Reverend William “Bill” Andrew Williams
July 13, 1927 - July 19, 2016

Bill was born in Rapid City, SD, on July 13, 1927, the only child of F. Cecil and Myrtle Helen (Munson) Williams. As the son of a traveling salesman, he attended eight different grade schools in Midwest towns during the depression era. He attended junior high in Spokane, WA, and high school in Portland, OR. Bill joined the US Marine Corps when he was 17 and was stationed in Hawaii during WWII. After being honorably discharged, he earned his GED and graduated from Pacific Lutheran College, in Tacoma, WA, where he sang in the Choir of the West. In his early years, Bill worked at 17 different jobs! Because of the organ music and through the mentorship of both his Luther League friends and the pastor at Faith Lutheran (Portland, OR) Bill felt called to become a pastor. He was financially unsure about attending seminary and asked God for a sign to help him know that it was the right thing to do. An envelope of money arrived in the mail the next day and Bill knew seminary was where he should go. He studied to become a pastor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) in Berkley, CA. He was a member of the first class of four-year seminary students to graduate from PLTS in 1956, and celebrated 60 years of ordained ministry June 24, 2016. He was ordained and installed as the pastor at St. Andrew Lutheran Church (Beaverton, OR), and then served at the following Lutheran Churches: Grace (Victoria, B.C., Canada), St. Paul’s (Seattle, WA), Zion/Peace (Astoria, OR), King of Glory (Boise, ID), and Grace (Horseshoe Bend, ID). He filled in at Grace (Mountain Home, ID), St. Paul (Ontario, OR), and Grace (Vale, OR). He served as chaplain for the Idaho State Legislature, the Idaho State Veteran’s Home, the US Veteran’s Administration, and as the Interdenominational Chaplain at three nursing homes in the Boise area before retiring at the age of 77. He relocated to Panorama City, Lacey, WA, in 2007. The Lord has worked through Bill in every aspect of his life, from parish and youth ministry, to Alcoholics Anonymous, and throughout his struggle with Parkinson’s Disease. His mission and passion in life was to help people know about God’s love for them.

While at St. Andrew’s he met Laverne Joan Adolphson, the helpful church secretary at Central Lutheran across town in Portland, OR. They married in Chokio, MN, her home town, in 1958.
When he was admitted to the Convalescent and Rehabilitation (C&R) Center at Panorama in October of 2008, he wondered how God would use him. A short time later he knew. Bill would visit all of the residents and get to know them and the staff and encourage them along their path. He was a collector of words and never liked to visit someone — ever — without having a handout containing encouraging words to give them. He was present with people and valued each and every one. He was full of ideas — holding the first Easter Sunrise Service on top of the Space Needle in Seattle, or receiving “phone calls” from God in the pulpit to highlight a point in a sermon.

He loved cars, computers, new gadgets, and music — especially organ music. He liked to have fun, play games of all sorts, and enjoyed the ocean, camping, traveling, and radio shows. During his time at the Panorama Convalescent Center he wrote several skits for the residents and staff to perform. Bill was creative, determined, and persistent. If he couldn’t get something done one way he would find another way to make it happen. He was mischievous, meek, humble, mild, and tender-hearted with a positive attitude. He never gave up.

Bill died peacefully of complications from Parkinson’s Disease at the Panorama C&R in Lacey, WA, on July 19, 2016, at the age of 89.

Bill is survived by the love of his life, Laverne, his wife of 57 years. She resides at Panorama in Lacey, WA. He is also survived by daughter Beth Tobin (husband Jim) of Olympia, WA, and son Joel Williams (wife Amy) of Fruitland, ID; grandchildren: Erika Tobin, Colin Tobin, and Grace Tobin of Olympia, WA, and Mikayla Williams and Annika Williams of Fruitland, ID; brother-in-law Earl Adolphson of Chokio, MN and Ralph Olson of Grand Rapids, MN; sister-in-law Margie Olson of Hopkins, MN; cousins, and many nieces and nephews.

We thank God for Bill’s life and the many lives he has touched. A memorial service will be held on August 6, 2016, at 11:00 a.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1515 Harrison Ave. NW, Olympia, WA, 98502. A Service of Remembrance and Inurnment will be held at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 3430 N. Maple Grove Road, Boise, ID, 83704, on September 3, at 2:30 p.m.

Bill was a mentor to many and wants to encourage people to enter the seminary. In lieu of flowers, if you desire, Bill’s wish was that any memorials be given to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Fund for Leaders https://community.elca.org/fundforleaders or a charity of your choice. The ELCA Fund for Leaders provides scholarships for people attending seminaries as they study to become pastors. Donations may be given in his name online, or through the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church office.

Bill’s family extends thanks and appreciation to the Panorama C&R staff and Panorama Clinic; Dr. Gregory Bell; Assured Hospice; Gloria Dei pastors, staff, and Caring Ministry Team; and all those who call him friend.