



Merlin Jay Yoder, 60, of Bay Port, died Monday, October 24, 2011, at Covenant Health Care in Saginaw.

Merlin was born in Pigeon, the son of Luke D. and Cora (Maust) Yoder. He grew up in Bay Port and graduated from Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Virginia in 1969. He attended Rosedale Bible College and Malone College, both in Ohio, and Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. He also served as a community development worker in Costa Rica, volunteering with Rosedale Mennonite Missions from 1970-72.

On November 3, 1979, he married Patricia Shetler, also from Bay Port. Merlin worked as a farmer, and he loved the earth he knew so well, constantly exploring new and unconventional ways of farming, planting trees along roadsides, and tending his gardens. He viewed his life as ministry; he was a founder of the local Foods Resource Bank, a volunteer at the Thumb Breadbasket, and an active member of the Pigeon River Mennonite Church. He was passionate about making friends wherever he went. Merlin enjoyed camping, hiking, and biking, and he loved exploring unfamiliar terrain.

Merlin is survived by his wife Patricia; children Shari (Chad) Craig of Pigeon and Michael of Harrisonburg, Virginia; a grandson, Brayden; his mother, Cora; two brothers, Darrel (Lynette) and Dale (Phyllis) of Bay Port; and a sister, Gloria (Eugene) Diener of Harrisonburg, Virginia. He was preceded in death by his father, Luke.

The funeral will be held 11 a.m. Thursday, October 27, 2011 at the Pigeon River Mennonite Church, 7120 Geiger Road., Pigeon, with Rev. Alvin Yoder officiating.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Foods Resource Bank, Pigeon River Mennonite Church, or Rosedale Mennonite Missions.

The family will receive friends at the church on Tuesday, October 25 from 5 to 8 p.m.; on Wednesday, October 26 from 3 to 5 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.; and on Thursday, October 27 from 10 a.m. until time of service.