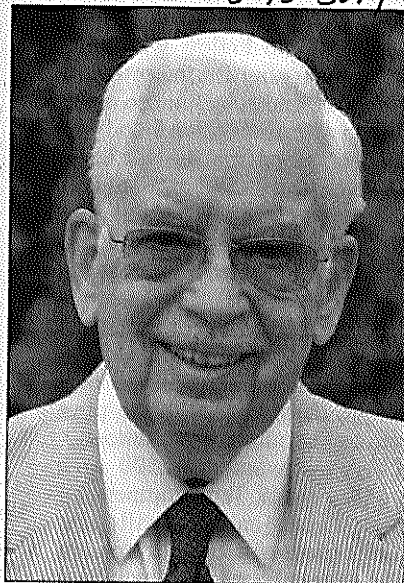


Rev. Philip J. Ramstad ^{64-R}
5-19-2017

Rev. Philip J. Ramstad, who was pastor of the United Church of Christ - Congregational in Grinnell from 1974 to 1988, died Friday, May 12, 2017, at N.C. Little Hospice in Edina, Minn.

He was 87 and died of kidney failure related to congestive heart failure.

His tenure at the Grinnell church was the longest of his 64 years as an ordained minister. In addition to his role at the church, Ramstad was active in many civic and service organizations and broadcast a short spiritual message on weekday mornings on KGRN.



His wife Lucille, who survives him, worked for many years as coordinator at the optometry practice of the late Dr. Duane Town and was also active in local organizations.

Ramstad was born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota, the youngest of four sons of a high school biology teacher and homemaker. He was drawn to American history at a young age. As a teenager during World War II, he published a weekly newsletter for his brothers in the service with news about the war and their home neighborhood.

He attended the University of Minnesota, where he studied anthropology and was drawn to campus ministry. After graduation, he enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he obtained a divinity degree and edited its quarterly review. In summers during seminary, he worked as a custodian and fill-in pastor at the church his family attended in St. Paul, Peoples Highland Park Congregational.

His first fulltime job was as chaplain at Kiski School in Saltsburg, Penn. He then served as senior minister in churches in Pittsburgh, Penn., Hartford, Conn., and Akron, Ohio, before moving to Grinnell.

During his pastorate here, the church built an addition with offices and classrooms to its original 1950s building. Ramstad also served in leadership roles in Kiwanis, the Grinnell Ministerial Association and as a chaplain to Mayflower Home. He was president of the board of the Poweshiek County Mental Health Center and a co-organizer of Greater Grinnell Hospice.

He considered the years in Grinnell some of the most rewarding of his career. He built friendships beyond the church throughout the community, often over coffee at Cunningham's Drug Store and other spots around town. Seeing the thousands of books that lined his offices at church and house, friends would frequently ask if he'd read them all. "Some of them twice," he usually replied.

He and Lucy left Grinnell in early 1988 to go to Lansing, Michigan. He spent six years as senior minister at Edgewood UCC in East Lansing and she was office coordinator at Pilgrim Congregational Church in Lansing.

They retired in 1994 and moved to suburban Minneapolis. They joined Chapel Hills United Church of Christ in Edina, where he was later named community minister. Until 2015, he continued to help dozens of other churches in Minnesota by filling in for vacationing ministers. He served longer stints, as long as six months, at 17 churches that were between ministers. And he assisted with services at Chapel Hills until just a few weeks ago.

In addition to Lucy, he is survived by son Evan Ramstad, St. Louis Park, Minn., daughter Kari Sweeney, Eden Prairie, Minn., stepsons Jeff Baker, Lutz, Fla., David Baker, Eufaula, Ala., and Gregory Baker, Dunedin, Fla.; and six grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

A memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 20, at Chapel Hills United Church of Christ, 6512 Vernon Ave., Edina, Minn.