



Rev. Judith Elaine Smith

August 11, 1944 - April 16, 2026

Judy Smith lived a life of steadfast, humble, unconditional love. Her death on April 16, 2026, leaves behind countless friends and family whose own lives were touched by her generous concern for others.

Judith Elaine Anderson was born August 11, 1944, to Jane and Sid Anderson. The first of three children, she grew up in Montana and Eastern Washington loving horses, books, her family, and her church. After graduating from the University of Puget Sound, Judy studied at Claremont School of Theology and Vanderbilt Divinity School and was ordained in the United Methodist Church. A woman pastor at a time when it was rare, she mentored and supported others. She dedicated herself to a theology of concern and love for the poor and others pushed to society's margins.

At 35, she was offered a position as the first editor-in-chief of the United Methodist children's magazine Pockets, and her family moved from Oregon to Nashville, where for more than 30 years she worked for boards supporting the Church's publications, higher education, and ministry. She cultivated a circle of friends whose numbers were matched by their devotion. She married the love of her life, Duane Ewers, in 1993 and immediately welcomed his family into her own. Judy and Duane remained in Nashville - with regular, extended visits to Cannon Beach, Oregon, in their retirement - through his death in 2023.

In her final weeks, after transitioning to hospice care, she told visitors she took comfort in the words of the 14th Century ascetic Julian of Norwich, which she recited: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.”

Judy is remembered by family and friends for her sharp mind, her generous laugh, and her warm heart. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister, Kathi Jansen, and her husband Duane. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Tobie and Katie Smith, and their daughters, Maren and Margot; her brother, David Anderson (Cathy), and nieces and nephews Katie Craft (Loren), Jan-David Jansen, Katherine Anderson, Carter Anderson, and Jacob Anderson (Acie); her beloved stepchildren, to whom she was not a stepmom but a “bonus mom,” Tim Ewers (Tammie Burghuis), Jon Ewers (Susie), Brian Ewers, Beth Herman-Drake (Sean Drake), and Todd Smith (Jill Bradshaw), and their children; and innumerable other family and friends.

In a 1992 article for the United Methodist journal *Weavings*, Judy pondered, “How will I know when I have reached the destination?” In answer, she wrote, “I am coming to believe that there is no final destination except to continue to be on the journey and to know that every place along the way is a holy place because God is present ... calling us to stand on our own ground and know that it is holy and let our roots grow deep. And yet at the same time, the journey goes on.”

Nourished by firm roots, her love branches ever outward. Visitation will be at West End United Methodist Church, 2200 West End Ave. Nashville, TN 37203, on Friday, May 8th, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. A memorial service will be conducted Saturday, May 9th, at 1:00 p.m. also at West End United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family is coordinating with the West End United Methodist Church to honor Judy's memory with a scholarship. If you would like to contribute, please make donations to West End UMC, with Judy Smith Scholarship Fund in the memo line.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 8. 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

West End United Methodist Church
2200 West End Ave.
Nashville, TN 37203

Memorial Service

MAY 9. 1:00 PM (CT)

West End United Methodist Church
2200 West End Ave.
Nashville, TN 37203

Tribute Wall

BR

“ I’m so sad to learn of Judy’s passing. When I was a young adult at The Upper Room, she was a mentor and an inspiration. Thank you for sharing such a beautiful obituary. She was a gift to me and a gift to the world.

Beth Richardson - May 04 at 05:36 PM

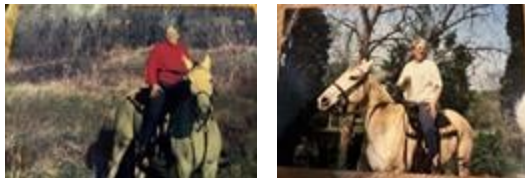
MC

“ Judy was a fountain of God’s grace. Our memories of her will bring us grace, still. Marvin Cropsey

Marvin Cropsey - May 04 at 06:57 AM

GW

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Gay Welch - April 25 at 09:26 AM

KS

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Katie Smith - April 21 at 02:09 PM