



Willard Joseph Bellinger

August 31, 1939 - January 13, 2014

Willard Joseph Bellinger, 74, of Kalkaska, passed away on Monday, January 13, 2014 at home. He was born on August 31, 1939 in Traverse City, to the late Owen and Violet (Andrus) Bellinger. He proudly served his country in the US Army. Willard always had a passion for fixing things; whether it was working on tractors or his cherished 1949 blue Chevy pickup. He enjoyed his time spent with the Kalkaska Historical Society, gardening, watching Nascar, and hunting. Willard was quite the story teller, and since he never met a stranger he was happy to tell his story to a new friend. He loved his family, and never forgot to "kiss the cook", he will be dearly missed. Willard is survived by his wife Brenda (VanderVeld); children: Heidi (Ron) Winn of Grand Rapids, Robin Nyson of Kalkaska, Joseph (Erin) Bellinger of Traverse City, Wendy (Michael) Hains of Dexter, and Michelle (Jonathon) Good of Dearborn; 5 grandchildren: Amanda (Brendan) O'Brien, Justine Nyson-Piechocki, Tyler Nyson, Madison and Olivia Good; 3 great grandchildren: MacKenzie Nyson, Trenton Washburn, and Jaxson O'Brien; and his two sisters Bonnie (Norm) Peterson and Deanna (Fred) Bateson. A memorial service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 18th with a time for visiting beginning at 12:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Kalkaska. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Munson Hospice, St. Paul Lutheran Church or the family. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Cemetery Details

Excelsior Township Cemetery

1225 CR 571
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 18. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Paul Lutheran Church
2470 Beebe Road NE
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Tribute Wall

“ Here is the second part of the sermon preached at Duke's funeral:

Giving tours at the History museum, mowing the lawn at church, sitting in the woods hunting (but without actually shooting anything), kissing the cook, wearing plaid shirts with oil stained jeans, making things in his workshop (like a rototiller using an old bicycle tire), mentoring his grandchildren and great grandchildren, talking to strangers who soon became friends, or sitting in the back pew at church (which is where his family has chosen to sit with his remains for today's service) – Duke Bellinger carried that status of new creation in Christ.

Even with the diagnosis of terminal cancer. Even as His health failed and his strength slipped away, Duke remained confident (because of the faith God has given him) in the promise that Christ had made to Him – that he was a new creation, that he had been reconciled with God, that though he was going to die, he would live forever in Christ.

And that's where Duke is now. He is with his Lord. I can say that with confidence not just because Duke was here at church just about every Sunday before he got sick, but because he believes the message that is taught and preached in this church. He believes in Christ and His salvation. Just as Christ says, “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”

As a faithful member of this congregation, Duke regularly confessed his sins and received absolution. He regularly confessed the faith and communed with Christ in the Lord's Supper. And lest you think he was hiding back there in that back pew of the sanctuary and maybe the pastor didn't see him or hear him confessing these things, no. Just five days before his death, weak and out of breath hardly able to speak – he confessed the faith and received the Lord's Supper - as he had done several times in his home over the past few months. There should be no doubt about, Duke is in

paradise and understands more fully now that he did before his death, just what it means to be a new creation in Christ.

Conclusion

Duke loved to restore things and he loved his family – including those who were adopted into his family. In this way, He emulated his Father in heaven. He too loves to restore things and he too loves his family. Duke is His child. And on the Day of the Resurrection, Duke's body will be restored.

While there is pain now, for us, as we mourn the loss of our friend and brother in Christ, we rejoice for him. For he is a new creation in Christ. He is no longer suffering. He is no longer in pain. Yes, he suffered and endured a lot of pain during his earthly life (especially these past few months) but that was only temporary. His suffering has forever ended because Christ is the one who took the eternal suffering and pain of Duke's sin and ours upon Himself and put it to death on that cross. And on that Last Day, when Christ returns, Duke's body will be restored to perfection and sinless glory. It will never wear out or grow old. He will live and live eternally as a new creation in Christ. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Rev. Chad E. Hoover - January 21, 2014 at 10:27 AM

“ Here is the first part of the sermon preached at Duke's funeral:

Dear family and friends of Duke. Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

St. Paul tells us in our epistle reading from 2 Corinthians 5, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” This is true for Duke.

Duke is in Christ. He has been ever since he was an infant and his parents faithfully brought him to the waters of Holy Baptism, where he was united with Christ in His death and in His resurrection.

And what that meant for Duke, and for all who are baptized, is that he is a new creation. His sins, which would separate Him from His creator for all eternity, have been forgiven. He has been reconciled with the Father. All through his life here on earth, for over 74 years he carried this promise and distinction from God – that he was a new creation in Christ.

During the early days of his life when his family lived in Traverse City – new creation in Christ.

When they moved downstate – new creation in Christ.

As a father to Joe to Wendy – new creation in Christ.

Later in his life, when he and his children moved back to the area, Duke became a husband to Brenda (before this very altar almost 35 years ago) and a stepfather to Heidi and Robin (but it should be noted that Duke was really more than a stepfather, he was a Dad to them – the only steps in the Bellinger house were ones leading up to the door) and he became a father for the fifth time with the addition of Michelle – anyway, all during this time Duke maintained that status as a new creation Christ.

Somewhere along the line, when his age and demeanor allowed it – a sign was added to the door of his workshop: “Old Fart's Garage” - old fart or not – he was a new creation in Christ.

Rev. Chad E. Hoover - January 21, 2014 at 10:26 AM

GV

“ *Grayling And Robin's Vandervelde lit a candle in memory of Willard Joseph Bellinger*



Grayling and Robin's Vandervelde - January 16, 2014 at 01:09 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Willard Joseph Bellinger.*



January 16, 2014 at 08:32 AM

BF

“ *Bonnie Ferrell lit a candle in memory of Willard Joseph Bellinger*



Bonnie ferrell - January 15, 2014 at 02:45 PM

AS

“ *Asure Software purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Willard Joseph Bellinger.*



Asure Software - January 15, 2014 at 11:09 AM

RW

“ *Although I spent twenty years of my adult life in Alaska far away from my family, I hold very happy memories as a child and teenager with my Uncle Duke, Aunt Brenda and cousins. Many visits of exploring the woods and lake surrounding their home, wonderful meals at their table, and getting into trouble. My Uncle always had kind words, a teasing nature, and spun fascinating stories. He reminded me of my Grandpa George, who also loved to garden and grow things, ride tractors, and reminisce about days of classic cars and trucks. Uncle Duke lives on in the face of his son, Joe, the smile of his daughter, Wendy, the kindness in his daughter, Heidi, the laugh in his daughter Michelle's voice, and the twinkle in his daughter, Robin's eyes. He will be a part of each grandchild and in generations to come. He has left a space in the life of his wife, but he has filled a space next to God. May you rest in God's loving arms free of pain and sorrow.*



Rhonda Welborn - January 14, 2014 at 08:22 PM

CD

“ *So sorry to hear the sad news, our thoughts and prayers are with you.*
Burt and Connie Dean

connie dean - January 14, 2014 at 03:07 PM

BF

I am so sorry..the first time i met Duke was at the Kalkaska Museum he helped me out a lot..will be missed

Bonnie ferrell - January 15, 2014 at 02:46 PM



*Hi Brenda,
sending my condolences and love. Sherry*

Sherry Yonkers - January 16, 2014 at 09:58 AM

GV

Brenda, you can be comforted by the fact, that Duke's last thoughts were of you, the great kids, and all the family, you have created, loved and shared, over the years.

As they were there for him and his final days maybe be there for you along your journey forward.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your lovely family

Grayling & Robin

Grayling and Robin's Vandervelde - January 16, 2014 at 01:06 PM