



Rev. Gwendolyn Harrietta Snell

October 26, 1957 - March 3, 2024

Obituary for Reverend Gwendolyn H. Snell

Reverend Gwendolyn H. Snell, a dynamic pastor, preacher, strategist, coach, healer, and evangelist for the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America, journeyed from this life to the next on Sunday, March 3, 2024 in Novi, Michigan. She was 66. She will be greatly missed.

A Memorial Celebration for Pastor Gwendolyn will be held on March 16th, 2024 at Peace Lutheran Church, 17029 W. 13 Mile Road, Southfield, Michigan 48076. There will be a reception in the narthex beginning at 10AM. The homegoing celebration will begin at 11AM. A repass will be served at the church following the service. Memorial gifts may be made in Pastor Gwendolyn's name to the National Kidney Foundation, the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program, and/or Peace Lutheran Church, Southfield, Michigan.

Pastor Gwen was born on October 26, 1957 to Henry and Cora Snell. She is survived by her cousins, Francis Luster and Joanne Morris, and her "little sister", Tracy Dickerson, along with a host of family and friends.

Pastor Gwen was an energetic advocate for the rights, freedoms, and dignity of all people of color, and especially African Americans. She was a person of great faith, and deeply committed to the larger church and the general welfare of others. Pastor Gwen was a force of nature, and at the same time she demonstrated love, acceptance, and a servant heart toward all.

Pastor Gwen's life was a testimony of God's mercy and grace. She was

burdened by kidney and heart disease most of her life and received two kidney transplants. She also spent years on kidney dialysis. She acted as an advocate for those in need of kidney donations. She travelled several times to Washington, D.C. as a patient advocate. She served on the Advisory Board of the Cleveland Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP). She was a volunteer with Lifebanc and the American Heart and American Stroke Associations. She was also a cancer survivor.

Pastor Gwen attended Blessed Sacrament Cathedral School and St. Rita Catholic School in Detroit. She was a graduate of Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. She earned a Master of Arts Degree at Marygrove College in Detroit and earned a Master of Divinity Degree at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

Pastor Gwen served as Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan. She also served at Fellowship Lutheran Church, and as Congregational Redeveloper at New Covenant Lutheran Church in Cleveland, Ohio. More recently, she was the Pastor Emeritus at Peace Lutheran Church, Southfield, Michigan.

Pastor Gwen was a Certified Grief & End-Of-Life Coach. She was also certified as a Congregational Vitality and Mission Developer Coach and served on the ELCA Domestic Mission Renewal Team. Pastor Gwen was a Certified Reiki Master Healer. She was the Treasurer of the Women Clergy Association of Greater Cleveland. Pastor Gwen was also instrumental in developing the newly-formed African Descent Lutheran Association – Southeast Michigan Synod Chapter. and served as the first Chair. She was a contributing author to “What Happens When We Pray”, published by Augsburg Fortress Press in 2001.

Tribute Wall



“ I’m heartbroken to learn of Rev Gwen’s passing. I knew her as Gwen, my big sister through the Higher Horizons program at Hope College. She was so kind, supportive and inspirational to me, her “little” Caucasian sister. Something moved me to contact her again at the end of last year. Our phone call was about half an hour long, and she told me of her health struggles and huge faith conviction. We talked about my own tough childhood, and I told her how important it was to me to be able to have her in my life at that lonely time.

We had made a plan to possibly meet, and I planned to contact her again this spring when the weather got warmer and we could meet outside as I was thinking it would be best for her health if we could meet in the fresh air.

Now I know how important that phone call was, and I’m so thankful I had the chance to tell her how much she and her beautiful spirit meant to me.

Peace to Gwen’s family. She was truly a gift to mankind. I only wish I could’ve spent more time with her, learning and appreciating all her gifts.

Terry Overbeek
Holland Michigan

Terry Overbeek - April 14, 2024 at 10:36 PM