

Pastor Grant Simmons to Retire this Month

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Pastor Grant Simmons will be retiring this month after 73 years of ministry with the Church of the Brethren. Pastor Simmons grew up in the Sangerville Church, became a licensed minister in 1946. He graduated cum laude from Bridgewater College in 1952 and from Bethany Seminary in 1955. He was also ordained that same year.



Early in his ministry Pastor Simmons served in a summer pastorate in the South Indiana District and then moved outside of Roanoke to serve at Boons Mill Church in the Virlina District (from 1955-65). He returned to the Shenandoah District and pastored at both the Mt. Vernon Church (1965-79) and the Arbor Hill Church (1999-present). During his hiatus from pastoring in the 1980s and 1990s, he worked in family counseling in Waynesboro and was active in the Mt. Vernon Church. There, he served on the church board as chair, managed endowments, taught Sunday School, filled the pulpit and guided the congregation along their walk of faith.

Reflecting on over seven decades of ministry, Pastor Simmons is both pleased and saddened. He says ministry has been, "An interesting experience," but, "At age 88, I'm old enough to sit back and listen to others speak." With concern in his voice, Pastor Simmons remarked that It is sad to see older members pass away and leave empty places in the church, especially since new people are not coming in to take their places. He recalls conducting funerals for at least one member each year for twenty years at Arbor Hill. The congregation misses these long-time church members when they are gone. His own wife, Jane, died 15 years ago, but Pastor Simmons has managed to adjust over time. He looks forward to moving to Naples, Fla., to live with his daughter at the end of the month.

This morning, Shenandoah District Executive Minister John Jantzi expressed appreciation for Pastor Simmons' extraordinary tenure. He noted, "It is with a great deal of respect and admiration that I wish Brother Grant God's best in this next phase of his life. He has served well, long and with distinction and perseverance. We trust these next years will be filled with much joy and laughter."

Two celebrations are planned for Pastor Simmons. Arbor Hill will host a retirement celebration on Sun., June 30 and Mt. Vernon will hold a celebration and carry-in meal this Sun., after the 11 a.m. worship service. See Mark Your Calendar in this newsletter for more information.

The Shenandoah District joins with his congregations to extend congratulations on his retirement and express heart-felt appreciation to Pastor Simmons for his long-time ministry.

Written by Brenda Sanford Diehl for The Shenandoah Update