



Gilbert Emmanuel McKenzie

November 21, 1942 - July 4, 2022

GILBERT EMMANUEL MCKENZIE

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Gilbert Emmanuel McKenzie was born to Eric Hemming McKenzie, an Anglican Warden, and Irene Leonora McKenzie, a Practical Nurse and church pianist, in Belfield, Saint Mary, Jamaica. Also born of this union were his sisters Winnifred Ruth Johnson (Bahamas) and Mary Audeline Williams (Ontario Canada). He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister Winnifred.

His daughter, Christian Onika McKenzie (Chicago), and son, Gilbert Kenyatta McKenzie, who preceded him in death, were born from his marriage to Nancy Thornton.

Gilbert, later married Dianne Briscoe and with this union became stepfather to LaDawn Sullivan, Ruthie Sullivan, and James Sullivan.

He leaves cousins Hector Evans, Debbie, Valerie, and dear lifelong seminary friends, Rev. Winston Lawson, Rev. Oliver Daley, Dr. Tony Allen, Rev. Raymond Anglin, and Denver friends, Dr. Dan Wright and Patti Wright, and numerous relatives and friends throughout the world, like Kemorine Miller, wife of his bosom buddy the late Paul Miller of Jamaica. They were active members of the World Student Christian Federation (SCM) and active in the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF).

Gilbert fondly told the story that when he was born his father made a promise to God to give his son to God. When his father told him this Gilbert said to his father, “You could have had the courtesy to consult me first”. His father’s promise to God was kept, as at a young age Gilbert felt called to serve God and spent his entire adult life in ministry.

His formative years were spent in Jamaica, completing secondary school in Kingston, completing his studies for a Diploma in Ministry Studies at United Theological College of the West Indies and a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from Jamaica Theological Seminary. Gilbert was ordained in 1970 by Middlesex Presbytery (Jamaica). He later served as

Chaplain with the rank as Captain in the Jamaica National Reserve (acting under the command of Queen Elizabeth the Second).

During his early years in ministry, he served as pastor of several congregations including Islington, Jamaica, Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Port Maria, Jamaica. He then moved to the United States to attend Princeton Theological Seminary where he earned a Master of Arts in Theological Education and a Masters in Theology. Gilbert was a lifelong student, participating in numerous study seminars in the U.S., Czech Republic, Jordan, Colombia, South America, Cuba, Senegal, Morocco, Madagascar, and Nicaragua.

He loved traveling throughout the world having visited every continent except Antarctica. He enjoyed meeting and interacting with people where ever he went. His life was filled with exposure to a multiplicity of cultures, religions, and philosophies which enhanced his ability to inter-relate to everyone with ease and understanding. He was involved with the worldwide Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in Cuba, South Africa, Madagascar, East Germany (former Communist Germany), Vanuatu (South Pacific), England and Wales, Scotland, and Czech Brethen, helping to shape policies in committees, encouraging their work, preaching/speaking and attending their General Assemblies.

Rev. McKenzie served two years as President of the Dutchess County Interfaith Council and traveled to Morocco as a member of an Abrahamic Religious Group. After attending a World Religions Convocation in Uruguay, he chose to become a significant part of an Abrahamic Group (Jews, Christians, and Muslims)

In his mid and later years as a pastor, he served Presbyterian Churches, (U.S.A.) in Princeton, New Jersey, Denver, Colorado, Poughkeepsie, New York, Binghamton, N.Y., Endicott, N.Y., and Mount Vernon, N.Y. Until his death, he led a weekly bible study by phone/zoom with members of First Presbyterian Church in Mount Vernon, N.Y.

Rev. McKenzie served on committees of the PCUSA General Assembly, Synods, and Presbytery, i.e. Finance, Self Development of People, Administration, Evangelism, Camps and Conferences, etc. He also served on the Ghost Ranch Conference Center Foundation Board and as Chaplain at Ghost Ranch for a number of years.

Rev. McKenzie fully retired in 2011 and moved to Denver where he attended Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church with his wife, Dianne. He participated at Montview by arranging for a youth group to participate in a service project at Hellshire Church in Jamaica; preaching as a

guest, leading an Adult Education hour, walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain, and as a mission partner in Nepal.

He was a voracious reader – always carried a book or two with him when he left home so that if he had to wait for an appointment, he could spend his time reading. He studied languages and was fluent in Spanish and quite knowledgeable in French, German, and Italian languages.

Rev. McKenzie's intellect, curiosity, boisterous laugh, friendly hugs, and sartorial splendor will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

As Gilbert would end meetings and correspondence, his obituary ends with: "Blessings, Courage and Love".

Gilbert E. McKenzie,
Pastor, Teacher, and Friend.

SERVICE: YouTube link for Gilbert's Memorial Service for your family and friends who wish to view the live streaming of the service. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dptlJPCvxEO>

This link may also be used to view the recording of the service later.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Colorado Make a Wish in memory of Gilbert.

Please disregard the link below for flowers etc...Thank you

Previous Events

Memorial

AUG **26**. 11:00 AM (MT)

Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church
1980 Dahlia Street
Denver, CO 80220

Tribute Wall

JA

“ *Thinking of my friend on his birthday.....miss you caring phone calls.*

janet - November 21, 2023 at 12:35 PM

SJ

“ *Stan & Wanda Jones lit a candle in memory of Gilbert Emmanuel McKenzie*



Stan & Wanda Jones - August 26, 2022 at 01:37 PM

SJ

To the Family, we will forever remember Gilbert as a kind and loving person who always brought a smile to our faces with his intellect and quick wit. A beautiful memory is the twinkle in his eyes, and he grinned like a teenager when he talked about Dianne, his lovely wife. Know that we share your loss and know that you are loved.

Stan and Wanda Jones - August 26, 2022 at 01:52 PM

PL

“ *From camp at Clarendon College to First Presbyterian of Mt. Vernon New York to Tuesday night vertical bible study you have been a sustainer in my life. I thank you for all the support and understanding even when we disagreed. To Winston and Kamal you have been a true Uncle helping them to navigate the “growing up” journey. My Mom will miss your birthday calls no matter where in the world you were. We will miss your special laughs and hugs. Now that God has called you to “higher ground” we know we have a guardian angel. We miss you but as you always told us “hallelujah anyhow”.*

Pat Llewellyn - August 26, 2022 at 08:35 AM



To the Rev Gilbert McKenzie we can all say we remember you with fondness. You brought life and light to Salem United Church St. Mary. You were young and dynamic, powerful and passionate. You brought a lightness to Christianity which for us as teenagers made it “easier” and less burdensome to walk the Christian life and yet with all this without compromise. You helped to shape our beliefs as no question was dumb or stupid. We could communicate and you listened. You encouraged our Christian growth fostering peace and kindness. And as your “pastoring” taught us to be happy Christians, so did your life. You were genuine. You were real. For your leadership and dedication we say see you on the other side of glory “Ex-P”. Much love.

*Carol/ Claudette McLennon
Salem United Church Young People's Group.*

Dinch McLennon - August 26, 2022 at 02:17 PM

RD

“ What endeared Gilbert to me was the entirely unique embodiment his soul so gracefully integrated in robust intellect, love grounded in Christ’s forgiveness and charming confident presence. Gilbert knew how to engage in rich dialogue and enjoyed it. His laughter rose up from the finest amalgam of genuine humility and pride being alive in Christ. It was delightful sharing friendship as colleagues, and as much just sharing inquiry as searchers on the journey. Gilbert’s soul could not, cannot , be compartmentalized. He stood out in this way for me, and I felt joy deeply seated in him. I offer a prayer of “blessing, courage and love” to his family and dearest friends.

Rev Tom deBree - August 25, 2022 at 02:28 PM

JM

“ Rev. McKenzie was a dear and faithful friend, whom I had the pleasure of knowing. We met in the PC(USA) and I remember his passion for ministry and a heart of gold. It was truly a pleasure working with him and seeing him at the General Assembly. Sending prayers to the family and thinking of you as you celebrate the life of Rev. McKenzie. He will be missed.
Jewel McRae

Jewel Mcrae - August 25, 2022 at 11:10 AM

RR

“ Roberta Rhoden lit a candle in memory of Gilbert Emmanuel McKenzie



Roberta Rhoden - August 20, 2022 at 07:24 PM

“ Rev Gilbert McKenzie was very special to us from Salem United (Presbyterian) Church in Islington, St Mary, in the 1970's. He was our Senior Pastor, mentor for our Youth Group and a dear friend to all. Rev McKenzie along with Mrs. Una Benjamin, provided a safe place (the Church Hall) and community for us. We had a place to go to and activities to participate in, that not only enhanced our spiritual lives but built a vibrant organization.

He was the fearless leader of our group. Alongwith Ms. Benjie, Rev ensured that the youth group was kept busy. There were always plays, choir rehearsals, community activities like caroling, and feeding the people who needed assistance or were shut-in, on Friday evenings. Members of our youth group was also given the opportunity to attend church sponsored summer camps. These camps were held far away from home and was the only time that some of us were able to leave our community. As our leader, he was instrumental in effecting changes that without his guidance and approval, we may never have seen in our rural community.

Rev McKenzie was patient, kind and passionate about our community. I would be remiss if I did not mention the friendship and wisdom he provided to many of our wayward young men in Islington. While driving through the community if saw them congregating in Islington Crossroads, rather than passing them with a wave, he would always stop chat with them and provide his wise counsel to them. Rev McKenzie's action by just being attentive to them, impacted some of those young men in ways I do not believe he was even aware of. There are men from those impromptu sessions with him who have NEVER forgotten just what did for them all those decades ago. They are still grateful to him for taking the time to sit with them and provide some guidance for them.

We will never forget your laughter, nor your love and caring for us at Salem. Sleep in peace Rev!

Lovingly remembered by Salem United Church Young Peoples Association,
Islington, St Mary, Jamaica W.I.

Roberta Rhoden

JK

“*Gilbert was a wonderful man. He brought so much joy to our congregation! I remember the first time he introduced our "frozen chosen" congregation to his habit of saying "God is good" to which we were supposed to respond "all the time", and I thought "this will never work here!" But lo and behold, he kept at it, and soon (and very soon) we became very good at it! God is good, all the time, and the time Gilbert spent with us at Northminster was very, very good! Judie Kindig, Former Organist at Northminster Presbyterian Church, Endwell, NY*

Judith T Kindig - August 17, 2022 at 10:06 PM

RD

This resonates with my experience of Gilbert! Thank you.

Rev Tom deBree - August 25, 2022 at 02:31 PM

VR

“*Our condolences to Pastor Gilbert's family and many, many friends. As accomplished and busy as he was, he found time to check in with my mother-in-law, who was bed-ridden and with me after my husband passed away. Gilbert even made time to participate in Steve's online memorial service and it was such a joy to hear his words of wisdom again even in my grief! He was always a well spring of comfort, laughter and support. I will miss you, my friend. Thank you Lord, for bringing this wonderful man into so many lives. Val and Travis*



Valerie Rounds-Atkinson - August 17, 2022 at 07:04 PM

RF

“*Mom Peggy and I thought you were a fabulous man. We always felt your love and your warmth. And we sure did miss that when you left. Especially my Peggy. She's with God now too. Know that you will never ever be forgotten. Love you my old friend. Go with God.*



Robin L Fox - August 17, 2022 at 05:42 PM

BN

“ Rev. McKenzie, our teacher, our mentor, and our friend, has gone on to that glorious place he often spoke of with awe and wonder. He was a mighty man of God, who made the study of God’s Words easy, exciting and relevant. His passion for justice and belief that love conquers all made Micah 6:8 the go to verse for the bible study group, for all of us (He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God).

Tuesday Night Bible Study will not be the same without him. He was all heart and soul as he took us back in time with biblical history and connected it with our life experiences today. He had never seen some members of the group, but everyone knew him, and he knew everyone. His world travels allowed him to easily connect with all cultures, his stories were made richer because they were real to our lives. He had an answer for every question and a quick biblical reference to further teach and guide us. He did not Lead our bible study, but he was our ever-present resource. When the topic was a difficult one and the answer left us still asking, he would add that to the list of questions he would “one day ask God in their face-to-face meeting”.

We will miss you, friend, but we know you have earned that place in glory. Like Mary you can now sit at Christ’s feet, “having chosen what is better”.

We, Tuesday Night Bible Study Group, will continue to love and serve our God until that glorious day when we join you.

FPC Tuesday Night Bible Study Group.

Beverley, Marva, Monica, Roslyn, Delores, Jaimie, Joyce, Barbara, Joan, Pat, Marcia

Beverley Nicholas - August 17, 2022 at 08:57 AM

RB

“ A brother who was faithful to the end. My condolences to the family.
Rev. Cynthia Burse

Rev. Cynthia Burse - August 16, 2022 at 11:35 AM

RL

“ I send my condolences to the family of Rev. McKenzie. We miss him greatly at the virtual Bible Study. We know he is in his Heavenly Home.
Roslyn Linnen, Florida

Roslyn Linnen - August 15, 2022 at 09:21 AM

SH

“ *My condolences to all of the family.
Thank you for all your wisdom, kindness and love.
You will be missed!*



Stephanie Hayes - July 26, 2022 at 11:09 AM