

The Bitner family thanks you for the gift of your presence today and for every expression of kindness. Following the service, the family cordially invites you to join them in the Christian Education Building for a time of fellowship and refreshments prepared by the Presbyterian Women of Northwood and the Kitchen Krew.

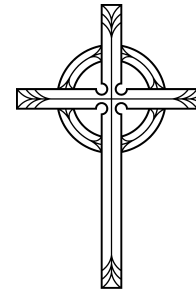
*In lieu of flowers,
the family requests memorial donations be made to:*

*Feeding Tampa Bay
feedingtampabay.org*

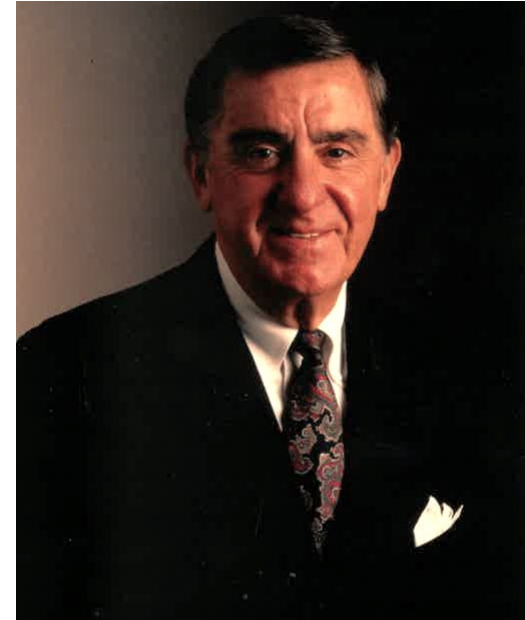
or

*The Family YMCA of Glens Falls
glensfallsymca.org*

Rev. Dr. Paul D. Means, Associate Pastor
David Furr, Organist



A Witness to the Resurrection



**To the Glory of God &
In Loving Memory of**

William L. Bitner III

December 25, 1930– November 24, 2024

Northwood Presbyterian Church
2875 State Road 580, Clearwater, FL 33761-3231
727-796-8090
www.northwoodpc.org

In Gratitude to God for the Gift of Life of Bill Bitner

Tuesday, December 17, 2024
11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

SOLO "Perhaps Love"
Michele White, Soloist

INVOCATION

*HYMN "Faith of Our Fathers" Fredrick W. Faber
Faith of our fathers, living still in spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
O how our hearts beat high with joy
whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
were still in heart and conscience free;
and blest would be their children's fate,
If they, like them should die for thee:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!

Faith of our fathers, we will strive, to win all nations unto thee;
and through the truth that comes from God,
mankind shall then indeed be free.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!

Faith of our fathers, we will love,
both friend and foe in all our strife,
and preach thee, too, as love knows how,
by kindly words and virtuous life.
Faith of our fathers! holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!

OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS

Psalms 100

Psalms 90:12

Lynne Ackner

Psalms 23 (Unison)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

Betsy Bitner

*HYMN #69 "Hear I Am Lord"
I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain: Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

I, the Lord, of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSONS

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13; John 14:1-3, 27

MEDITATION

Paul Means, Associate Pastor

SOLO "Time to Say Goodbye"
Michele White Soloist

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN "Amazing Grace"
Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be, as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

*BENEDICTION

*RECESSIONAL "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" Robert Hobby
(Please remain in the pews while the family is escorted from the Sanctuary.)

*Please stand if able.

Obituary of Bill Bitner

William L Bitner III, 93, of Clearwater, Florida passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 24, 2024. A long-time banker and educator in the Glens Falls, NY area, he is survived by his devoted wife Bunny (Bowman) Bitner, daughters Betsy Bitner (Gregg Brown) of Clifton Park and Lynne Ackner (Charlie) of Queensbury, and five grandchildren: Madison Brown (Husband, Michael Kernstock), Sophia Brown, Duncan Brown, Eric Ackner, and Kathryn Ackner (Fiance, Andrew Carter).

Bill Bitner was born on Christmas Day, 1930 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to the late William L. Bitner, Jr. and the late Anna (Horstick) Bitner. His only brother, Robert John Bitner, predeceased him in 1996.

Following graduation from William Penn High School in 1948, Bill enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He served for four years before being honorably discharged in 1952. He was always very proud of his Marine Corps service, often taking note of the USMC birthday and teaching his daughters the words to the Marine Corps hymn.

In the fall of 1952, he arrived at Bloomsburg State Teachers College (now Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania), thanks to the G.I. Bill and a three-year-old Studebaker Champion convertible. He wasn't on campus long before a young co-ed named Bunny Bowman caught his eye, and they were a couple ever since. He was the dictionary definition of Big Man on Campus, taking active roles in college organizations, winning awards, and being elected class president. And while he always excelled academically, the smartest thing Bill ever did was marry Bunny upon their graduation in 1956.

Bill and Bunny lived in Fanwood, New Jersey, where Bill earned his master's degree at Rutgers University. Upon obtaining his doctorate in 1963, he was hired as superintendent of the Glens Falls City School District. Bill was 32, making him, at the time, the youngest city school superintendent in the history of New York State. During his ten years as superintendent, Bill oversaw the establishment of an international school-to-school program, pairing Glens Falls with the American School in Tunis, Tunisia. The program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department, required him to travel frequently to schools in Europe, North Africa, and Central America to provide professional advice and support.

In 1972, Bill left Glens Falls to become Associate Commissioner of Education for New York where he oversaw elementary, secondary, and continuing education throughout the state. During his tenure, he was appointed by a federal court judge to the Willowbrook Review Panel. The seven-member board was charged with overseeing the implementation of a consent decree to improve the conditions of the Willowbrook State School in Staten Island. Their work involved finding placements for more than 3,000 residents into community group homes and ended when they permanently closed the school in 1987. It was a landmark action on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and became a template for the deinstitutionalization movement throughout the country.

Bill returned to Glens Falls in 1976, leaving education to become president of the First National Bank of Glens Falls. In 1980 he became CEO and Chairman of the Board. The bank, and later its holding company Evergreen Bancorp, was highly successful under his leadership, acquiring Keeseville National Bank and Peoples Commercial Bank. He retired in 1993.

He was a leader in the community, serving on the boards of many organizations throughout his professional life and into retirement. Locally, he served on the boards, including as chairman, for the Hyde Collection, the Glens Falls Hospital, and Crandall Library, the Glens Falls Family YMCA, and the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce. Bill also served in leadership positions for the New York Bankers Association, the Independent Bankers Association of New York, the Council of School Superintendents, and the Lake Champlain Cancer Research Organization. A gifted public speaker who loved telling a good joke, Bill was a sought-after speaker throughout the country.

Summers were spent at the camp they owned on Kattskill Bay, Lake George for over 30 years. Many happy memories were made there including playing Jarts with neighbors (no one lost an eye!), setting off fireworks on the Fourth of July (again, no one lost an eye!), and the excitement that surrounded finally trading in the hibachi for a Weber grill. Rainy weekends were spent playing cutthroat games of Monopoly as well as various card games. To this day, the mere mention of the word "Monopoly" makes his daughters break out in a cold sweat. And, when the power went out, Bill would entertain his daughters and their friends with the spooky, made-up tales of Katie Winnliker and the Heppenstall murders.

An avid sports fan, Bill had a keen memory for baseball stats and trivia of his youth. Every kid playing ball at the Emerald Street Playground in Harrisburg had a favorite team, and his was the NY Giants. He rooted for them along with the greatest player he ever saw - Willie Mays- until the Giants moved to San Francisco in 1957. Following that loss, he pledged his die-hard allegiance to the New York Yankees and was a loyal fan ever since. He enjoyed attending nearly every game of the Yankees training camp in Tampa for several years. Bill also enjoyed football, cheering for the NY Giants through all their ups and downs, as well as hockey. Bill and Bunny were season ticket holders to the Adirondack Redwings for many years and later followed the Tampa Bay Lightning on TV.

Bill enjoyed playing sports, too. For over 20 years, he played squash five mornings a week at the Glens Falls YMCA. Weekends would find him on the golf course at Glens Falls Country Club. When they joined East Lake Woodlands Country Club in Oldsmar, FL, Bill enjoyed organizing Sunday afternoon couples' golf outings followed by dinner. He liked competition of all sorts and could make a game out of anything, including nightly quizzes at the dinner table.

In addition to sports, Bill had a number of other interests including genealogy, coin collecting, and U.S. history. He read the Wall Street Journal daily. He and Bunny continued to travel in retirement, seeing much of the United States, Canada, China, Africa, and many European countries. They also liked taking cruises, seeking out ones that specialized in the history and culture of the ports they were visiting.

A man of faith, he was a long-time member of the First Presbyterian Church of Glens Falls, where he served in several leadership positions including Elder. Later, he became a member of the Northwood Presbyterian Church in Clearwater. There he taught an adult Sunday School class called Today's Christian Issues for many years. Bill's community involvement, leadership style, and sense of humor left an impression on many, most of all his family whom he loved deeply and always supported. There are so many memories associated with Bill that his family will hold dear and whenever they think of soft pretzels, Ivan Ivegatanich, sugar sticks and two are eight, donuts on Saturday morning, the Governor Thomas E. Dewey Thruway, or playing the shoehorn they will remember him and smile.

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