

Celebrating the Life
of
Stephen John Penico



November 17, 1956
~
May 3, 2025

Parkway United Church of Christ

St Louis, Missouri ~ May 12, 2025

Organ Prelude

Opening Sentences

Cello Solo

Bach Suite No. 2

Alexander Roesler

Welcome

Call To Worship

Opening Hymn

How Great Thou Art #467

Opening Prayer

Holy One, you teach us that all who mourn shall be comforted. We await the fulfillment of your word. Comfort us and help us to trust you more deeply. We give you thanks for Steve – a gift that continues to bless us into the future. With the presence and love of one another, scripture, prayers, music - as well as with silence and memories of Steve - we seek your tenderness, strength and healing. Make yourself known to us during this celebration of life, for Steve is with you completely now - no limitations, no questions, no doubts or fears... just hope, peace, joy, love... and sweet reunion. Help us to find resurrection faith now. Amen.

Poetry

The Seed Market

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi

Can you find another market like this?

Where,

with your one rose

you can buy hundreds of rose gardens?

Where,

for one seed

get a whole wilderness?

For one weak breath,

a divine wind?

You've been fearful
of being absorbed in the ground,
or drawn up by the air.
Now, your waterbead lets go
and drops into the ocean,
where it came from.
It no longer has the form it had,
but it's still water.
The essence is the same.
This giving up is not a repenting.
It's a deep honoring of yourself.
When the ocean comes to you as a lover,
marry at once, quickly,
for God's sake!
Don't postpone it!
Existence has no better gift.
No amount of searching
will find this.
A perfect falcon, for no reason
has landed on your shoulder,
and become yours.

Choral Response

You Are Mine

Scripture Readings

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. ~Psalm 34:18

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
~Matthew 5:4

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
~ Matthew 11:28-30

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:
*Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven
will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in
darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of
peace.* ~ Luke 1:78-79

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor
principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to
come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other else in all creation,
shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in
Christ Jesus our Lord. ~ Romans 8:38-39

Unison Prayer

The Prayer of St Francis

Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Words of Remembrance and Hope

Mark Robeck, cousin

Kevin Cameron, pastor

Others as you feel moved to share a memory or story

Song

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Israel Kamakawio'ole

What A Wonderful World

Moment of Silence

Pastoral Prayer, Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

Our [Creator/Mother/Father/Holy One] who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Benediction

Benediction Response

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Polster-Roeslers

Postlude

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

(with a moment of silence to start – in recognition of the time Steve gave everyone the silent treatment as payback for having to miss Pujols' *grand slam* at the end of the game because the kids wanted to leave early)

Thank You for joining us in this celebration of Steve's life.
Please join us for lunch in the Fellowship Hall.
Your continued care and prayers mean a great deal to the family.



Stephen John Penico

November 17, 1956 – May 3, 2025

Stephen “Steve” John Penico, 68, of St. Louis, Missouri, passed away peacefully on May 3, 2025, from complications related to ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease).

Born in Palo Alto, California, Steve moved with his family to Rolla, Missouri, in 1966. He was raised in a home that deeply valued education—his father, Tony Penico, was a mathematics professor at what is now the Missouri University of Science and Technology, and his mother, Eva Penico, taught German at Rolla Senior High School. Steve shared a close bond with his brother, Dave, whose perfect memory was treasured by all who knew him.

Steve attended Rolla public schools from the fifth grade onward, graduating in 1974. He was active in sports—especially basketball—and participated in several student organizations, including the German Club, which was sponsored by his mother, “*Frau Penico*.”

Returning to Northern California for college, Steve graduated from Stanford University in 1978 with a degree in economics. His early career focused on econometric studies and demand forecasting for consumer products. He lived in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., before moving to Chicago, where he earned a law degree from the University of Chicago. Though he practiced law briefly, his true passion lay in computing. Steve moved back to Missouri in the 1980's and for over four decades, he was a self-taught "jobbing programmer," participating in the computer revolution. He enjoyed work every day, most recently working for Keefe Group and NISA.

Steve was a lifelong learner and Renaissance man. He had a deep curiosity about the world, with interests spanning math, languages, history, political science, and classical music, most recently learning to play the viola. Steve took a deep dive in learning physics after ALS forced him to retire. He was a voracious reader, ranging from murder mysteries to classic literature. Steve's sharp wit and effortless sense of humor lit up the room and left everyone laughing. He was also a gifted teacher and mentor who delighted in helping others learn.

On August 30th, 2003, Steve married the love of his life, Paige Penico. Together, they built a joyful family that included her three sons—Ryan, Sanjay, and Kevin Seetharaman—and their daughter, Ella. Embracing fatherhood at 45, Steve poured himself into the role, attending school events and performances, helping with homework, and quietly modeling values of compassion, integrity, and respect.

A devoted member of Parkway United Church of Christ in St. Louis, Steve served on the church council, sang in the choir, and gave generously of his time. He found deep friendship among the "Manly Men Hikers," a group of friends who bonded over shared hikes and camaraderie.

Steve was preceded in death by his beloved brother Dave (2008), father Tony (2011), and mother Eva (2017). He is survived by his loving wife, Paige; his children Ryan, Sanjay, Kevin, and Ella; and the family's beloved pets—Finn, their 15-year-old Labradoodle; Zoe, a 23-year-old Blue and Gold Macaw; and Rambo, a 32-year-old African Grey parrot. He also leaves behind many cherished cousins and dear friends.

Steve's legacy lives on through his decision to donate his body to ALS research at St. Louis University, contributing to the advancement of science and offering hope to those affected by the disease.

A memorial service will be held on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., with visitation beginning at 10:00 a.m., at Parkway United Church of Christ, 2841 N. Ballas Road, St. Louis, Missouri. A luncheon will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the ALS Association in Steve's memory.

Parkway UCC has a team participating in the St Louis ALS Walk on Saturday, June 28 in Forest Park. Please consider joining our team for the walk.

Якщо у вас ніколи не виникало бажання обійняти всю землю, погладити вуличного пса, взяти з землі вибракуваний листочок і поцілувати його, то ви ще не любили.

If you have never had the desire to embrace the whole earth, to pat a street dog, to take a culled leaf from the ground and kiss it, then you have not loved yet.

~ Hryhir Tiutiunnyk