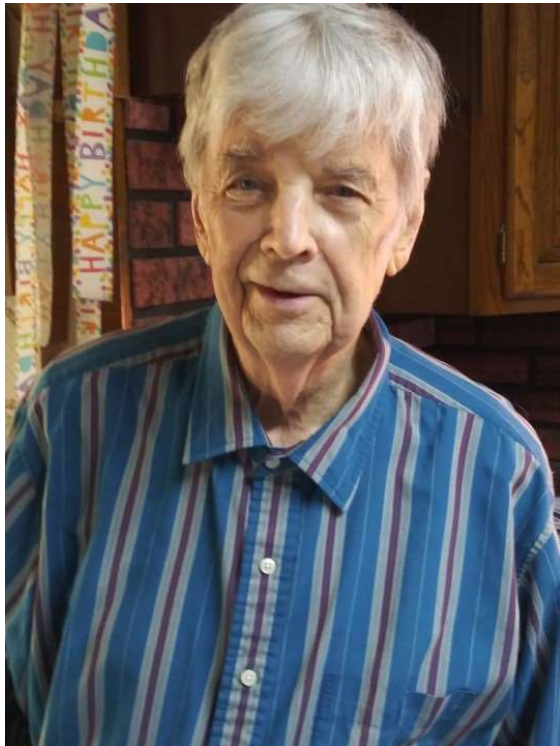


**Celebration of Life**  
**In Loving Memory of**

**Ross Burrus**

**1931-2022**



**First United Methodist Church**  
**Madisonville, Tennessee**  
**March 26th 2023, 1:00 PM**

# Worship Order for the Celebration of Life of Ross Burrus

**Presiding: Rev. Chris Black**  
**Worship Leader: Sue Hamilton**  
**Organist: Mary Alice Huff**

## WORDS OF GRACE AND GREETING

### PRAYER

*O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother, Ross Burrus. We thank you for giving him to us, his family, and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence, we may continue our course on earth, until by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### OLD TESTAMENT READING: Psalm 23

### MUSIC

#### *“For the Beauty of the Earth”*

1. For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies, For the love which from our birth over and around us lies: Source of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

2. For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight, For the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight: Source of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

3. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night, Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light: Source of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

4. For the joy of human care, sister, brother, parent, child, For the kinship we all share, for all gentle thoughts and mild: Source of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

### GOSPEL READING: Selections for John 14

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; Because I live, you also will live. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ”

## INVITATION TO SHARE

### HOMILY

Rev. Chris Black

### MUSIC/HYMN “Take Me Home, Country Roads” (John Denver Version)

Almost heaven, West Virginia  
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River  
Life is old there, older than the trees  
Younger than the mountains,  
growin' like a breeze.

Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia, mountain mama  
Take me home, country roads

All my memories gather 'round her  
Miner's lady, stranger to blue water  
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky  
Misty taste of moonshine,  
teardrop in my eye.

Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia, mountain mama  
Take me home, country roads.

I hear her voice in the mornin' hour, she calls me  
The radio reminds me of my home far away  
Drivin' down the road, I get a feelin'  
That I should've been home yesterday, yesterday.

Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia, mountain mama  
Take me home, country roads.

Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia, mountain mama  
Take me home, country roads  
Take me home, (down) country roads  
Take me home, (down) country roads.

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Eternal God, you have shared with us the life of Ross Burrus. Before he was ours, he is yours. For all that Ross has given us to make us what we are, for that of him which lives and grows in each of us, and for his life that in your love will never end, we give you thanks. As now we offer Ross back into your arms, comfort us in our loneliness, strengthen us in our weakness, and give us courage to face the future unafraid. Draw those of us who remain in this life closer to one another, make us faithful to serve one another, and give us to know that peace and joy which is eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**MUSIC** “Amazing Grace “ (Verses 1,2,5 & 6) #378 in the Hymnal

**BLESSING** (written by Nell Burrus)

## **(Walter) Ross Burrus**

1931—2022

Ross was born to Nell Ross Burrus and Edward Perry Burrus in Columbus, Georgia. He had one older brother, Perry Burrus, who pre-deceased him. In between earning his BS at Georgia Tech and his PhD at Ohio State, he served as a Captain in the US Air Force during the Korean War. He met his first wife, LeRona Wilson (Kocher) while at Ohio State. They moved to East Tennessee after his graduation to take a job at Oak Ridge National Labs. There, he and LeRona had two kids, Nell (Albuquerque, NM) and Kai (Laura) Burrus (San Francisco, CA; married to Julia Smith).

Over the years, he worked at a number of places including Tennecomp, Scientific Applications, Inc., Minimax and Tennessee Computers Specialties Inc, and played a critical role in founding all but one of these companies.

After his marriage to LeRona, Ross went on to wed Doris Sharpe and gained two new sons in the process, Scott Gilkey (deceased) and Steve Gilkey (Knoxville, TN; married to Cindy Liafsha). They spent the majority of their married life in Lenoir City, TN. He remained married to Doris for almost 20 years before she passed away.

He then went on to marry Joyce McWilliams, move to Madisonville, and become a step-father to Joyce's adult son Cole McWilliams (who now resides in the greater Atlanta area). Ross is also survived by Cole's children Jennifer and Nicholas McWilliams and Jennifer's mother Marie and Jennifer's children Noah and Malakai (who all reside in the greater Atlanta area).

Ross used to brag that they lived on top of the Lost Sea. After Joyce died in 2018, he moved to Albuquerque, NM, where he lived in two care centers and with for 1.5 years with his daughter, Nell. He provided her with company and hugs even as his dementia advanced.

Ross was a complicated and paradoxical man. Although he was rather conventional in many ways, he also had distinct disinterest in societal rules and expectations. He was a brilliant mathematician and started 3 different companies and yet, he struggled with more mundane tasks like paying bills and balancing his checkbook.

Ross was intrepid and loved (mis)adventures; he left many stories in his wake. These stories offer up some good laughs now, especially since all of the participants lived to tell them. Once famous story centers on the time that he left his young daughters and a friend alone in the Smoky Mountains to go for help after getting lost late at night (with only one functioning flashlight). Another takes place in Mongolia, where he and his wife, Joyce, narrowly escaped a yurt that might have burned to the ground.

Perhaps what is most memorable is that Ross had a sweet heart. He had a sweet spot for animals and people who were down on their luck. He will be missed...

In his last few years of life Ross enjoyed dancing, painting and bingo at his first assisted living facility. While living with Nell he enjoyed twice daily walks, helping with the dishes, cooking, singing, drawing, and puzzles.

Nell and Kai (Laura) would like to thank the Madisonville friends who provided companionship and much concrete support in Dad's last years living in TN. They helped with paperwork, medical appointments, transportation, shopping, house cleaning and so much more! They also came forward to help the family at the time of Joyce's funeral.