatre productions, where he was known to boost the energy and camaraderie of the cast. He also enjoyed singing in the F&M Alumni Chorus.

After retiring from full-time work, he served as a visitation pastor at Church of the Apostles, a disaster-ministry chaplain and a tour guide for Brunswick Tours. He loved the scenery and history of Lancaster County and never tired of sharing it with others.

He lived a life of service to others. He comforted families in their worst hours, provided counsel as people navigated key times in their lives, married and baptized hundreds, and brought positivity to many community organizations, theater casts and choirs. His positive impact will live on in the many lives he touched.

Visitation will be held at Church of the Apostles UCC, 1850 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster on Monday, March 27, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. The funeral service will follow at 11:00 a.m. Interment will be at Millersville Mennonite Church Cemetery after the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Lancaster County Food Hub at lancasterfoodhub.org.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 27. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of the Apostles UCC
1850 Marietta Ave
Lancaster, PA 17603

Funeral Service

MAR 27. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of the Apostles UCC
1850 Marietta Ave
Lancaster, PA 17603

Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. Richard P. Fehnel*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *My deepest sympathy goes out to the wonderful family of Dick Fehnel. Dick was an amazing human being who always knew the right things to say and do in any situation. There are not a lot of people like him in this world, and he will truly be missed. I first met Dick in 1977 when I started working at Riverside Medical Center. We quickly became friends and maintained that friendship long after both of us had left Kankakee. Gretchen and I had the distinct pleasure of visiting Dick in Lancaster shortly before she passed away. He treated us to a wonderful personal guided tour of the Amish community. His love for Pennsylvania was very obvious. I will keep you in my prayers Dick.*

Dennis Menard

Dennis Menard - March 26, 2023 at 05:13 PM



“ *I was in KVT's production of Fiddler on the Roof in the early 80's with Dick, and also a friend of his son, J(or Jim). I honestly don't remember which friendship came first, but both are treasured. In later years, I looked forward to Dick's visits to Chicago, and our dinners together. Dick Fehnel was one of the sweetest, kindest, most gentle human beings I've ever encountered. I am honored to have known him And will miss his smile and laughter and friendship.*

Norma Felbinger - March 26, 2023 at 03:00 PM

SW

“ Steve West lit a candle in memory of Rev. Richard P. Fehnel



steve west - March 25, 2023 at 09:43 PM



“ Chaplain Fehnel performed our wedding in Kankakee. He was the chaplain at the Hospital my wife and I worked at. He was a warm and friendly man . We always enjoyed chatting with him. Prayers for peace for his family.

Steve McCabe - March 25, 2023 at 05:52 PM

CA

“ My condolences, I worked with Chaplain Fehnel at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee, Illinois. One of the kindness people I have ever worked with. Cathy Anstrom

Cathy Anstrom - March 25, 2023 at 04:49 PM

MB

“ I was an employee at Riverside Medical Center when Rev Fehnel was our chaplain. He was a good friend & a good chaplain. My daughters were in a bus accident when they were in grade school & they were taken to Riverside & he was there to reassure & comfort them until I could get there. Mu husband, Mike, was in several KVT productions with him. We were so lucky to have known him.

Mary & Mike Birr - March 25, 2023 at 02:41 PM

DB

“ Glad you are reunited with Arlene. You always tried to do the right thing for the right reasons.

Dale Barnes - March 23, 2023 at 07:23 PM

MH

“ Rev. Dick Fehnel was our neighbor in Kankakee, and our son Lee was his paper boy. We enjoyed neighborhood gatherings together, and Dick was a part of our lives in several ways that became great memories. He was an actor in our local theatre production of Fiddler on the Roof when I was directing, and he had the time of his life! He served as the minister for our son's Wedding. He gave sage advice when needed, and comfort to all people he came in contact with. He was a gentle man in all sense of the word. He led a good life, and shared his experiences with great delight. Our family sends sympathy to his family and prayers for love in their hearts knowing that Dick's new home will be a wonderful place.
Marsha Hill

Marsha Hill - March 23, 2023 at 06:52 PM

DA

“ Darlene lit a candle in memory of Rev. Richard P. Fehnel



Darlene - March 23, 2023 at 11:07 AM

CS

“ Dick was a life-saver to Wayne when he was first diagnosed with cancer back in Illinois. He somehow showed up in his hospital room and things took a positive turn after that. He gave Wayne a small angel pin that he placed on the robe he was wearing and it was still there until the day he passed in September. I'm so glad that Wayne has another dear friend in heaven....thank you for all you have done over the years, Dick! Much love from the Segneri family. (and yes I remember Dick the bumblebee at the Wettergren "wedding"!)

Cheryl SEGNERI - March 23, 2023 at 12:27 AM

BW

“ Dick and his lovely wife, helped us celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary. He was the Officiant at the renewal of our vows in our backyard. The groom (Len) wore shorts and a cowboy hat, the bride (me) a borrowed old bridal gown from the theater warehouse. Rev. Fehnel's attire consisted an old crumpled black top hat complete with yellow chiffon and and shiny black striped caftan from the Jesus Christ Superstar production! It was better than our original wedding ceremony...because of Dick. His humor and kindness set the tone for one of our fondest memories! Barb and Len Wettergren

Barbara Wettergren - March 22, 2023 at 05:56 PM

EK

“ Pastor Phenal was always a friendly, gentle face and energy around Church of The Apostles. He was a genuinely good soul who radiated kindness wherever he went. He was also a part of the wonderful Zartman family who I grew up with through church and school. He will be missed! My deepest sympathy to the family and all who feel the loss of his presence- Emily Kleimo

Emily Kleimo - March 22, 2023 at 04:35 PM

PG

“ 3 files added to the album Richard P. Fehnel



Patrick Gerrity - March 22, 2023 at 01:10 PM

PG

One of my very favorite humans, I met Richard on his birthday in 1977 (My first day working at Riverside.) We were friends from that day on. He and his family became like a second family to me. His friendship and compassion for others will never be forgotten. Thank you, Richard, for all of the great advice and memories. You are missed. See you on the other side. - Patrick Gerrity

Patrick Gerrity - March 22, 2023 at 01:17 PM

JH

“ *Such a dear man and servant of God. It was a joy to work with Dick and to get to know him. We were on the same team with some assignments in the Lancaster Association of the UCC, and he was always a helpful and positive colleague, friend and brother in Christ. Christ is risen, and what a comfort to know that Dick is at peace, with his Lord, and back with his dear wife. - Jim Haun, St. Luke's, Lititz*

Jim Haun - March 22, 2023 at 08:47 AM

NB

“ *Our sincere sympathy to the Fehnel family. We enjoyed many pleasant times with the family while living in Millersville. We always called him Rev. Fehnel because we had so much respect for him even in social gatherings. God Bless. Nancy/Bill Brackbill*

Nancy/Bill Brackbill - March 22, 2023 at 08:02 AM

DP

“*Rev. Fehnel was our minister at St. Paul's when we were teenagers, and had the patience of a saint with all our pranks, tricks and "devilment". He was probably the holiest person I ever met. He was kind, sincere, generous and had a sense of humor, which he needed with us being in his flock. I used to babysit for his 3 children. He married my husband and I, and baptized our son, Thomas and stayed in touch periodically over the years. We have been married 54 years.*

He was a gift to the world, from GOD. We will miss him, even though we haven't seen him in quite awhile.

Love to Rev. Fehnel and his family from Ken and Doris Tshudy Paradis

Dee paradis - March 22, 2023 at 07:32 AM