

PastorCare

West Michigan

Helping Pastors Soar

May 2013 Special Edition Newsletter

Our Tribute to Rev. G. David Korsen

Rev. G. David Korsen was my very dear friend, brother in Christ, and partner in ministry. David went home to be with Jesus very suddenly and unexpectedly on Tuesday afternoon, April 23, 2013. My heart's desire is to honor my dear friend and testify to the difference he made in my life, and in our world for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ!



Joanie Korsen remembering David



Kathy and Bill Wynsma with Joanie Korsen

I walked closely with David and Joanie for nine years. Through our journey together, David became one of my closest and dearest friends. We shared our hearts and lives deeply and transparently with each other. We cried together, laughed together, experienced God's grace, healing, and restoration together. We dreamed together and we partnered together in ministry to wounded pastors and families. I still can't believe he is gone.



John Smith with David and Joanie Korsen



Pastor David Korsen

On February 8, 2013 David and I spent a couple of wonderful hours together at Panera Bread, brainstorming and dreaming together about all the ways we could serve and bless pastors and families through a new PastorCare West Michigan website that I was hiring David to develop. After his dear wife Joanie joined us, I called my wife Sue and she agreed with the prompt I received from the Spirit to write David a check for the full amount up front. It was one small way we could let him know how much we loved him, trusted him, and believed in him. I will always remember the look of shock, joy, and amazement on their faces when they looked at the amount on the check. David and Joanie both said, "Are you sure you want to do this?" I replied,

“Absolutely! Sue and I want to bless you!” David looked at me with his eyes full of emotion and said, “You are the first person who has ever paid me in advance. Thank you so much!”

I talked with David on the phone, on Wednesday April 17 at 9:25 pm, as he was racing to get some work done for me before he left at 5:00 the next morning to catch a plane to attend a conference for ECC pastors. We decided to change the color scheme of my new PastorCare West Michigan website from brown and green tones to blue tones. David designed a temporary business card in black and white which he sent to Staples to be printed over night. He said he would finish the logo design and the new business cards as soon as he returned. The last thing David posted to my new website that night, was his initial rendering of the new logo which you see on the top of this Newsletter. We exchanged two emails on Tuesday morning April 23, to set up a time to meet face to face later in the week. At 3:14 that afternoon David went home to be with Jesus. It was such a shock and so hard to believe. Not David! Not now! I don't understand!



Sue Smith with Joanie Korsen

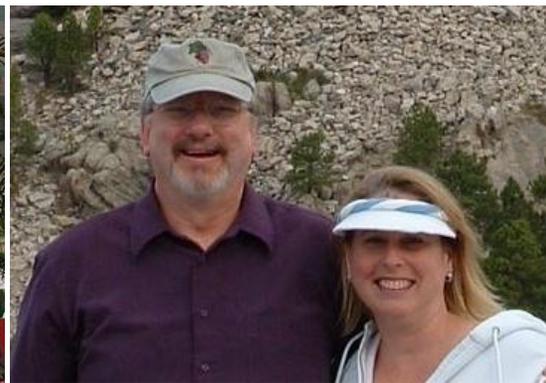
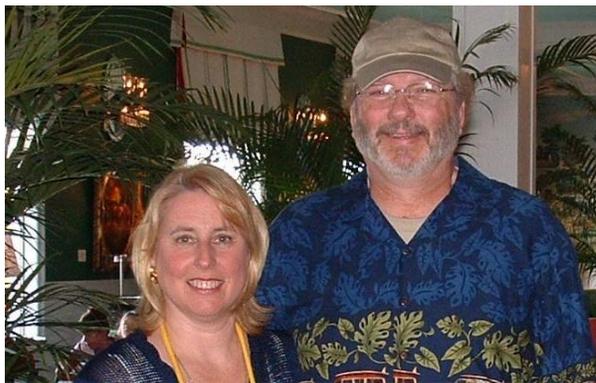


Joanie Korsen with John Smith

David and I had so many dreams and plans for our next season of ministry together through PastorCare West Michigan. I miss him more than I know how to express in words. David and I walked together in the journey of learning to trust God even when the events of life don't seem to make sense. The best way I know how to honor David is to continue to pursue God's calling upon my life to be used by God to help pastors soar again.

Joanie Korsen writes,

It is difficult to write this, as I am still not used to referring to my husband, David, in the past tense. After almost 40 years together, it feels like half of me is missing. The best half.



David was a kind, generous, enthusiastic, funny and loyal man. His weakness was people. He could never say “No” to anyone who made a request of him, no matter how inconvenient it was to him. He was what you would refer to as the quintessential “nice guy”, in the best sense of the phrase. His most fervent prayer, in the five years since we went through his forced termination from the church we moved 2000 miles to Pastor, was that God would somehow redeem that terrible experience, and use it to help other Pastoral Couples suffering through it. David found an opportunity to participate with God in that desire through PastorCare and Ministry to Ministers.

We had an advantage back in July 2008, because David was already friends with John Smith, having met him at a National Pastors Convention, prior to accepting the call to the church in West Michigan. When we were forced to leave that church, four years later, John attended most of our meetings with the church representatives and those from the Denomination that David had served for nearly 25 years.

Often, John was our only advocate. He walked through the whole messy journey with us, and resourced us with a trip to Blessing Ranch to get some needed counseling. I can honestly say that without his continuing support and coaching, David would have been a ministry casualty, and Morning Star Church might not exist today.

It is my prayer that the unfortunate trend of churches across all Denominations to make their Pastors conveniently disposable would end, but we live in a broken world. PastorCare serves those Pastors who become casualties of this practice. Somehow God uses broken Pastors to reach broken people, so that what was “intended for harm, God has intended for good to accomplish what is now being done—the saving of many lives” (Gen 50:20)

David was blessed to be part of the PastorCare network, and has received his reward with his ever gracious and glorious God.



There is an old Collin Raye song “Love, Me” In which the chorus goes:

*If you get there before I do,
Don't give up on me.
I'll meet you when my chores are through,
I don't know how long I'll be.
But I'm not gonna let you down,
Just you wait and see.
But, between now and then,
Until I see you again,
I'll be loving you.
Love,
Me*

*That says it all, better than I ever could.
Thank You to PastorCare and their love and care for
David and I.
In Christ's gentle arms,
Joanie*

Dr. Allen Tyndall, Lead Director, PastorCare Network writes,

I appreciated the dedication David had for the Lord. It was apparent that he was sold out to following God in all that he did. When he committed to do something he did all he knew how to do to stay on task with that commitment. He pursued God with all his heart, mind and strength. I appreciated how God honored his commitment to Him as he served Him faithfully. We are grateful for his service to us at PastorCare. Praise God for his faithfulness!

Rev. Gary Bowman, Northeast Regional Director, PastorCare Network writes,

This smiling, long-haired man greeted me warmly as we both came to serve hurting and wounded pastors through the ministry of the PastorCare Network. Our common pain was what we shared initially. . . and then we began to talk. Oh, Father had much more for two of His sons to discover!

David's heart for advancing the Kingdom of Christ in culturally relevant—and often radical—ways was a mirror of Jesus' own heart and methods. Our conversations about the waning influence of the Church in western culture were certainly fodder for dreaming God-sized

dreams—dreams that would fertilize the roots of Morningstar Fellowship. Our prayers together inspired hope and faith for what each of us would set our energy toward in the years that followed our initial introduction.

Though many miles separated us, we shared an affinity of spirit that made us long for personal connection. Emails and phone conversations would fly back and forth with ideas and scriptures, thoughts and frustrations. Father's magnificent grace was evident in the journey of restoration that both of us walked and through it, the increased sensitivity to those who are minimized by the gracelessness of many churches. What was being dug in David was a deep well of grace from which many have drawn strength and hope! And his vulnerability is a continuing example of an authentic journey with Jesus which is worth emulating.

David's dreams will live on through many of us in our pursuit of the heart of Jesus. He touched lives in ways that point to our Redeemer and Restorer—and those of us who knew David are inspired to press forward on the road of discovery, much as those two disciples on the road to Emmaus—with ears burning in the quest for more truth.



Dave Korsen and Gil Bilezikian with "Lass'ay Quinn" Celebrity Dog!

Rev. Charles H. Chandler, Executive Director, Ministering to Ministers Foundation writes,

I have known David Korsen for about five years and I found him to be a person of integrity with a deep commitment to Christ that permeated his entire being. He personified what I think of as a servant leader fulfilling his mission to serve Christ in whatever position he filled.

David was a self starter who required little supervision. He was a “big picture” visionary who developed the ability to give close attention to details. His relational skills were outstanding. He had an abundance of energy and a strong but healthy work ethic. His leadership style was to involve other people in shaping a vision.

He had a sensitive and nurturing spirit that enabled him to work with people of varying backgrounds and differing levels of spiritual commitment. He also gave attention to his own spiritual growth. David's experience of planting churches, nurturing churches, leading churches to reach and minister to their community and his cooperative and ecumenical spirit prepared him to serve our Lord from a variety of ministry positions.

David excelled in the art of communication through his own innate abilities and through the latest technologies. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation (MTM), he made valuable contributions to communicating the MTM mission and ministry. He designed websites, brochures, flyers, and other means of telling the MTM story. During the past few years, he developed a small graphics design business that had an impressive impact on the new church he planted as well as supplemented his income enabling the new church plant to have a greater percentage of their budget to expand and improve their ministries.

David and Joanie were an outstanding team and together they impacted in a very positive way a multitude of lives throughout the Midwest as well as the Pacific Coast. Though I have lost a dear friend, my life has been enriched through knowing David. I am convinced that his legacy will continue to bear fruit for our Lord for years to come.

Rev. Russell Camp writes,

David was a great source of support to me in my time of adjusting to being dismissed by a Muskegon RCA church. I am sorry to hear of his passing.

Beth Lewis, Worship Director, Morning Star Church writes,

Laughter. That is what always comes to mind when I think of Dave; his laughter. His smile. His warm, generous, and caring heart. His passion for Christ and worship. His love for his congregation, his wife, his friends. His was a life encompassed and defined by love and laughter.

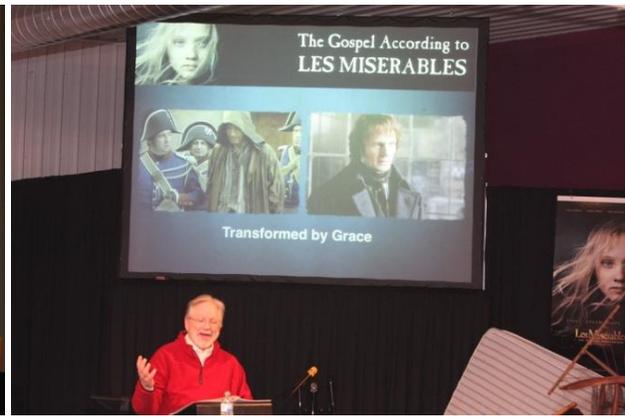


Dave and I first met when he accepted the call to Peace Reformed Church in Middleville, Michigan. I had served as the Director of Music there, and was leaving that congregation as he was coming on board, but we did a couple of services together.

Over the next couple of years, he and I served in worship together on a few occasions; most memorably on one Maundy Thursday evening service. Up until just a few days before he went home to God, we were still lamenting that this particular service had, for some unknown reason, not been recorded. The music, message, and Spirit of that night worked to create something unique and beautiful, and it was my honor and privilege to share that experience with him.



Dave started a new church plant in Middleville: Morning Star Church. They were meeting in a local school, and after about a year, Dave asked me to come on board as their music leader. Although by this time I had been somewhat disillusioned about my ministry within a church setting, I agreed to serve in a limited capacity for a short period of time. That turned into almost four years of working with Dave closely on designing and sharing in worship experiences that were truly blessed by the Spirit's presence.



Dave had such a passion for his church and his people, and everything he did was driven by that passion. During our many meetings to discuss worship, plan for the future, or just swap dog stories, I was always struck anew by the breadth and scope of his vision for ministry. Our nascent website, worshipweave.com, grew out of those meetings, and I hope to continue building on his dream for it. In our work with Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian, we grew to a wider understanding of the importance of mutuality and community together, and Dave was always on fire to promote a deeper understanding of God's purpose for us as a family of believers, not just individuals in Christ.

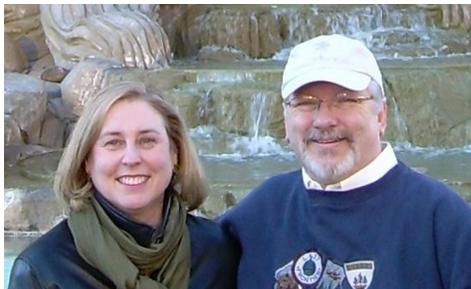


Rev. David Korsen



Dr. Gil Bilezikian

We deeply grieve this loss. The loss of Dave's friendship, his love, his dreams of the future. The loss of our pastor, our leader, and our friend. The loss of a man who was truly led by God, and who cared deeply about all others. While we feel joy at his homecoming to God, we still feel deep sorrow and pain at the cost. We pray for his loving wife and best friend, Joanie, for the extended family at Morning Star, for John Smith, Larry Sherman, Gil Bilezikian, Beth Ernest, and all those who worked so closely with Dave, mentored him, prayed with him, and supported him. And in tribute, we will continue to try and realize his dreams for ourselves, our church, our community, and our world: A mutual servant community rooted and established in love. This will be his most defining legacy.



“Grieve not, nor speak of me with tears, but laugh and talk of me as if I were beside you...I loved you so...’twas heaven here with you.” - Isla Paschal Richardson

Blessings!

Pastor John W. Smith, M.Div., D.Min.

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