



Lyle Ball

February 8, 1947 - November 18, 2023

Lyle Gene Ball, of Drakesville, Iowa, passed away on November 18, 2023 at the age of 76. After learning he had terminal cancer, he chose to spend his final days at home on the land he tended, surrounded by family and friends who loved him.

Lyle was born on February 8, 1947, in Washington, Iowa, to Howard and Edith Ball.

He is survived by his wife, Trudy Ball, and their children: Chris (Jennifer) Ball, Clint (Karla) Twedt-Ball, Courtney (Emmylou) Ball, and Jamie Stanley. Lyle and Trudy nurtured a strong, loving family, a legacy that is evident today in their descendants, including grandchildren Shane, Joseph, Juliana, Simon, Anyssa, Isaac, Dakota, Jack, Aidyn, Annika, and Amelia.

Lyle himself was part of a large family. He is preceded in death by his parents, older brothers Vaughn and Vern, and foster son Todd. He is survived by his sister Kathleen and his brothers Lynn and John. His parents also took in numerous foster children. Those he knew best were: Gene Webb, Jerry Ball, Alan Ball, Bob Ball, Karla Castle, and Larry Miller.

Lyle's educational journey led him to Clarinda Community College, Simpson College (BA in Philosophy), and St. Paul School of Theology (Master of

Divinity). He went on to become a United Methodist Ordained Elder, serving congregations in Massena, Bridgewater, Avondale, Nichols, Conesville, Cedar Valley, Des Moines (Jordan and Greenfield Plaza), Leon, Weldon, Van Wert, and Highpoint.

In 1986, Lyle took leave from congregational ministry and transitioned to working for affordable housing. He served as the first Executive Director for Des Moines' chapter of Habitat for Humanity. He then founded the nonprofit Home Recycling Exchange and served as its Executive Director for many years before returning to pastoral ministry. In all his years of service, whether inside or out of the church, he believed passionately in the sacred value of overlooked people, places, and resources.

Outside work, Lyle was a lifelong scholar and lover of the natural world. He was a voracious reader with a wide scope of interest, but most of what he studied, from philosophy to community renewal to regenerative agriculture, focused on how to leave the world a better place than he found it.

Much of what he read about, he and Trudy experimented with and put into practice through their shared work, or on the 50 acres of land they owned outside Drakesville. They restored the prairie and woodlands there, and saw the return of richly diverse wildlife to land that had formerly been depleted through overuse.

Anyone who visited them there also knew Lyle loved to raise and train dogs—beagles earlier in life, and English setters in retirement. He could spend hours poring over pedigrees or watching dogs work together.

His family and congregations knew Lyle as a creative and gifted storyteller. He found joy in sitting with others, sharing stories and debating ideas. He was a dynamic preacher who challenged his listeners to question convention, to

think more deeply about their faith and how they might help their communities.

When it came to making his mark on the world, Lyle was not one to seek wealth, recognition, or awards. What mattered most to him was the love he shared with his wife and family, the good work he could do to help the world, and a hope that his life might inspire others to practice similar love and service long after his earthly life had ended.

Lyle's wish was that after death, his remains be cremated and his ashes spread over the land he nurtured, so that he might become one with it. Late next spring, a memorial service for family and friends will be held to celebrate his life (date to be determined). In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Matthew 25 (matthew-25.org) or Drakesville United Methodist Church.

Tribute Wall



“ My Mother, Cathleen Davidson-Miller. Was Paramore and eventually wife of Lyle's Foster Brother Larry Miller. They met when I was only 4 years old and only parted in death. I remember visiting "Uncle" Lyle and "Aunt' Trudy as a child. I enjoyed our visits immensely. Jamie, Courtney, and I played together at Grandma and Grandpa Ball's many times. It's been many years but I remember those two and their older brother, Clint. He and my mother had many conversations about artists they were fans of in the music industry. They had an ear for talent and spent some hours listening to my mom's comprehensive record collection, if memory serves. Sadly, I lost touch with the Ball family some years before my Dad, Larry passed away. I appreciate that his name was included in the announcement. He loved Lyle and Trudy and they as well as the rest of the Ball family loved him just like he were their own. They always treated my my mom my brother and me with respect, affections, warmth and hospitality. I am thankful to have the opportunity to know such kind and gracious people and I am pained by this news of Lyles passing. I can't even be sure if any of them would remember me at all now. No matter, I remember them, so very fondly. Please accept my condolences and know you have always been in my thoughts.

Karenina Paris - March 04, 2024 at 04:40 AM



“ My sincere sympathy to the family of Lyle Ball... I was a former classmate at Hamburg High School, May our Lord give you peace, Linda (Mount) Leyden



Linda Leyden - November 30, 2023 at 10:05 AM

DC

“ I had the privilege of living in Des Moines at the same time Lyle Ball was in ministry in the capital city. I loved visiting him in his recycling center, not so much because I wanted recycled items but to just be near Lyle to hear his wisdom or a story. He was what I thought the biblical prophet Jeremiah may have been like, hardened by time spent on the margins, always seeking the promise of God’s love in the midst of what may have looked like despair. Jeremiah’s mission to pluck up and pull down, then to build and plant sounds like recycling to me.

Lyle was able to connect with and build relationships with people of all nations while especially bringing hope to the weary ones. His smile and laughter brought joy to many. I’m glad our paths crossed in ministry. I have been the benefactor of his mercy and love. Well done good and faithful servant!

Peace,
Rev. Denny Coon

Denny Coon - November 23, 2023 at 06:22 AM

AL

“ We have many fond childhood memories of Lyle when his family lived in Clearfield. We will keep his family in our thoughts. Allen & Myra Lillie

Allen & Myra Lillie - November 22, 2023 at 10:12 PM

PR

“ Ball family you are all in my prayers as you celebrate Lyle's life with smiles and tears.

Pastor Laurie Riley - November 22, 2023 at 08:06 PM

BC

“ I'm Beverly Baker Coleman, live in Pella, Iowa now but was raised around Hedrick area. Attended Hedrick Methodist Church where his father was the minister. Lyle was younger than I. But my sister dated Gene Webb, were friends with Vern and Helen, Vaughn, Kathleen. Yes I recall his large family, as my family was also very close and large. Over the years lost track as to where they lived. Would love to have his family address , as I'd to get in touch again. We loved this family

Beverly Baker Coleman - November 22, 2023 at 04:55 PM

CC

Lyle was our neighbor in Clearfield, IA. Lynn was my age, so their Mother, Edith called these 4 neighbor lads, CALL club. Chester, Allen, Lynn and Lyle. We made a lot time biking, eating Edith's cookies, swimming , being friends. Bless you, Lyle, forever a friend.

Chester crouse - November 27, 2023 at 08:10 PM

LT

Lyle and I drove school busses for the Indianola School System. Lyle found a litter of puppies the farmer planed to drown so he brought them back to the dorm. Fir a couple of months the dorm had puppies..When discovered we were told we could keep them for the remainder of the term but not next fall.

Leonard Tinker - July 24, 2024 at 10:22 PM