



Rev. Gary A. Bell

February 28, 1948 - January 23, 2021

Rev. Gary A. Bell, 72, former pastor of Benicia Lutheran Church passed away peacefully following a brief illness. He was born in Merrill, Wisconsin and later the family moved to Whittier, California, before ultimately making their home in San Jose, CA. Gary began his career in 1966 as a milling machinist for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company and made parts for space vehicles. A few years later he also started his own floor covering business.

In 1975 he met his lifelong love Sherry Lee. They soon married and made their home in Campbell, CA. Sherry worked as a registered nurse and Gary returned to school. His journey then took them to Southern California where he continued his studies at Christ College Irvine. While there, he felt God calling him to be a pastor. So in 1984, after graduation, they packed up and headed east to Fort Wayne, Indiana where he enrolled in Concordia Theological Seminary. By now their family consisted of two daughters, Sarah and Melinda, and one son, Aaron.

Gary graduated from seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in 1988. His first call was to northern Wisconsin. He crisscrossed the shores of Lake Superior for seven years bringing comfort and God's word to his church in the unincorporated town of Maple, WI as well as his two deaf congregations in northern Minnesota. In 1995, God called him westward towards the Rocky Mountains and he accepted a call to Hope Lutheran in Aurora, Colorado,

serving there until 1999, when he accepted a call to Benicia Lutheran Church. He served there until retirement in 2010. The Lord had more work for him to do and he began a ministry at St. John's in Clearlake, CA. Gary treasured his time as a preacher and touched many lives before finally retiring in 2018.

Gary was a man on the move throughout his life – from backpacking through the high desert as a young man to hiking the golden hills of Northern California in his later years. He was often found listening to his music and driving his truck through the backroads of the many communities he called home over the years. Gary enjoyed spending as much time as he could with his seven grandchildren, raising his voice in song, and studying the Bible. He was truly a man of faith and we rejoice that he can now be released from his earthly difficulties and live forever in heaven.

Gary is survived by his wife Sherry; children Sarah Bell and her husband Wymond Miles, Aaron Bell and his wife Jessica, and Melinda Bell; and his grandchildren: Julian, Levi, Michael, Moriah, Jonah, Jack-Robin and Gideon. He is also survived by his mother Phyllis Vickers, his stepdad Aubrey Vickers, and stepsisters Linda Loomis and Lori Vickers. He was preceded in death by his father Harry Bell.

Many thanks to the caregivers at Benicia Angel's Home, where Gary spent his final months.

We give thanks for the life of this dear man and what a blessing he was to his family, church and friends.

Memorial services will be held at a later date when current restrictions allow. The family prefers donations in Gary's name be sent to Benicia Lutheran Church or Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Tribute Wall



“ *Rev. Gary A. Bell*

November 29, 2022 at 08:20 PM



“ *Sherry*

We are so sorry to hear of Gary's passing. He will be remembered as a kind and thoughtful man and a blessing as our pastor at Benicia Lutheran. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the family. Praying for the Lord's peace and comfort.

Janis & Greg King

Janis King - February 03, 2021 at 12:21 PM



“ *Dear Sherry,*

Please accept our sincere sympathies. We really appreciated Gary's time at Benicia Lutheran when we first moved here. Our prayers are with you and your family.

Scott and Angela Irwin

Scott and Angela Irwin - January 31, 2021 at 10:29 PM



“ *Gary, I remember the trip in a rental truck from Aurora, CO to Benicia. Snow and ice on all the highway we had to use, in a poor performing truck. A bonding trip I never forget. Love you.*
Aubrey

Aubrey E Vickers - January 27, 2021 at 09:31 PM

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“ *Dear Sherry and Family,*

We have always loved Pastor Gary Bell and your family.

He has been a huge part of our lives since we moved to Benicia over 20 years ago.

Pastor Gary Bell will be dearly missed.

Sincerely,

Ramone, Donna, Brooke, Tyson and Casey Noska

Donna Noska - January 27, 2021 at 08:22 PM