Sossoman
Funeral Home & Crematory Center
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Rev. Donald J. Smith

Aug. 25, 1925 - July 21, 2022

Rev. Donald J. Smith of Drexel, a life-long servant of God and his fellow man, was called home by his Heavenly Father on July 21, 2022. Pastor Smith was born in Zanesville, Ohio, on August 25, 1925; the second of thirteen children born to Dale Isaac Smith and Lucy Mendenhall Smith.

After thirteen years as pastor of a church in Alpena, Michigan, Pastor Smith moved to Drexel, North Carolina, and pastored two churches—Drexel First Church of God and Morganton First Church of God—for a combined thirty years. In retirement, he and his wife Ruth served as missionaries to Uganda, the Philippines, Haiti, and Trinidad/Tobago. In Uganda, they fell in love with young Samuel Kaweesi, and treated him as an honorary son thereafter. Pastor Smith loved mentoring young ministers, and above all else, he valued leading people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout his long ministry, he kept a book in which he recorded all marriages and funerals he had performed. He presided over three hundred ten weddings and five hundred eighty funerals in his lifetime--each one a treasured memory to him. His desired eulogy is short and sweet: “He was a Christian.” Those four short words defined his life.

His beloved wife of seventy years, Ruth Lillian Hefler, predeceased him in 2016. He is survived by four children: Donald Joe Smith, Jr. (Vicky) of Chestertown, MD; Tom

is survived by four children: Donald Lee Smith, Sr. (Vicky) of Chesterfield, MD; Tom Smith (Kathy) of Beaufort, NC; Donita Deal (Don) of Drexel; and Kris Icard (Randy) of Rutherford College. He is also survived by eight grandchildren: Tom Smith and Hallie Smith (Joe); Casey Smith and Emmy Woody (Tom); Donielle Rector and Donovan Deal (Donita); and Tim Icard and Sam Icard (Kris); nine great grandchildren; and seven of his thirteen siblings: Charlotte Hankins, Shirley Miller, Keith Smith, Ken

Smith, David Smith, Carol Mayhew, and Paul Smith. Five of his siblings predeceased him: Wayne Smith, Roy Smith, Sharma Talbott, George Smith, and Ralph Smith.

The family will receive friends at Sossoman's Funeral Home from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 23, and the funeral service will be held on Sunday, July 24, at 3:00 p.m. at the Morganton First Church of God.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Missions of the Philippines and Uganda (people he loved) through Morganton First Church of God, P.O. Box 1404, Morganton, NC 28680.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.