

Turpin, Francis E. (Frank)

The Reverend Francis E. Turpin, age 87, of Madison, Wisconsin, passed from this earth on June 9, following a devastating stroke. Patriarch of the family, Dad to 4, Grandpa to 8, Big-Bapa to 3, his family was the core of his life. Due to Covid-19, unable to get together in person, we celebrated his 87th birthday, last Thursday, June 4, via Zoom. We are all grateful we had those final moments with him.

Francis was born in Albany, New York on June 4, 1933 to Hyatt and Isabelle (Eldred) Turpin. He grew up in Earlton, New York, a small town that few have heard of, but was only 25 miles southwest of Albany, New York, the state's capital. Growing up just after the great depression of 1929, his family worked hard to make ends meet, but provided a loving home. Frank's father raised chickens and sold eggs to families in NYC, 100 miles away. This did not endear him to chickens and he complained about having to eat chicken dishes for his entire life. Living next door to a one room schoolhouse, at the age of 4, Francis sat longingly outside the building day after day looking for playmates. Eventually, the teacher told him he might as well come inside and learn with the rest of them.

Brother Billy came along in 1944. Eleven years apart in age, Francis was definitely Bill's big brother. He was happy to now have a playmate.

Francis met the love of his life, Virginia Hale, at Greenville Central School. Francis left for Union College in Schenectady in 1951, while Virginia began her college experience at SUNY Albany, and then transferred to State University of New York at Oneonta the next year. Francis transferred to Hartwick in Oneonta, so they could be near each other. Francis and Virginia were married in 1953 at Westerlo Baptist Church in Westerlo, New York.

Francis completed his bachelor's degree in Philosophy in 1955. The following fall, he enrolled at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center outside of Boston, studying to earn his Master of Divinity degree. They moved to Round Top, NY halfway through seminary where Francis completed his student parish training at the Round Top United Methodist Church. Nearly 20 years later, Francis would officiate at the wedding of his oldest son at this same church in the Catskill Mountains.

Their first child, Mark, came along in 1954 in Oneonta, while Brother Paul entered the world in 1956 while they lived in Boston. They were a very busy family with two young children, Francis still in seminary and Virginia teaching in the Cairo (NY) Central School District while continuing to attend college classes.

As a minister, Francis and his family moved often, serving 7 different congregations. After completing his Seminary training, Francis was called to minister at the Gaylord Community Church. He moved his growing family to Gaylord, Kansas, where two daughters, Karen and Elaine, were born in Smith Center. The family lived in Gaylord from 1959 to 1961.

Now with four children, the family needed a bigger house and a larger salary, so the family moved to Cambridge, Nebraska, where they lived from 1961 to 1966, as Francis was called to the Cambridge Congregational UCC Church.

In 1966, Francis was called to minister the yoke churches of Cortland and Hallam, Nebraska. While waiting for a new parsonage to be completed in Hallam, the family moved into an old house in Cortland.

Francis ministered to the Cortland and Hallam churches until 1970 when the family moved to Athens, Michigan.

Francis was called to minister at the First Congregational United Church of Christ of Athens (MI) from 1970 until 1978, with Mark, Paul and Karen all graduating from Athens High School. Their next move was to Holgate, Ohio where Francis was called as pastor of the Emanuel's United Church of Christ. Youngest daughter Elaine graduated from Holgate High School in 1979. Francis remained as Pastor of Emanuel's for 20 years, before retiring from active ministry in 1998.

Following his retirement, Francis and Virginia returned to their roots in upstate New York for a short time before moving to the Cedar Ridge Community in West Bend, Wisconsin in January 2000 where they remained for the next nineteen years. Francis and Virginia became active members of Immanuel's United Church of Christ in West Bend, where they enjoyed being a part of a progressive, socially minded congregation.

A lover of music, Francis enjoyed playing the recorder and singing in the choir. He also enjoyed woodworking, photography and was an avid reader. Francis could engage anyone in a conversation about current events or religion. He was a supportive listener, rarely offering advice. A man with an easy demeanor, and a very kind heart, his family meant everything to him.

Francis is pre-deceased by his parents, Hyatt and Isabelle Turpin and sister-in-law, Bonnie Lou Turpin. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Virginia (nee Hale); children Mark (Bonnie), Maple Grove, MN; Paul (Dorie), Madison, WI; Karen (Len Abbeduto), Torrance, CA; and Elaine (Ken) Muntz, Holgate, OH; grandchildren Michael (Sara), Matthew (Kristen) and Hannah Turpin, Bethany (Tirupan) Mandal, Lucas Turpin, James Abbeduto, Kevin and Lindsey Muntz; and great-grandchildren Devin, Nathan and Julia Turpin; brother William Turpin, Hattiesburg, MS; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service for immediate family has been already been held. Friends and families may donate to Immanuel's UCC's (West Bend) India mission program, <https://joyfuljourneys-inc.org/> or other charitable organizations of the donor's choice.