

**Memorial Service for  
Gerald R. "Jerry" Smith  
January 24, 2026**

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church  
Bloomington, Indiana**

## + GATHERING +

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME

P: Friends, we have gathered here to praise God and to witness to our faith as we celebrate the life of Jerry. We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss. May God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, in death resurrection.

### \*THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

P: All who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ. In his baptism, Jerry was clothed with Christ. In the day of Christ's coming, he shall be clothed with glory.

P: Holy God, we give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that make a people your own, that restore to wholeness, and empower us to be witnesses in your name.

P: We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that strengthen believers and give new life to beloved servants of your church; waters that extend your boundless love and cross barriers of our own making.

P: We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that open the hearts of believers and give a voice in the night to those in captivity; waters that set your people on a new path, rejoicing in the Spirit's power.

P: In these waters, you shape our days and give meaning to our lives, to the honor of your name, Blessed and Holy Trinity, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

The Lord's Prayer

Laura Muse

# \*GATHERING HYMN

## Shall We Gather at the River

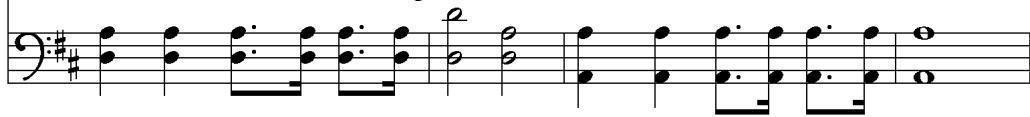
ELW#423

*verse 1 soloist only*

*Congregation stands and joins in verses 2-4*



1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,  
2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,  
3 Ere we reach the shin-ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;  
4 Soon we'll reach the shin-ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim-age will cease;



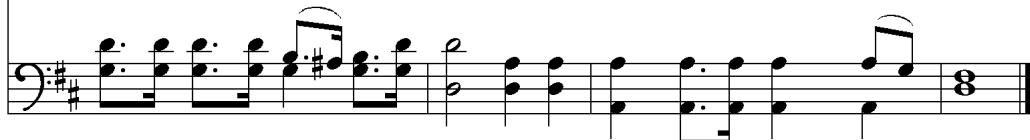
with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow-ing by the throne of God?  
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.  
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.  
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.



## \*GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, we give you heartfelt thanks for the grace you have granted to Jerry and to all who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labors. Raise us with them from death to life, that when we die we may rest in our Redeemer, receive the inheritance prepared for us from the beginning of the world, and find perfect fulfillment and joy in your everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

+WORD+

## WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Susan Klein  
Jack King  
Patty Alheim

## READING

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

written by Pr. Robert Werberig

Carl Smith

Tom Smith

O Magnify and thank the Lord with me,  
All you people!

Turn your ear toward the voice of His  
promises!

Live without fear in the safety of His  
presence!

Trust Him and find out for yourselves  
That the Lord is great and good  
That He is merciful and long-suffering  
That He rescues all who call upon Him  
And that his love for you  
Will never end.

For in the time of trouble He will shelter you.  
As a shepherd covers the lamb with His arm  
So shall our God protect you.

You too shall say with me  
“O Lord how marvelous is your grace toward  
me!”

\*GOSPEL            John 15:1-12            Dan Riggins

P: The Holy Gospel according to John, the fifteenth chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. The Father removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit is pruned to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my

commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in the Father's love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

P: The gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pr. Adrianne Meier

# \*HYMN OF THE DAY

## The King of Love My Shepherd Is

ELW#502

1 The King of love my shepherd is, whose good - ness  
 2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed  
 3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in  
 4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear

fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if  
 soul he lead - eth and, where the ver - dant  
 love he sought me, and on his shoul - der  
 Lord, be - side me, thy rod and staff my

I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.  
 pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.  
 gent - ly laid, and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.  
 com - fort still; thy cross be - fore to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
 thine unction grace bestoweth;  
 and, oh, what transport of delight  
 from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,  
 thy goodness faileth never.  
 Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
 within thy house forever.

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us come before the triune God in prayer. Each petition ends, God of mercy, and the congregation is invited to respond,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Almighty God, in holy baptism you have knit your chosen people together into one communion of saints in the body of Christ. Give to your whole church in heaven and on earth your light and your peace. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to share the new life in Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Give courage and faith to all who mourn, especially we who mourn Jerry, and give us a sure and certain hope in your loving care, that, casting all their sorrow on you, they may have strength for the days ahead. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that, where this world groans in grief and pain, your Holy Spirit may lead us to bear witness to your light and life. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Help us, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: God of all grace, we give you thanks because by his death our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death and by his resurrection he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Make us certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

**C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**+ SENDING +**

**\*COMMENDATION**

**P: Let us commend Jerry to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer.**

**P: Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Gerald. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.**

**C: Amen.**

# \*HYMN OF FAREWELL

## O God Our Help in Ages Past

ELW#632



1 O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;  
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,  
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,



our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:  
suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.  
from ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.  
short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.



5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
bears all our years away;  
we fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last  
and our eternal home!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.  
Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

## \*BENEDICTION

P: The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, in Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**C: Amen.**

## \*DISMISSAL

P: Let us go in peace.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

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*Jerry's family and friends are invited  
to a luncheon in Community Hall  
the service.*

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Gerald R. Smith died on November 21, 2025, with loved ones surrounding him. He was born on October 26, 1929, in Schenectady, New York, the son of Albert Russell and Alice Enos Smith, and the second youngest of seven children. Gerald, always called Jerry, attended public schools in Schenectady. He was an apprentice draftsman in the American Locomotive Company for one year following graduation in high school. He entered Concordia Collegiate Institute in Bronxville, New York in the pre-ministerial program in the fall of 1951 and attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri the following year. He elected not to continue in the ministry and returned to Schenectady where he completed teacher training at New York University at Albany earning his B.A. degree in 1955 and his M.A. degree in June 1956.

While at the University, he met Betty Dickheuer, and they were married on November 27, 1954. Jerry and Betty moved to Huntington, Long Island in August of 1956 where Jerry began teaching 7th and 8th grade English. He was accepted into the doctoral program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and attended

classes for the three years they lived on Long Island. Their daughter, Linda, was born in Huntington on February 27, 1959, and was three months old when they moved to Washington, D.C., where Jerry worked for the Office of Education. Their son, Paul, was born in Washington on January 10, 1961.

Jerry received his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree from Teachers College, Columbia, in February 1964, the same month the Smiths moved to Syracuse, New York. Jerry became an Associate Professor in the School of Education and Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

After three plus years at Syracuse, the Smiths moved to Bloomington, Indiana, where Jerry accepted a position as a Professor in the School of Education at Indiana University. He served his department with distinction for many years and became one of the trusted, respected, and admired leaders in the School of Education. During this time, Jerry's interests turned to alternative schools and to teaching leadership development. Throughout his tenure, his

research focused on how change can be brought about in teacher education.

After retirement, Jerry could concentrate on his lifelong love of poetry. He began writing and reading poetry, joining several poetry groups. He may have owned one of the largest private collections of poetry books in Bloomington. At the time of his death, he and Betty were working on compiling his legacy of over 1,000 poems.

Jerry will be remembered for his ever-present smile, his beloved sense of humor, and his love of family. Besides poetry, his art included creating sculptures with clay and mobiles with driftwood. He enjoyed reading about the natural world and the universe, as well as playing games with family and friends. An avid fisherman, his favorite places were the family summer homes first on Devil's Lake in Canada, Green Lake in Maine, and then Gunlock Lake in Wisconsin.

He is survived by his wife, Betty; daughter Linda (Michael) Riggins; son Paul (Kathy Essex) Smith; grandchildren Laura (Sam) Muse, Daniel (Lauren) Hall Riggins, Thomas (Jenna Larkin)

Smith, Carl (Mary) Myth; great grandchildren Theodore, Rory, and Pippa Muse, and Ayla Hall Riggins; and many loving nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by great granddaughter Saoirse Marie Hall Riggins.

# ST. THOMAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3800 East Third Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401  
Office Hours 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.  
Phone: (812) 332-5252  
[stlconline.org](http://stlconline.org)

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*In covenant with*  
**Lutheran Campus Ministry  
at Indiana University**  
Rev. Amanda Ghaffarian,  
Campus Pastor  
[lutheran@iu.edu](mailto:lutheran@iu.edu)  
Phone: (812) 333-2474  
[lcmiu.org](http://lcmiu.org)

Rev. Adrianne Meier  
Senior Pastor  
[pastor@stlconline.org](mailto:pastor@stlconline.org)

Rev. Lecia Beck  
Pastor of Youth and Christian Nurture  
[christiannurture@stlconline.org](mailto:christiannurture@stlconline.org)

Erica Whichello  
Parish Administrator  
[parishadmin@stlconline.org](mailto:parishadmin@stlconline.org)

Matthew Benkert  
Director of Music and Organist  
[directorofmusic@stlconline.org](mailto:directorofmusic@stlconline.org)

Ben Wegner  
Adult Choir Director  
[choir@stlconline.org](mailto:choir@stlconline.org)

Melissa de Graaf  
Children's Choir Director

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**We are a Christ-centered community that lives,  
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