



Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke

August 27, 1939 - January 2, 2026

The Rev. Dr. David Keith Clarke, 86, widower of Linda Kay (Freeland) Clarke, passed away on Friday, January 2, 2026, at his home in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina.

He was born on August 27, 1939, in Charleston, West Virginia, son of the late Leonard Gordon Clarke and Marguerite Lucille (Lyons) Clarke. He was a graduate of DuPont High School, Morris Harvey College, and Emory University School of Divinity. He was an ordained Elder in the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church and faithfully served the Church for forty-seven years in pastoral ministry. Throughout his career, he pastored churches across West Virginia and was appointed Fairmont District Superintendent at the age of thirty-six. Even in retirement, he continued to answer God's call, serving Belin United Methodist Church in Murrells Inlet until the end of his life, even administering Holy Communion on Christmas Eve just days before his passing.

In addition to his ministry, Keith devoted his life to service and leadership in both church and community. He served as chair on numerous committees at both the Conference and General Conference levels of the United Methodist Church, including the Conference Rules Committee, Conference Higher Education Committee, Conference Missions Committee, and as President of the General Conference Equitable Salaries Commission. He was a past

member of the Board of Trustees at West Virginia Wesleyan College and was honored with the title of "Kentucky Colonel."

Keith was a member of Rotary International and proudly served as past president of the Murrells Inlet Rotary Club. He was also a member and past Grand Prelate of the West Virginia Grand Commandery Knights Templar. His service extended into the community through roles as a choir director, radio broadcaster providing football color commentary, member of the American Red Cross relief assessment team, Habitat for Humanity Board member, and occasional basketball official.

A man of many interests, Keith enjoyed cooking, golfing, traveling, hunting, and basketball. He was an avid West Virginia Mountaineers fan. Music was a lifelong passion, and he found great joy singing in chorales, choirs and small groups, especially alongside his beloved wife, Kay.

Survivors include his two sons and daughters-in-law, Jeffrey P. and Valerie Clarke of Cherry Grove, South Carolina, and Mark A. and Anne Clarke of Staunton, Virginia; his daughter and son-in-law, Kimberley K. and Tim Williams of Florida; his three grandchildren, Quenton Clarke and his wife Krystal, Noah Clarke and his wife Faith, and Marina English and her husband, Brendan; his beloved great-granddaughter, Rienna Lily Clarke; as well as a number of nieces, nephews, and in-laws.

In addition to his parents and his wife of sixty-four years, he was preceded in death by his brother and sister-in-law, Samuel Gordon and Martha Clarke, and his daughter-in-law, Kelley Clarke.

A Celebration of Keith's life will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at Belin United Methodist Church in Murrells Inlet with the Rev. Will Malambri officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements are entrusted to Goldfinch Funeral Home, Murrells

Inlet, SC.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Belin Memorial Worship and Music Department (4182 U.S. 17 Business, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576), the West Virginia Wesleyan College for scholarships for pre-ministerial students (59 College Avenue, Buckhannon, WV 26201), or to the West Virginia United Methodist Foundation for Seminary Scholarships (500 Virginia Street East, Suite 750, Charleston, WV 25301).

Previous Events

Funeral Ceremony

JAN 10. 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM (ET)

Belin Memorial United Methodist Church
4182 US-17 BUS
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

Tribute Wall



“ *Goldfinch Funeral Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke*



Goldfinch Funeral Home - January 09 at 01:49 PM

ES

This is a beautiful video of a life well lived. Rest in the eternity of peace.

Ellna Silver - January 10 at 05:51 PM

ES

“ *Keith was a pastor to admire, and his faith was evident in all he did. I had the honor of serving Communion with Keith on a few occasions. His prayers sounded as if they had come straight from heaven.
Rest in peace servant of the Lord. You will be missed.
Ellna Silver*

Ellna Silver - January 06 at 02:44 PM

TW

“ *So many reasons to love and respect Rev. Keith. He lived a great testimony of faith. He was kind and funny. He was one of the best dressed men in church - a color for every season and wore them perfectly! He drove a great muscle car! He was loved and will be missed. Tim & Nancy Ward*

Tim & Nancy Ward - January 06 at 02:07 PM

MB

“ Keith and Kay were inspirations to me in Fairmont (& beyond in Annual Conference work) & his fingerprints were surely on both my call into, and practice of, ministry. I just left Murrell’s Inlet on January 2, the day he passed into glory. I will be holding the family in prayer on Saturday.

Monty Brown - January 06 at 11:01 AM

MM

I was surprised to hear of your dad's passing away this week. It brought up memories of my dad Raymond Rowe passing away in 2007. When both parents pass away it is an end of an era. This is also an end to an era of some of our greatest pastors in WVUMC. Thinking about your dad takes me back to my teenage years full of happy memories. We had the joy of getting to live beside the district parsonage and growing up with Jeff, Mark, and Kim. We were more like siblings than friends. We all went to Fairmont Senior High School and most of us went to WV Wesleyan College. If we were altogether we probably would remember both alma mater songs! Oh, the stories we could tell of hanging out at your house as teenagers on Pine Hill Drive! Keith was a great district superintendent and well respected to my dad and many pastors in the Fairmont District. But your mom was the secret behind his success. She was quiet, patient, and organized. Your house was always well kept. I remember how Keith made a study/office in the garage. He was always well dressed he was in his 3 piece suit and had a command presence coming out of that garage office and getting into his Buick or Oldsmobile? I don't know how he managed to fit it along with his office in that tiny garage. We even got to ride in it a few times to high school or youth group events at Central UMC. He needed a big car for all of those big personalities. Keith was a natural being the master of ceremony at any event. Yet he was very personable and approachable. He had the remarkable ability to remember names and a contagious smile. He also was very gifted in music. I always loved to hear Keith and Kay sing duets together or she would accompany him on the piano. My favorite song they sang was "How Great Thou Art." His faith in Christ along with Kay are their lasting legacies that have been passed down to your family. I love hearing how he was still living out his pastoral call by serving Holy Communion on Christmas eve. There is no telling how many people your dad served communion to over the years or had the privilege of welcoming folks into the family of God in almost 5 decades! I can imagine the joy he hears when he sees the Master "Well done good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21) Your dad's greatest reward is seeing all if you take hold of Christ's invitation to follow Him. How wonderful that your parents lived to see 4 generations of Clarkes. I speak for Paul, Meg and myself that we wish we could be present at your dad's service of death and resurrection on Saturday. We will be holding you all in our hearts as you witness and give God thanks for his life. We love you and know the service will be filled with God's overwhelming love on Saturday. With great gratitude, Rev. Dr. Mary Rowe Miller (and Rev. Doug Miller) Winston-Salem, NC

Mary Miller - January 07 at 12:39 AM

BS

“ Keith was my pastor at First Church Ravenswood during the late sixties and early seventies. He was a great influence in my life and helped shape me in ways that I'm sure he never imagined. He performed our marriage ceremony in 1980 and I have always admired and respected him. Of course, I loved his sweet wife Kay as well and can only imagine their heavenly reunion. I will pray for his family and all those who loved him.

Beth Sears - January 05 at 08:37 PM

CB

“ I will never forget your kindness, warmth, joy, love and especially your support! You were so witty and funny and I was so proud to be allowed to call you "my boyfriend". You help me more than you will ever know and I take so many notes from the relationship that you had with your beautiful bride and my sorrow is ease knowing that you had the most beautiful reunion with her when you reach the Gates of Heaven. I will love and cherish you always but more than that I will miss you!

Christine L Brennan - January 05 at 03:09 PM

JG

“ We are sad to here this news today. Prayers to the entire Clarke family during the difficult days ahead.
Love the Nine Rivers District (Charleston) of the UMC, WV Conference



Jennifer Goldizen - January 05 at 12:15 PM

BB

“ I enjoyed his singing and dramatic monologues as part of his sermons at Christ Church.

Bettijane Burger - January 05 at 11:40 AM

BS

“ *Brenda Lee Smith lit a candle in memory of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke*



Brenda Lee Smith - January 05 at 11:00 AM



“ *Chris Hopkins lit a candle in memory of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke*



Chris Hopkins - January 05 at 08:59 AM



“ *Dr. Clarke was pastor of Bland Street United Methodist Church in Bluefield, WV back in the 1980s. All of my family and I loved Dr. Clarke. He was such an engaging and sincere pastor. I have thought of him often over the years with great respect and affection. Love and prayers to his family. God bless all of you.*

Chris Hopkins - January 05 at 08:57 AM

DR

“ *Dr. Clarke made a very positive difference in my Christian life. I attended Christchurch United Methodist in Charleston and served God through different ministries under Dr. Clarke's leadership. Forever grateful. Now he's with Kay, the love of his life, again. Prayers for his beautiful family. 🙏*

Delores 'Dee' Rumbaugh - January 05 at 08:54 AM

FW

“ Fred and I loved Keith. He was our minister at Christ Church in Charleston. He was such a special person. We are praying for him and his family at this difficult time.

Fred Westfall - January 05 at 07:35 AM

TW

“ Todd, Kelly, Richard & Laura Ward purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke.



Todd, Kelly, Richard & Laura Ward - January 04 at 11:01 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke.



January 04 at 10:38 PM

TA

“ The Young Family: Freddie, Lori, & Angel planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke.

The Young Family: Freddie, Lori, & Angel - January 04 at 10:38 PM

LS

“ *Lavonde Smith lit a candle in memory of Rev. Dr. D. Keith Clarke*



Lavonde Smith - January 04 at 10:03 PM

AL

“ *My prayers go out to all the family, my sister, brother in law and nephews and nieces. May he rest in peace. Love you guys!*

Alecia Lewis - January 04 at 09:07 PM