

Joseph H. Whitaker

June 4, 1948 - January 4, 2016

Joseph Howard Whitaker, aged 67 of Custer died suddenly on Monday, January 4, 2016. Joe was born on June 4, 1948 in Ludington, the son of Harry and Meg (Wing) Whitaker. On October 27, 1965 he married his best friend Linda Forbes and they have celebrated 50 blessed years together.

Joe had many interests and wore several hats in his life. He worked many years as a truck driver, musician, salesman, and as a pastor. He drove a route selling meat, sold automobiles, operating Joe's Auto Sales in Custer, and assisted his niece in ministry at Beacon Ministries. As a musician, his band was known as "Custer's Last Stand" and was the house band at Johnny's for several years. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, and was an avid Detroit Tigers fan. Joe loved his family and supporting them in all of their activities, whether attending sporting events, or just being their biggest fan. Unplanned, last minute long road trips will forever be remembered. As a pastor, Joe loved serving the Lord. He led a Jail Ministry at the Mason County Sheriff Department for over 20 years and previously at the prison in Free Soil before its closure. He ministered with music alongside his family at Beacon Ministries, and was privileged to lead many friends to the banqueting table prepared for them in heaven.

Joe will be greatly missed by his wife Linda, his children Melissa and Mike Griffis, Jody and Curtis Stewart, Dana and Lyle Kessel, Caleb and Jennifer

Whitaker all of Custer, his grandchildren Allie, Cassidy, and Miley Kessel, Jamie, Neal, and Amelia Stewart, Bridget and Emma Whitaker, his brother Dan (Christine) Whitaker of Alabama, his sisters Joan (Bob) Edwards of Custer, Suzy (Jerry) VanderWall of Grand Haven, and Jane (Ed) Myer of Ludington, his brother-in-law Jim (Leslie) Forbes of Custer, his aunt Elizabeth Wing also of Custer, many nieces, nephews, and cousins, and his many friends at Beacon Ministries, Hunan Gardens, and the Breakfast Club at Big Boy.

A Celebration of Joe's Life and Ministry will be held at 3:00 pm on Saturday, January 9th at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Ludington with his niece Pastor Tammy Bacon officiating. Burial will take place at St. Mary's Cemetery in Custer. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Saturday from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at the church. Those who wish to remember Joe with a donation are asked to consider the care of his family.

Cemetery Details

St. Mary's Cemetery

1000 South Custer Road
Custer, MI 49405

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 9. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Cornerstone Baptist Church
121 N. Nelson Street
Ludington, MI 49431

Celebration of Life Service

JAN 9. 3:00 PM (ET)

Cornerstone Baptist Church
121 N. Nelson Street
Ludington, MI 49431

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Cassidy Kessel - January 12, 2016 at 11:15 AM

CP

“ *Joe was a great man- great family man and pastor!!! He was also a terrific family friend. My heart goes out to linda and his family. You always be loved and missed pastor joe. We will see you again!!!!*

Cleve Petersen - January 11, 2016 at 03:32 PM

DS

“ *Pastor Joe was a beautiful person. He had a way of making you feel important and loved. He was there for me at the ER the morning Nate died and his presence brought me such peace and comfort. The Holy spirit was his best friend and Joe shared God's love freely. This world is a much less bright place without him in it. I'm heavy of heart with this news, but happy that he and Nate are probably talking and singing praises together even as I type! i pray that God's mantel of peace be upon his family and help them cope with Joe's absence, even as it brings them joy in knowing Joe is right now laughing with Jesus in his reward for a life well lived.*

Dani Stansell - January 09, 2016 at 03:32 PM

RR

“ Joey was a great friend when we were kids. We were all part of the Custer "gang" of boys. We played ball, built rafts and captured turtles from big pond, collected metal to sell to Mr. Fisher, watched tv on snowy mornings and went sliding until we were frozen. Joey was just across the street and so we knew when anyone was out at his house as he did at ours. It was a wonderful time for a bunch of kids. My memories of Joey bring a smile. I know that he will be missed. His adult life was as positive as his childhood. No one is truly gone as long as he is remembered. Joe will live on in all our memories. Best wishes to Joe's family and friends.
Richard "Dick" Reader
Phoenix, AZ

Richard Reader - January 09, 2016 at 11:09 AM

JC

“ I first met Joe at Hunan Gardens when my sister, Karen, used to work there. That day, we only exchanged greetings, but I noticed that he knew and treated my sister with kindness, which I greatly appreciated. The next time I saw Joe at Hunan Gardens, we talked for a couple of minutes as he and his wife, Linda, waited for their food. Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to get to know how wonderful of a person Joe really was, but just from the couple of brief meetings we had, I could tell that he was friendly and sincere.



Happy memories live forever, and Joe filled many lives with plenty of them. Sometimes when I see two senior couples eating at a restaurant, I think of Joe and Linda, and that brings nothing but good memories. I'm sure Joe will be missed greatly by everyone who knew and loved him.

Javier Cho - January 08, 2016 at 11:23 PM

DM

“ Our prayers are with you Linda and your family at this difficult time. We did not cross paths often but we still remember the times we did. May you find comfort in knowing you have one more Angel watching over you and yours. Karla Battice and Donna(Micko) Morris

Donna Morris - January 08, 2016 at 06:25 PM

JM

“ It seems like we have known the extended Whittaker family as far back as we can remember, in one regard or another. Many of those connections were through Mason County Eastern. We witnessed Joe and Linda's faith in action, love of family, gentleness, generosity and commitment to the community time and time again. Joe had such pride and love for his children and grandchildren; you could just see it on his face whenever he was with them at a school event. He set such fine examples for the rest of us to live by. Whenever we ran into him he made us feel like he was truly happy to see us. To be honest, we did see him at MCE often, but the most likely place was at Hunan Gardens. We will give a special nod to 'their' booth every time we go there to eat.

Joe will be missed by many, but he left many wonderful memories behind for the rest of us.

Love, Jenny & Bruce Micinski

Jenny & Bruce Micinski - January 08, 2016 at 10:26 AM

LC

“ *Linda and family,*

You and your family are in our thoughts prayers. We always looked for you and Joe when we would go to Big Boy for breakfast, now he will be eating with Jesus. We will miss him, but know that we will see him again. May God's peace be with you to help get you through the days ahead.

Laura and Erwin Christmann

Laura Christmann - January 07, 2016 at 06:38 PM

CH

“ *God puts the right people in our lives, at the right time. He gave me pastor Joe, his beautiful son Caleb and his entire family to touch my life and bring me back to a closer walk Him.*

Your work here is done good and faithful servant. You ran the race and now have received your prize. My thoughts and prayers are with the family you have left behind. I know they will eventually find the peace and comfort that comes from the father in knowing you are now walking with him and playing music with the angel choir.

*God bless,
Connie Helton*

Connie Helton - January 07, 2016 at 03:19 PM



MP

“ *My deepest condolences to the entire family. Joe was such a kind man and always had a smile on his face. I know that your faith and strong family unit will help you in the difficult times. My thoughts are with you.*

Michelle Proue - January 07, 2016 at 11:13 AM

 Jen Tu

“ *It feels unreal that he is gone. I still expect to see him at the restaurant and I can still see him sitting at his table with a smile to greet me. I looked forward to it everyday, and when he comes in I'll always ask, "see u tomorrow?" He will forever have his seat at Hunan Garden's.*



I am truly blessed to have known him, and through him I had met many new friends and the privilege to met his beautiful wife and his wonderful family. I am also very blessed to be able to call him my family, my papa.

He has touch each and everyone of us, even those of us who are still in Taiwan. My family and I loves him and he will be greatly missed.

Prayers to everyone who knew him, he was a wonderful guy and there's no one like him. My prayers and my love to his family. You have been truly blessed to have him as a husband, as a dad, or as a grandpa.

Hey Mr. Joe, I love you and you will be truly, greatly missed.

Jen Tu - January 07, 2016 at 10:41 AM

 Robert Paulson

“ *Robert Paulson lit a candle in memory of Joseph H. Whitaker*



Robert Paulson - January 07, 2016 at 07:53 AM



Robert Paulson

My condolences Caleb to you and your family. Your in our thoughts and prayers.

Robert Paulson - January 07, 2016 at 07:55 AM



“ *Jamie Stewart was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:45 PM



“ *Mike Griffis was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:45 PM



“ *Emma L Whitaker was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:44 PM



“ *Bridget Whitaker was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:44 PM



“ *Jenn Whitaker was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:44 PM



“ *Miley J Kessel was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:43 PM



“ Cassidy Kessel was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:43 PM



“ Allie Kessel was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:43 PM



“ Lyle J Kessel was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:43 PM



“ Amelia Stewart was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:42 PM



“ Neal Stewart was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:42 PM



“ Curtis Stewart was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:41 PM



“ Caleb J Whitaker was added to the Family Tree.

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:41 PM



“ *Dana M Kessel was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:41 PM



“ *Jody L Stewart was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:40 PM



“ *Missy Y Griffis was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:40 PM

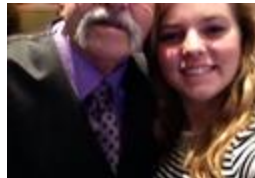


“ *Linda Whitaker was added to the Family Tree.*

Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:39 PM



“ *8 files added to the album New Album Name*



Cassidy Kessel - January 06, 2016 at 09:38 PM

DL

“ Our heartfelt sympathy to Lin, and Joe's family. Joe always shared himself and his faith with all who loved him. He always had a word of encouragement, and a smile to share. We know you are in your heavenly home, but you will surely be missed. We love you Joe. God bless Lin and your family.



Steve, Dar, and Luke Lund.

Darlene Lund - January 06, 2016 at 07:11 PM

JO

“ Joe made all of our days happier in the work place. I worked at Chuckwagon and Ravens in high school and Joe would visit us often. I truly appreciated his stories: Rest in Peace.

jake obrien - January 06, 2016 at 06:01 PM

DE

“ I needed a car about 10 years ago and Joe had this car I really liked. Made payments and got it. He will always be remembered by all those people he sold to and made friends with because of who he was.

God has a great minister to stand by his side.

May God Bless his family through this time.

Another bright star in the heavenly sky above.

He will be remembered by the ones he met.

Diana LeLugas Engfer

Diana LeLugas Engfer - January 06, 2016 at 03:04 PM

CA

Pastor jo a man he had a srnce of himor he always had an encoutage word to say hr was a friend buta padtorhr helped my out whenmy stepdadwrnt yo be lordhim linda eas a godly exzampleto manythey were onrof yhe couplewho lived what they preached padtor jo will be missed but we love u padtor jo love rip we miss youprayers family

cathypeters - January 06, 2016 at 04:11 PM



“ You will be missed my friend



Germaine Jensen LaPorte - January 06, 2016 at 02:53 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Joseph H. Whitaker.



January 06, 2016 at 02:44 PM

LG

“ Joe was one of the rare people you meet who just absolutely radiated Christ's love, mercy, grace, and humility. He was also funny and a joy to be around. He was an integral part of my son's recovery when he had a cardiac arrest at age 16. Joe will be very sadly missed by my whole family. We love him so much. But we rest in the fact that he is with Jesus in heaven enjoying the reward for his faithful service to our Lord. "Well done good and faithful servant!"

Laura Garcia - January 06, 2016 at 02:29 PM

PF

“ *Pastor Joe was always a ray of sunshine to all he met. It will take an army to be able to fill the shoes that he wore. I know you are having a grand time at that banquet table and you don't have to worry about the salt now.*


Pat Fricke - January 06, 2016 at 02:22 PM

AD

“ *Joe was a good man. He always made me smile. I will miss you Cuz.*

Alfred Davis

Alfred Davis - January 06, 2016 at 02:03 PM

 Brian Phillips

“ *Pastor Joe, you was the first one to reach out to my family when we started going to church. You always had a listening ear. You will be missed but not forgotten. I'll see you at the Banquet when the time comes. Love you Pastor Joe.*

Brian Phillips - January 06, 2016 at 01:15 PM

CH

“ *Sorry for your loss, Joe was a great guy.*

Cindy Speaker Hummer - January 06, 2016 at 12:57 PM

MR

“ Pastor Joe words can not describe the kind loving man you are.. You and my mom and dad were friends for years and years ..Then I had grand babies and one of them passed and you did the funeral its was beyond what I could have dreamed was a very sad day you came to me knowing my mom was really sick told me you had cleared a spot right up front for my mom and her wheel chair so she would be close to us. Then my mom passed and you did her services and it was amazing beyond words .Ty for all kind things you have done Ty for being a amazing man and Pastor .R.I.P
Pastor Joe

Melodey RAy - January 06, 2016 at 12:09 PM

JC

“ So very hard to believe Joe is gone. I've had you all in my prayers and will continue to keep u all there. Joe and Linda have always had a special place in my heart. Yellow candle because Joe was always a ray of sunshine for me. I love Joe an he will be missed. Love and prayers to Linda and all.



Janna Cutler - January 06, 2016 at 11:13 AM

DB

“ Joe never met a person who couldn't be a friend. He was a great man who lived what he preached. He will be missed by many. Doug B.

Doug Beadle - January 06, 2016 at 10:58 AM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Joseph H. Whitaker.*




January 06, 2016 at 10:57 AM



“ *Pastor Joe will be greatly missed by the Cole family. He did the celebration of life ceremony for my infant son almost 8 years ago. His kind words and his tears that he shared somehow made it easier to get through that very difficult day as we said our last goodbyes to our son and will be remembered for a lifetime. The service was absolutely beautiful. Thank you Pastor Joe! You had a beautiful soul!*

Amanda Cole - January 06, 2016 at 10:42 AM



“ *Joe was a wonderful man, years ago I had a house fire and lost everything he came to my new apartment and filled up my freezer with meat and gave me almost \$200.00 and said they took a collection for me at church, it took my breath away that someone was so nice..years later he married me and my husband..You were a great man Joe* 

nancy killian - January 06, 2016 at 10:35 AM

GH

“ Linda and family, Remembering Joe as a kind-hearted gentle man wo loved the Lord very much. Now we can say Love You More Joe. You are able to run free now, you and Vaughnita need to be good. He was very special as you are to us. With Sincere loving thoughts and prayers,
Greg and Patty Hanson



Greg and Patty Hanson - January 06, 2016 at 09:29 AM

LR

“ Always a good friend and always a great neighbor. You will be missed Joe! To Linda - We are always right out your back door if there is ever anything you need.

Lyle & Kris Reene

Lyle Reene - January 06, 2016 at 09:19 AM



“ JoAnn Mugford Simmons lit a candle in memory of Joseph H. Whitaker



JoAnn Mugford Simmons - January 05, 2016 at 05:47 PM



I remember all the good times that we had at "Johnny's". As the years passed we would run into each other and chat a while. May your family find peace in the memories that you have made with them...RIP Joe.

JoAnn Mugford Simmons - January 05, 2016 at 05:51 PM

RW

I have known Joe most of my life. I worked at the Mason County Jail 20 plus years and observed Joe bringing the word of the Lord to inmates week in and week out for many of those years. My son attended MCE with Caleb. Joe was nearly always in the crowd of supporters to root on the teams. I'm sure he is rejoicing with the Lord.

Bob Wilson

Robert Wilson - January 06, 2016 at 10:36 AM

AG

“ *Alyce I. Graber purchased the Simply Elegant Sp
athiphyllum for the family of Joseph H. Whitaker.*



Alyce I. Graber - January 05, 2016 at 05:33 PM

RO

“ *So sorry to hear of your loss. First met Joe when he sold meat.
Great guy, always a kind word. Will miss seeing him around. Glad to
know he's with his Savior now. What a blessed hope we have in
Jesus!*

roger - January 05, 2016 at 03:30 PM