



Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner

July 18, 1923 - February 11, 2024

The Reverend Raymond Bittner passed away peacefully at Pine Shadows Manor in Sylvester Sunday afternoon on February 11, 2024 at the age of 100 1/2 years old.

The funeral service will be held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, February 17, 2024, at Poulan Methodist Church, interment will follow in the Poulan Cemetery. The Rev. Dan Harper and Mr. Calvin Bittner will officiate.

Ray was born 07/18/1923 in Coloma, Michigan. He was the son of Otto and Florence (Umphrey) Bittner. A very significant event happened in Ray's life, when at the age of 16 during Sunday school class at the Coloma Methodist Church, he realized he was not a believer, that he was a lost soul, and very deserving of God's wrath. Over the course of the next year, Ray diligently sought the Lord through Bible study, church, and fellowship with believers. Ray credits his Sunday school teacher, and their many interactions, with coming to a true saving faith at the age of 17 when one night in his basement bedroom he felt a peace come over him, that he did have saving faith and so he prayed for forgiveness and surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

After Ray graduated from high school in 1941, he attended Moody Bible Institute in nearby Chicago. During the next four years Ray's part-time ministry work on the weekends included a Chinese congregation in downtown Chicago and two small churches near Coloma.

Ray met the love of his life, Jeanette, in the summer of 1947 at her large and vibrant Calvary Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan during an evening service in which Ray gave his testimony. Six months later, Ray and Jeanette were married. Over the next 16 years they had five children. Ray finished college and seminary in 1957 at Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids and was ordained into the Presbyterian USA denomination. After serving five years as a Presbyterian pastor in two different churches in Michigan, a series of events led him to move his family to Savannah, Georgia in 1963. In 1964, Ray returned to his Methodist roots and became a Methodist pastor in the South Georgia Conference. Over the next 50 years, Ray pastored 30 different Methodist churches, mostly small rural churches with small congregations. These included Poulan, Sumner, Shingler, Warwick, Beulah and lastly Clements Chapel when he was in his late 80s. In 2019, at the age of 96, he was called out of retirement yet again to preach

Sunday services at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Ashburn. At 98, after thoughtful prayer, he felt the Lord telling him to retire for good.

Ray was an avid handball player, and the YMCA was like a second home to him. In fact, Ray rented a room at the YMCA in Grand Rapids for over two years in the 1940s before marrying Jeanette. He won large city tournaments as a single player. His last first place trophy was in a Savannah city tournament for doubles in 1992 at the age of 69. This was a general competition for all ages, and most of the participants were young men.

Ray is survived by his five children: Karen Woods (Donnie Basko), Linda Aultman (Bruce), Calvin Bittner (Renee), Deborah Hiles and Janice Poston (Rick). Ray has 11 grandchildren and a bunch of great grandchildren. Ray was the oldest of five children and is survived by his youngest brother Larry Bittner (Roseanne) of Coloma, Michigan.

The family wishes to thank the amazingly loving staff at Pine Shadows Manor! We are forever grateful for the love and care they showed to our father over the last two years. We would also like to thank the hospice workers for their wonderful end-of-life care during the last eight weeks of our father's life.

Viewing hours will be at Banks Funeral Home from 4:00 PM until 6:00 PM on Friday February 16, 2024,

Cemetery Details

Poulan Cemetery

275 East Church Street
Poulan, GA 31781

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **16**. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Banks Funeral Home
PO Box 550
210 N. Main Street
Sylvester, GA 31791
(229) 776-2055
banksfh@yahoo.com
<http://banks.funeralplan2.com/>

Funeral Service

FEB **17**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Poulan United Methodist Church
110 W. Church Street
Poulan, GA 31781

Burial

FEB **17** (ET)

Poulan Cemetery
275 East Church Street
Poulan, GA 31781

Tribute Wall

KT

“ So sorry to hear of Rev. Bittner’s passing. He was such an awesome person. My experience with him was when he would come with Kenyon Shiver to run rabbits with my dad, Randall Shiver. He was so easy going and they would tease him about his hunting prowess.



Another humorous memory of him was when one day my mom came home to find a dog tied to a tree. After calling around, we found out that preacher Bittner had found the dog and thought it would be a good hunting dog for my dad. It didn’t even look like a hunting dog! I don’t know if we gave the dog back to him or just found a new home for it. It didn’t stay at our house.

He was a very special person. May you find solace in all these good memories written here and memories of your own. He will be missed.

Kim Shiver Towson - February 18, 2024 at 11:47 AM

LY

“ LynnTomlinson lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



LynnTomlinson - February 16, 2024 at 03:46 PM

CW

“ I remember Ray very fondly and respectfully from my early years in ministry during the 1960s. He was a gentle spiritual giant. My consolation to Ray's family.

Cephas Williamson - February 15, 2024 at 05:28 PM

RL

“ Rita Leggett lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Rita Leggett - February 15, 2024 at 12:59 PM

JO

“ June And Lee Odom lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



June and Lee Odom - February 15, 2024 at 09:18 AM

SB

“ Remembering uncle Raymond for being such a sweet and energetic man who was always on the go! My girls (Paige & Amanda) sometimes referred to him as the “pecan man” because when he came to visit, he would always bring us pecans from Georgia. He will surely be missed by many. Prayers for whole family at this time of loss. Love , Sue Bittner-Grassmid



Sue Bittner-Grassmid - February 15, 2024 at 08:49 AM



“ 



Elena Taylor - February 14, 2024 at 04:46 PM

EH

“ Wonderful memories of a great evangelist! He was a amazing example to Raymond & me & our children while he was serving at Damascus church. Great Christian teacher. Has sat in our home & taught us so much about our Bible! I know he is in Heaven with Miss Jeanette, enjoying being in God's presence, worshiping Him! He taught so well.



Eva Wood Howell - February 14, 2024 at 12:48 PM

JO

“ June And Lee Odom lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



June and Lee Odom - February 14, 2024 at 10:03 AM

DC

He was a good man and his teachings will be missed

Donnie cook - February 14, 2024 at 08:36 PM

SW

“ *Sandra Watson lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner*



Sandra Watson - February 13, 2024 at 10:30 PM

CB

“ *Preacher Bittner was such a sweet and honest man to us! He will forever be remembered by our family* ❤️ 🙏



Charles & Gale Booth - February 13, 2024 at 10:18 PM



“ *My sweet Brother Ray. He pastored our small Methodist church for most of my adolescent years. He had many conversations with me over that time & without any judgment, answered any question I ever asked about Jesus & the Bible. He lead me to my membership of the church, as well as my decision to be baptized & publicly share my surrender to our Lord at 16 yrs old. He baptized me with water he brought back from the Jordan River. I'll never forget the impact he had on my life then & even after his time at our church. He had me visit several of his other churches with him to sing some of my favorite songs for them & share my testimony. He & his wife were more like a grandpa & grandma to me. And, I could never thank him enough for his guidance in my spiritual journey. I write this as I cry tears of joy knowing how happy he is to see his Heavenly Father. Enjoy your celebration, Bro Ray. I know the Lord had to have welcomed you home with "well done, my good & faithful servant."* 💜💜

Danyelle Burnette - February 13, 2024 at 07:59 PM

AP

Thank you for sharing this! It's such a blessing to read.

Ashley Poston - February 13, 2024 at 08:53 PM

DH

This brought tears to my eyes. Thank you for your kinds words about my father.

Deborah Bittner Hiles - February 27, 2024 at 11:55 AM

BP

“ Bonnie Potts lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Bonnie Potts - February 13, 2024 at 12:20 PM

PS

“ Peggie And Tommy Snipes lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Peggie and Tommy Snipes - February 13, 2024 at 09:15 AM

TM

“ Tosha McDonald lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Tosha McDonald - February 13, 2024 at 08:25 AM

DB

“ Debbie St.Clair Banks lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Debbie St.Clair Banks - February 13, 2024 at 08:18 AM

LC

“ Karen and family. I know he will be missed. Thoughts and prayers go up for all of you. Paul and Dianne Cross

linda cross Cross - February 12, 2024 at 01:44 PM

GS

“ Gerry Sutton lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Gerry Sutton - February 12, 2024 at 01:14 PM



“ My condolences to all the family. My memories of Rev Ray Bittner began at Poulan Methodist Church. A wonderful friend and great preacher and teacher for Jesus Christ. ❤️❤️🙏🙏🙏

Janice Carter - February 12, 2024 at 11:12 AM

RS

“ Sorry for the loss prayers to all!!



Rhonda Saylor - February 12, 2024 at 10:55 AM

AM

“ Rev. Bittner was a gentle soul and shared the message of the gospel as a good and faithful servant. Prayers for Karen and all of his family.



a Ann N. Monk - February 12, 2024 at 10:48 AM

CC

“ Such good memories of Brother Bittner from Poulan Methodist Church .

Cindy Cochran - February 12, 2024 at 10:01 AM

CH

“ Charlotte Souter Hall lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Charlotte Souter Hall - February 11, 2024 at 10:57 PM

SS

“ Karen and family, I am so sorry to hear of Preacher Bittner's passing. You are all in my thoughts and prayers!



Sandi Seabolt - February 11, 2024 at 08:09 PM

JL

“ Jr Lewis lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Jr Lewis - February 11, 2024 at 07:52 PM

DL

“ Donna Lewis lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Donna Lewis - February 11, 2024 at 07:52 PM

SJ

“ Sandra A Jones lit a candle in memory of Rev. Raymond L. "Ray" Bittner



Sandra A Jones - February 11, 2024 at 06:13 PM

VE

I don't know if I've ever met a more sweet, kind soul as Mr. Bitter! No doubt he heard "Well done, My good and faithful servant!" God bless the family as you mourn his absence ❤️. Virginia Evans

Virginia Evans - February 11, 2024 at 07:39 PM

PD

So sorry to hear of Ray's passing. He was such a wonderful pastor and a special friend. Bob and I have so many fond memories of him and your family. God bless all of the family.

Peggie Davis - February 12, 2024 at 11:53 AM