



Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope

August 25, 1946 - April 25, 2021

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Mary Leah Bhamé was born to Roy and Marge Bhamé and grew up on a farm outside Zelienople, Pennsylvania. Roy was a farmer, and Marge taught school and played the organ at the Presbyterian Church in nearby Ellwood City. Roy and Marge died many years ago.

Mary grew up with a good appreciation for music via her mother and her mother's family, the Streeter family. She was an accomplished pianist and organist and occasionally played the clarinet. On her own she developed an interest in sewing, and over years developed that interest into a professional skill.

She loved cooking and developed that into a lifelong proficiency.

In 1968 she accomplished a Bachelor's in Music at Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA. Later that year she began attending the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky as she pursued a Masters Degree in Church Music. At the seminary in 1969 she met Charles Pope, her husband to be. They were married on December 22, 1970 at Christ Church United Presbyterian in Ellwood City. As Charles and Mary were

completing their degrees at the seminary in 1972, a daughter, Sarah Christine Pope, was born to them.

The next six years saw Mary and Charles in Maryland and Texas as Charles worked as a Baptist minister and trained as a Hospital Chaplain. In 1975 a son, James Adam Pope, was born in Maryland. In Corpus Christi, TX Mary worked as a choir director at a Methodist church. The couple moved to Charlottesville, Virginia in 1978 as Charles pursued chaplaincy. As the two children grew into school years, Mary was able to work as a Choir Director in a nearby Episcopal Church. It was there that she met Carolyn and David Holmes and Claire and John Whittaker who would become lifelong friends and essentially family. Both she and Charles were confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 1984.

The early to mid 80's saw Mary and Charles in Atlanta, GA as Mary worked toward a PhD in Liturgy, Music, and Theology at Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

Accomplishing that in 1985 they moved to Le Mars, Iowa where she taught Christian Education at Westmar College and served as College Chaplain. In Iowa in 1990 the couple adopted their third child, Leah Rachel Pope. Also in Iowa, Mary was ordained as a Methodist minister and, over years, served 3 congregations in Iowa. In Des Moines, Iowa she also served as Pastor in two Presbyterian churches and for a year was Director of Christian Education at an Episcopal Church. The last seven years of her professional life saw her as a Hospice Chaplain at Hospice of Central Iowa in Des Moines.

After moving to West Virginia in 2014, Mary served in a post-retirement position at the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia as she directed the Iona Program.

She loved history, as we visited many historic sites over the years. She loved growing things. In the spring a special light would come into her eyes as she talked about seeds and planting. She loved holiday family dinners. She loved our trips to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Musician, seamstress, cook, devoted wife and mother, college professor, ecumenical advocate, ordained minister, and chaplain, her life shines as a beacon of love, joy, and service. We are missing her terribly. But we cannot but be grateful for the blessedness of her life.

On May 4 visiting hours and service will be held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 405 B Street in St. Albans, West Virginia, Visiting hours begin at 2:00 P.M. and end at 5:00 P.M. The service will begin at 7 PM. It will be live streamed on the Facebook page of Ray Shackelford. Tune in at 6:55 PM. The in-person service will include family only. In the visiting hours people will be admitted one domicile at a time. During the visiting hours and the service, masks will be required. All attendees are asked to maintain proper spacing. Music during the visiting hours will be live streamed from the Facebook page of Rachel Taylor. Music will be played at 2, 3, and 4 PM for 20 minutes each time. Tune in at 1:55, 2:55, and/or 3:55.

Memorial gifts should be designated to support the music program of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Monetary gifts may be made electronically. Go to the web site of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia, click on E-Giving. A list of parishes will appear. Click St. Mark's, designate your gift as indicated , and have a credit card ready.

Interment of cremains will occur on May 8 at Steadman Baptist Church Cemetery in Steadman, Georgia at 1:30 PM. Presiding at the service at St. Mark's will be the Rev. Kent Higgins of Charleston, West Virginia, a friend of the family.

Our family: husband Charles, daughter Sarah Pope Miksinski, with husband, Ted, and son Adam, son Jim Pope, with wife Abby Goldsmith, daughter Leah Pope, with fiancée Joe Craven, Mary's brother, Ken Mitchell, with wife Janeine, and lifelong friends Carolyn Holmes and Claire Whittaker, are glad to greet you at the visiting hours.

You may visit Mary's tribute page at BartlettNicholsFuneralHome.com to share memories or condolences with the family.

Bartlett-Nichols Funeral Home, family owned and located at 409 Sixth Ave., St. Albans is honored to serve the Pope family.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 4. 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
405 B Street
St. Albans, WV 25177

private service

MAY 4. 7:00 PM (ET)

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
405 B Street
St. Albans, WV 25177

Tribute Wall

PE

“ I am sadden to hear of Dr. Pope's passing. She was a wonderful teacher, mentor and friend at Westmar and will be missed. I have always appreciated her encouragement, and her honesty in my days at Westmar. She is one of the main contributors to an excellent education I received and I will always be thankful to her for all she shared.

Paul Evans - May 04, 2021 at 05:26 PM

GC

“ So sorry to hear of Pastor Mary's passing. She was our interim pastor at Winterset (Iowa) First United Presbyterian. I was so thankful for her visits to the hospital when my husband had his stroke in 2000. I remember a DM Register story about someone breaking into their home (17th or 18th St/Pleasant in Des Moines) while they were away, and they came home to downstairs flooded and floors ruined. I had visited them a couple times prior to that when I was in the neighborhood, and tried again a few years ago, but I'll bet they had already moved away from Iowa by then. I am just so glad to have had Mary in my life!! Peace to her family and friends. G. JoAnn Collins, Winterset, Iowa (joannsings@hotmail.com)

G. JoAnn Collins - May 03, 2021 at 04:05 PM

BL

“ I remember the times Mary, Charles and Leah would come to pick out their Christmas tree the fun and joy of it all will remain with us, and the Christmas party's we celebrated together. Mary always made me feel welcome in any gathering

Barry Laws - May 03, 2021 at 12:49 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



May 03, 2021 at 11:51 AM



“ *Charles Stephen and Royce Ann Sanders purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



Charles Stephen and Royce Ann Sanders - May 02, 2021 at 10:01 AM



“ *Your friends at the dance studio in Des Moines where Mary took some classes send love to you, Charles, and the rest of Mary's family. We missed her when she left Iowa, and are sure she is dancing among the angels now.*
Elizabeth Adams

Elizabeth Adams - April 30, 2021 at 01:49 PM



Thanks Elizabeth. We really miss her.

Charles Pope - May 01, 2021 at 06:54 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 30, 2021 at 12:07 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 29, 2021 at 10:24 PM



“ *Wendy Wilson Lee, Paul Seo and Thomas Oliver purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



Wendy Wilson Lee, Paul Seo and Thomas Oliver - April 29, 2021 at 04:28 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 29, 2021 at 09:03 AM



“ *Rose Garden Heart was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 29, 2021 at 06:18 AM



“ *Dr Mary Pope was a thoughtful, kind, generous and talented woman. I was made better by knowing her and Charles. I am so saddened by the news of her death but her memory is bright as a beacon of courage and determination, intelligence and good humor. Dr. Mary (formerly Fraser) Lautzenhiser Bellon, Des Moines Iowa*

Mary (Fraser) Lautzenhiser Bellon - April 28, 2021 at 06:07 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 28, 2021 at 03:42 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. Mary Leah Bhamé Pope.*



April 28, 2021 at 03:22 PM