

Memorial  
Reverend Charles Eugene Craven  
1931-2026

Charles Eugene Craven, son of James Robert and Gennie Elizabeth Warwick Craven, was born July 14, 1931, in Hickory, North Carolina. In 1954, he married Blair Isbell. Blair and Gene had four children: Randy, Janet, Sally, and Mark. On April 11, 2026, Gene joined the innumerable saints that forever praise Almighty and Eternal God.

Gene attended the schools of Newland and Boone, North Carolina, and graduated from Davidson College. Sensing a call for the proclamation of the good news of Jesus, Gene studied at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Upon graduation, Gene, Blair, and family served at churches in Bartow and Haines City, Florida, before embarking on a ten-year service of Christian ministry on the island nation of Taiwan.

Returning to America, Gene served as a pastor with Reverend Ben Haden at First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Senior Pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Rock Hill from 1976-1983; and pastor at Freedom Presbyterian Church of Charlotte. During the pastorate at Charlotte, Gene and Blair opened Quiet Waters, a pastoral retreat center on Lake Norman, a place of respite and refreshment for ministers. As an encore to a life of service, Pastor Craven joyfully filled the role of beloved resident chaplain at Westminster Towers from 2012-2022.

There are no words which can express the marvelous way in which our gracious friend and pastor walked hand in hand with his God while caring for Blair when paralysis struck her. His concern for the well-being and spiritual health of residents at Westminster Towers influenced many lives.

Surely, he could join Paul in his valedictory from Second Timothy:

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

Fifty years ago, Pastor Craven opened many worship services at Westminster from Isaiah Chapter 9, verse 2, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” The Light for Gene is not just dawning, for now he basks in all of its brilliant holiness. We praise God for the witness of Gene Craven’s noble life. Realizing very keenly that we have suffered a great loss, his presence will be greatly missed in our congregation, our community, and Westminster Towers. We pray that God will enable us to emulate the beautiful life which our Christian friend lived before us as he walked in fellowship with Jesus, and we humbly pray that we may be more willing to be used in the service of Almighty God in the days that lie ahead.

May God comfort and sustain his loved ones in their great loss. Be resolved that a copy of this memorial shall be sent to his family, a copy spread upon the minute book of the Session of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Rock Hill, South Carolina, and read at the fall meeting of Fellowship Presbytery.

Done in Session this eighteenth day of May, two thousand twenty-six.

William A. McKinnon, William D. Cranford, Jr.  
Sessional Clerks

Michael W. Honeycutt  
Moderator