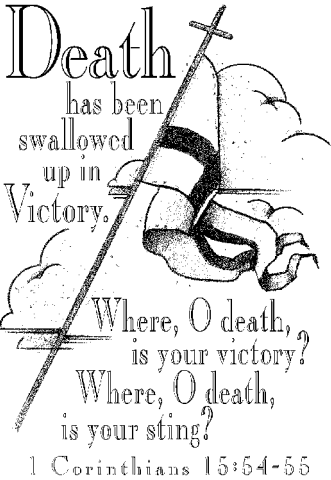


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**GRACE LUTHERAN  
CHURCH**  
**460 74<sup>TH</sup> AVE NE**  
**FRIDLEY, MN 55432**  
**FUNERAL: RAPHAEL STIFTER**  
**NOVEMBER 5, 2007 – 11:00 AM**

**Pastor:** John P. Hein  
**Web:** [www.CLCGraceLutheranChurch.org](http://www.CLCGraceLutheranChurch.org)  
**Email:** [jphein@clclutheran.com](mailto:jphein@clclutheran.com)  
**Phone:** 763-784-8784  
**Organist:** Sue Nelson

THE ORDER OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE  
**RAPHAEL "RAY" E. STIFTER**

**Worship Preparation:** ..... Psalm 23, TLH p. 128

**Invocation & Prayer:**

**Hymn:**.....TLH 660: I'm But A Stranger Here

1. I'm but a stranger here, Heav'n is my home;  
 Earth is a desert drear, Heav'n is my home.  
 Danger and sorrow stand Round me on every hand;  
 Heav'n is my fatherland, Heav'n is my home.
2. What though the tempest rage, Heav'n is my home;  
 Short is my pilgrimage, Heav'n is my home;  
 And time's wild wintry blast Soon shall be overpast;  
 I shall reach home at last, Heav'n is my home.
3. There at my Savior's side Heav'n is my home;  
 I shall be glorified, Heav'n is my home;  
 There are the good and blest, Those I love most and best;  
 And there I, too, shall rest, Heav'n is my home.
4. Therefore I murmur not, Heav'n is my home;  
 Whate'er my earthly lot, Heav'n is my home;  
 And I shall surely stand There at my Lord's right hand.  
 Heav'n is my fatherland, Heav'n is my home.

## **Brief Biography: ..... With WS 785: Children of the Heavenly Father**

The pilgrimage of Raphael "Ray" Stifter through this world of sin and sorrow into the victorious glory of heaven may be summed up as follows: His earthly pilgrimage began when he was born on April 20, 1930, in Winsted, MN, the son of Henry A. and Florence H. Stifter. Ray became a child of God by the power of the Holy Spirit through Holy Baptism. *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Galatians 3:26-27).

**SING(♫): Children of the heav'nly Father  
Safely in His bosom gather;  
Nestling bird or star in heaven  
Such a refuge e'er was given.**

Ray married Joyce Marcella Isaacson on September 25, 1954, at her parents' home in Cokato, MN. The Lord blessed their marital union with 53 years of Christian companionship and with four sons and one daughter. Ray served in the United States Navy for four years. He retired after working for 25 years in sales for Minnegasco. Those who knew him realized that he thoroughly enjoyed fishing and gardening. He also made his Christian confession before the world through his membership at Grace Lutheran Church, being a member for 49 years. Ray glorified his Lord Jesus through his life, understanding well the payment His Savior made for his sins: *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Corinthians 6:20).

**SING(♫): God His own doth tend and nourish;  
In His holy courts they flourish  
From all evil things He spares them  
In His mighty arms He bear them.**

Ray's soul was summoned to be with his Lord this past Thursday evening, November 1, 2007, his time of grace here on earth being 77 years. He was surrounded by family as he peaceably fell asleep in the Lord. His earthly remains will be laid to rest at Sunset Memorial Park in St. Anthony, awaiting the Last Day of the world when our Lord will invite all of His believers: *"Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matthew 25:34).

**SING(♪): Neither life nor death shall ever  
From the Lord His children sever;  
Unto them His grace He showeth,  
And their sorrows all He knoweth.**

Ray was preceded in death by his brother, Donald, and infant sister. He is survived by his loving Christian wife, Joyce; son Jeffrey with his wife, Marie; son Joel with his wife, Kelly; son Kirk with his wife, Elizabeth; son David with his wife, Theresa; daughter Debra Maki with her husband, Robert; 16 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; and sister-in-law, Ann.

We thank the Lord for blessing us with Ray and allowing him to touch our lives in the way that he did as a husband, father, brother in Christ, companion, and friend. "The LORD gave, the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

**SING(♪): Though He giveth or He taketh,  
God His children ne'er forsaketh;  
His the loving purpose solely  
To preserve them pure and holy.**

**Responsive Psalm of Comfort: .....Psalm 23**

*P: The LORD is my shepherd;*

**C: I shall not want.**

*P: He makes me to lie down in green pastures;*

**C: He leads me beside the still waters.**

*P: He restores my soul;*

**C: He leads me in the paths of  
righteousness For His name's sake.**

*P: Yea, though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;*

**C: For You are with me; Your rod and  
Your staff, they comfort me.**

*P: You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my enemies;*

**C: You anoint my head with oil; My cup  
runs over.**

*P: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of  
my life;*

**C: And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.**



## Scripture Readings of Comfort:

- (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, (4) who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*
- (John 14:1-6) *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. (2) “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (4) “And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (5) Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” (6) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*
- (Isaiah 43:1-3) *But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. (2) When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. (3) For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; ...”*
- (1 Peter 1:3-9) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, (7) that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (8) whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, (9) receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls.*
- (John 10:27-29) *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (29) “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”*

**Hymn:**..... TLH 552: Abide with Me!

- 1. Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!
- 3. Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,  
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,  
Familiar, condescending, patient, free.  
Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.
- 6. I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?  
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!
- 7. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;  
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still if Thou abide with me.
- 8. Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

**Sermon:** ..... 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 55-57  
(42) So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. (43) It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. (44) It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. ... (55) "O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?" (56) The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. (57) But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**"God's Final Gardening Plan for Ray"**

**Christian Day School Hymn:**.....Go Now in Peace

**Prayer:**

**The Lord's Prayer:**.....Duet (Jackie & Ann Radichel)

**Benediction:**

## **Closing Hymn: .....TLH 200: I Know that My Redeemer Lives**

- 1. I know that my Redeemer lives;  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;  
He lives, my ever-living Head.**
- 2. He lives triumphant from the grave,  
He lives eternally to save,  
He lives all-glorious in the sky,  
He lives exalted there on high.**
- 7. He lives and grants me daily breath;  
He lives, and I shall conquer death:  
He lives my mansion to prepare;  
He lives to bring me safely there.**
- 8. He lives, all glory to His name!  
He lives, my Jesus, still the same.  
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives,  
“I know that my Redeemer lives!”**

### **Pall Bearers:**

Joshua Stifter  
Michael Stifter  
Dylan Stifter  
Jack Maki

Joshua Johnson  
Dustin Eiffler  
John Maki

### **Announcements:**

- ☞ Following the funeral service there will be a committal service at Sunset Memorial Park (2250 St. Anthony Blvd., NE). There will be an escort.
- ☞ Everyone is invited to come for a fellowship meal in the church's fellowship hall following the committal.
- ☞ Joyce extends a word of thanks to all who have been supportive and encouraging during this time of her temporary loss.
- ☞ Memorials may be given to Grace Lutheran Church of Fridley.



