

### **Rothfuss, Rev. Walter J.**

Rev. Walter John Rothfuss, 71, of Bridgman, died Wednesday evening, April 30, 2008, at Jordan's Nursing Home in Bridgman, where he was recuperating after a short hospitalization. Walter was born June 25, 1936, in Pigeon, the son of Fred "Fritz" and Clara (Bauman) Rothfuss. He graduated from Pigeon High School in 1954. As a young man he loved to play and watch all sports. He was a people person, born to be a pastor. He believed strongly that the Christian faith must be lived out fully in daily life. How we relate to each other is a reflection of our relationship with God. He loved life and his happiness showed. He believed God intends that we enjoy this world and its beauty, with most of its beauty coming through His people.

There was no such a thing as a stranger to Walt, as he would talk to everyone. He especially loved babies because they are God's best work. He was a voice major in college, and he loved to sing and listen to classical music.

Walter was a United Methodist minister, studying at Vennard College in Iowa, and he obtained his degree at Bethel College in Mishawaka. He attended seminary in Naperville, Ill. He was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church in 1968, the last Evangelical United Brethren before the merger.

His 41 years as a pastor took him to UMC churches in Adamsville, Epsilon, Carlisle, Union City, Homer-Lyon Lake, Constantine and Hinchman/Oronoko. He retired in 2001. He and his wife, Jackie (Uzas), whom he married Feb. 14, 1987 at Albion College, bought a house in Bridgman shortly before retirement and resided there. He was lovingly called the "Bishop of Bridgman." Surviving are his wife, Jackie; two daughters, Dawn E. (Mike) Mack of Union City and Lisa Sekeet of Grand Rapids; two sons, Daniel W. (Teresa) Rothfuss and Doug J. Rothfuss, all of Union City; five grandchildren, Mike and Sara Mack, Russell and Trevor Sekeet, and Ami Eagen; four great-granddaughters; a sister, Marie (Paul) Leipprandt of Pigeon; and a brother, Joe (Veronica) Rothfuss of Caro.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Linda Boulton; and a brother, Dave Rothfuss. A service celebrating his life was conducted Saturday, May 3, 2008 at the First United Methodist Church in St. Joseph, with the Rev. Wade Panse officiating. Inurnment will take place at a later date.

Friends may leave messages for the family online at [www.allredfuneralhome.com](http://www.allredfuneralhome.com).

Memorials may be made to the 2008 general operating budget of First United Methodist Church, St. Joseph, where he and Jackie attended. Allred Funeral Home, Berrien Springs, is serving the family.