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Pastor being remembered as a kind, happy man

Schaefer served Bethlehem Lutheran

By LEE COLONY
Freeman Staff

WALEES - Bethlehem Lutheran Church pastor the Rev. Richard A. Schaefer died Thursday at the age of 58 at Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

Schaefer was a pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran for 19 years and will be known for his cheery personality, leadership in a growing congregation, and love of flowers.

"He will be best known for his compassion and love for Christ," said Schaefer's son-in-law, Scott Ferguson. "He was a most compassionate and caring person and when you talked to him, it was apparent he loved Christ."

Ferguson said Schaefer's knack for gardening was evident in the flower garden near the parsonage. "He had a beautiful garden, one that he loved," Ferguson said.

Schaefer served at Messiah Lutheran Church in Maryville, Wash., from 1971-1973 and Nazareth Lutheran Church in Chicago from 1974-1978. Parishioners said that through his ministry, he had a desire to visit the Holy Land of the Middle East - a wish that came true last year.

"He always dreamed of going there," Ferguson said. "Everybody was saying that in the last few days, he was so glad to be able to fulfill that dream before he died."

Pat Engen, a member of Bethlehem Lutheran since 1971, said she thought many church members were pleased that they could help send him to the Holy Land.

Engen said she considered Schaefer a friend and noted he cared very much about church parishioners

"He was always available," Engen said. "Pastor was always a happy person, always seeing the pleasure in every day and always dependent on his Lord to see him through each day."

Engen said Schaefer had a strong ministry to parishioners who were shut-ins or who were in the hospital.

Engen's husband, Dave Engen, said Schaefer was a good pastor and always strove to do the best he could no matter what situation was presented.

"His sermons were very good, he was trying to reach people," Engen said. "I think, overall, he enjoyed meeting and talking with people."

Schaefer helped with a ministry at a inner-city Milwaukee church and Dave Engen said Schaefer tried to reach out in the local community, as well.

Schaefer is survived by his wife, Ruth, and his children, Ray, Christopher, Mirian Wood and Rachel Ferguson.

Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church
North Prairie