



## Sara Jane (Weaver) Wenger

March 23, 2018

Sara Jane (Weaver) Wenger, 95, died early Friday morning, March 23, 2018. She died peacefully in the Lancaster home where she and her husband of 73 ½ years, Chester Lehman Wenger, have lived since 1966. She was actively engaged with family and friends until the end of her life.

Sara Jane was born in Lititz, PA, to the late M. Lloyd and Sara (Oberholtzer) Weaver. She attended local public schools until she transferred to Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, VA, for her senior year of high school in 1939, and two years of college, earning a Virginia teaching certificate. During these years she met Chester who became the love of her life. Before they married, she taught school for two years in Chester's home community in Virginia. Chester says, "They all fell in love with her, just like I did." Chester and Sara Jane married July 2, 1944, during the more than four years that Chester was in Civilian Public Service in lieu of the military draft.

In October, 1949, Sara Jane and Chester with their three young daughters, went to Ethiopia as missionary teachers, serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, PA. This was their primary home for the next 17 years. In addition to teaching, hospitality, ministry with women, students, and neighbors, and serving alongside Chester in a myriad of ways, Sara Jane devoted herself to their eight children, four born in Ethiopia and four in Chesapeake, VA. Of being a mother, she says, "I was a very happy mother. Not one of our children

went unloved, and none was a burden. They were all welcomed.” (p. 142, Bearing Fruit: A Collection of Memories.)

From 1967-1986 Sara Jane was a remedial reading teacher, mostly at Smoketown Elementary School. In 1974 she started a retail business selling plants and flowers at various Lancaster County farmers’ markets including many years operating as Tom’s Flower Garden at the Central Market. This was a family project. During this time Sara Jane served in volunteer leadership positions with Mennonite organizations such as the Women’s Missionary and Service Commission.

Summing up her life in recent years, Sara Jane said, “All along the way I have held a deep desire to do the Lord’s will. I have wanted to serve him in every way possible, and I’ve wanted my life to be an expression of His love.” (p. 328, *ibid.*) Sara Jane loved to read. She spent hours daily reading newspapers, church periodicals, and her Bible.

Family life played a defining role in Sara Jane’s life. Between her eight children, 16 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren, her home was often filled with visiting family and friends who were drawn to her sparkling smile, scripture-based wisdom, and infectious laugh. Many, warmed by her generous spirit, shared their personal stories with her. Sara Jane’s faith, family, and church formed her core identity, giving her life a rich and beautiful fullness.

Chester and Sara Jane’s family: (1) Betty Wenger Good-White (Don White, and Nelson Good, deceased 7-13-05): Ryan Good (Hannah Dueck), Naomi Good; Deborah Good (Russell James Pyle); Jason Good (Bryn Mullet Good), James and Mara Good. (2) Margaret Wenger Johnson (Samuel Charles Johnson, deceased 8-17-2017): Bartholomew Johnson (Christina Burger Johnson), Sara and Anele (Annie) Johnson; Hannah Wenger Johnson. (3) Jewel (Wenger) Showalter (Richard Showalter): Chester David (Chad)

Showalter (Deborah Shenk Showalter), Rachel, Jonathan, Nicholas, Jamie, and Hannah Showalter; Rhoda Showalter Miller (Keith Miller), Jadon, David, Michael, and Andrew Miller; Matthew Showalter (Colleen Miller Showalter), Joshua, Clay, Isaac, Nava, and Kenna Showalter. (4) Chester Wenger (deceased 11-16-2001) and Hilda Shirk (Wesley Farmer). (5) Sara Wenger Shenk (Gerald Shenk): Joseph Shenk (Amina Auezova Shenk), Ari and Jacob Shenk; Timothy Kennel Shenk (Michelle Kennel Shenk), Madeleine Kennel Shenk; Sara Margareta (Greta) Shenk Bucher (Matthew Bucher), Samuel Bucher. (6) Mark Wenger (Kathy Weaver Wenger), Regina Wenger, Charlotte Wenger. (7) Philip Wenger (Steven Dinnocenti). (8) Thomas Wenger (Keiko Kuniyuki), Yuji, Emiko, and Miako Wenger.

Sara Jane is survived by her three brothers, Lloyd Weaver (Sarah Marie Yoder Weaver), Kenneth Weaver (June Marie Collins Weaver, deceased) and Samuel Weaver (Sarah Marie Alderfer Weaver, deceased) of Harrisonburg, VA, and a foster brother, Ronald David (Susan Pillsbury David).

A Memorial Service will be held at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, March 31, 2018 at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, 333 Delp Road, Lancaster, PA. The family will be available from 9:00-9:50 a.m. for a time of mingling and greeting of friends. There will be no viewing. A separate interment is planned for immediate family at Mellinger Mennonite Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made to Meserete Kristos College, LINK, Ethiopia, a ministry to train Ethiopian church leaders, and should be mailed to P.O. Box 1701, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.

For on-line condolences, please visit Sara Jane's Memorial Page at [www.TheGroffs.com](http://www.TheGroffs.com).

(A memoir of Sara Jane and her husband Chester by Deborah Good and

Betty Wenger Good-White, is available on-line at  
[https://issuu.com/mennonitepressinc./docs/bearing\\_fruit\\_a\\_collection\\_of\\_memoirs](https://issuu.com/mennonitepressinc./docs/bearing_fruit_a_collection_of_memoirs)

# Cemetery Details

## Mellinger Mennonite Cemetery

Lincoln Hwy East  
Greenfield Road  
Lancaster, PA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 31. 9:00 AM - 9:50 AM (ET)

Blossom Hill Mennonite Church  
333 Delp Road  
Lancaster, PA

## Memorial Service

MAR 31. 10:00 AM (ET)

Blossom Hill Mennonite Church  
333 Delp Road  
Lancaster, PA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sara Jane (Weaver) Wenger*

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October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *What a wonderful person & teacher. I had the pleasure of working with her at Smoketown Elementary School as her principal. She always wore a beautiful smile & a kind word for everyone she came in touch with. The children's lives that she touched & worked with benefited from a most caring and wonderful teacher. She was very dedicated to her work and truly one of my best teachers that I had on staff. I remember how she & her husband would love to bring the family to the Smoketown gym over the Christmas Holidays to enjoy fun time together. It was a pleasure to be able to honor their request for such a special occasion. Jerre W. Pietsch*

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**Jerre Pietsch** - March 31, 2018 at 08:09 AM



“ *I would like to send to you and the entire family my deepest sympathy on the passing of your mother. I am so sorry that I will be unable to attend the service on Saturday, as I will be out of town. Marilyn Berger*

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**Marilyn Berger** - March 29, 2018 at 01:24 PM

AJ

“ To Chester and family, Don joins me in sending our loving thoughts and prayers in the passing of our beloved Sara Jane. Many, many memories come to mind of this lovely lady. The Wenger sojourn in Ethiopia overlapped with our time in Tanzania and I frequently heard about this outstanding family through our colleague, Rhoda, Chester's sister. Quite a few years later, Sara Jane and I served together in WMSC. It was a privilege to serve closely with this wise, devoted, compassionate sister in the Lord. I learned much from her and held her in high regard. She, indeed, served her Lord, her family, and her generation well. May God be praised.

*Anna Ruth Jacobs*

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**Anna Ruth Jacobs** - March 29, 2018 at 11:26 AM

 Connie  
Brew

“ Dear Chester Wenger Family,

*We were so sorry to hear of Sara Jane's passing. My husband Terry and I rented the Wenger's amazing farmstead in Chesapeake, VA for 15 years. Every August Chester and Sara Jane would drop by during their Sandbridge holiday and check in, sometimes bringing along a son or daughter or grandchild. Each year we had a lovely visit and learned so much about our home's past residents, the Fentress and Mount Pleasant area in the olden days, and their missionary adventures. We always talked about current events of the house and the joys of the Lord and prayed blessings over each other for the coming year. It was truly one of the great memories of living in that wonderful old farmhouse of which we had the privilege of stewarding all those years. Terry and I and our two children will treasure our incredible memories there. Our condolences to the family.*

*Connie Brew  
Chesapeake, VA*



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**Connie Brew** - March 28, 2018 at 07:20 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sara Jane (Weaver) Wenger.*



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March 27, 2018 at 01:15 PM

BG

“ I am so sorry to hear Sara passed on. I knew the entire family back when they attended Mellinger Mennonite Church. I loved hearing the stories of when they were teaching and doing missionary work over in Ethiopia.

*Chester and my Father (Earl B. Groff) knew each other well.*

*I have fond memories of Sara at the flower stand at Central Market ( I stopped by to chat every chance I got) and of Phil starting Issacs.*

*She will be dearly missed*

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**Barbara Groff** - March 25, 2018 at 08:18 PM

PW

“ Riding the golf cart with Chester or posing for pictures while enjoying an early Spring day, both pictures taken in March w 2018.



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**Phil Wenger** - March 25, 2018 at 10:22 AM

HS

“ *The annual beach week is always a great time for family reconnections. Sara Jane was not particularly a fan of the beach, but she was definitely a fan of family time and joined us with her usual positive spirit and passion for relationships. She was an exceptional woman and a great mother-in-law and I will cherish memories of her vibrancy and hardy laugh.*



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**Hilda Shirk** - March 25, 2018 at 10:06 AM

SD

“ *This picture is of Mom and I (Steve Dinnocenti) Phil's husband after she saw me for the first after my open heart surgery. The joy in her laugh and the look of happiness as she saw me will always be remembered.*



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**Steven T. Dinnocenti** - March 24, 2018 at 03:25 PM