



## The Reverend Charles "Christopher" Hinnen

December 4, 1945 – April 27, 2012

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8*

Known as Chris, Dad, Pop-Pop, the Reverend Hinnen passed into eternal love surrounded by his children and their loved ones, one granddaughter, a high school friend, and a pastor from the United Methodist Church of the Village. Described as a good, gentle man who was passionate about peace and justice, Chris was lovingly generous with his family and adored his six granddaughters. Throughout his life, he developed deep and lasting friendships. He truly made this world a better place through his ministry, making an impact in the lives of the people he served.

Chris was born in Ardsley, NY to Mary (Vile) and Charles Hinnen. He had an older sister, Margee, and a younger brother, Mark. He attended boarding school at St. Peters in Peekskill, NY and maintained friendships with those in his 1963 high school graduating class. He attended Colgate College and Mitchell College, where he met Anne Hughes. They were married September 16, 1967. He later graduated from Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration.

Drafted into the Army in 1967, Chris served as a food inspector in Okinawa. It was during his military service that he became a passionate advocate for peace. Returning to the US in 1970, he and Anne moved to Ithaca, NY. After completing his studies at Cornell, they bought a Carvel Ice Cream store. They were an integral part of the anti-war effort, Ithaca hippie community, and the Transcendental Meditation movement. The family grew with three children in the '70's: Melissa, Toni Joy (TJ), and Ben. In 1977, they joined St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Ithaca, NY. It was at St. Paul's that he received his call to ministry.

The family moved to Madison, NJ in 1980 where Chris attended Drew University Theological School. He was an active choir member and a voice for social holiness – speaking out against South Africa apartheid and encouraging equality in the United Methodist Church. During seminary, he served as a student pastor at Community United Methodist Church in Roselle Park where he welcomed young people from the community to engage in the church youth group. He also was a student pastor at Munn Avenue Presbyterian Church in East Orange, NJ where one of his responsibilities was to liaison between the church and a small independent congregation of gay and lesbian people that rented worship space in the sanctuary.

In 1982, while serving at Munn Avenue, Chris learned about a so-called "cancer" that was affecting gay men. He and Anne immediately became active in ministering with people who at the time were considered "untouchable." After he was ordained an elder in 1987 with the United Methodist Church, Chris continued his work as an AIDS activist. He led the Greater NJ Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church in developing a task force to integrate HIV/AIDS ministries throughout the region. At his retirement ceremony last summer, he said that in all of his ministries, he was most proud of the work he did to raise support and awareness for people living with HIV/AIDS.

From 1984-2005, The Reverend Hinnen actively served in the local church. His first appointment as a full time senior pastor was at Emanuel United Methodist Church in Union City, NJ. In 1988,

he was appointed to Grace United Methodist Church in Kearny, NJ. His final appointment was at Waldwick United Methodist Church in 1994 where he was the pastor until 2005. Over the years, he continued to be a voice for peace and justice on the floor of the church's annual conference and for a time chaired the conference chapter of Church and Society. He was active in the church on task forces and in mission.

While serving in Waldwick, Chris married his wife, Linda Elmiger on October 7, 1995. They shared a deep love and Chris was warmly welcomed into the Elmiger family. In their ten years of marriage, they traveled together, engaged in the United Methodist Church locally and generally, and enjoyed family gatherings. Following Linda's death in 2005, Chris faithfully stayed in touch with the Elmigers and valued their family connection.

Chris' last seven years were spent living in the Poconos. He was an enthusiastic traveler and in recent years visited Cuba, Costa Rica, South Korea, and made a pilgrimage to Taize, France. He strengthened relationships with longtime friends and relatives including his brother, Mark and their late sister's husband, Parker. Still guided by a heart for mission, this past year, he began volunteering with the Dingmans Ferry chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Occupy Wall Street rekindled his passion for social justice and he was very encouraged by the emerging movement. He visited Zuccotti Park a number of times, including on his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday and among other actions, offered communion to the occupiers.

Whether marching to demand peace or end nuclear disarmament, holding the hand of someone who had AIDS, taking young people on mission trips through the Aldersgate Christian Outreach Project, walking for three days in the Avon walk to end breast cancer, sitting on the board of Mustard Seed School, preaching justice from the pulpit, volunteering in disaster response following Hurricane Katrina, writing letters to Congress, or being a calm, loving presence for his friends and family, Chris actively lived out the Gospel, doing his part to bring God's Kingdom to earth. His last Facebook post said, "May Martin Luther King, Jr. continue to have his work blessed even thru his followers who never knew him. I wonder where we would be now, if he had not been killed. Happy Martin Luther King Day...we have all been changed by your life."

Chris is predeceased by his parents, Mary and Charles Hinnen; his wife, Linda Elmiger; and sister, Margee Hinnen Chapin. He is survived by his brother, Mark Hinnen; three children, Melissa, TJ, and Ben Hinnen; and six granddaughters: Cassie, Margee Liz, Natalie, Nicole, and Heaven Hinnen and Ananiah Green.

Photos, testaments, or condolences may be sent to the Hinnen Family c/o UM Church of the Village 201 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10011 or email [VillageChurchMelissa@gmail.com](mailto:VillageChurchMelissa@gmail.com). In lieu of flowers, the family has suggested that donations may be made to support the [United Methodist Global AIDS Fund](#) through the GNJ Annual Conference. Please make checks payable to Greater NJ Annual Conference, 1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean, NJ 07712 and write "Global AIDS Fund in Memory of Chris Hinnen" in the memo line.

**A memorial service in celebration of Chris Hinnen's life will be  
Saturday, May 19, 2012 at 2:00pm  
Tenafly United Methodist Church, 34 West Clinton Avenue, Tenafly, NJ 07670-2034**