

Arlin Mark Aasness

July 22, 1960-February 6, 2023

Arlin Aasness ("to pronounce my name, just think 'awesomeness'"), 62, of Coarsegold, California, died on February 6, 2023, at Saint Agnes Medical Center, Fresno. He had been taken ill just the evening before, and he died suddenly and unexpectedly in the intensive care unit after emergency treatment for a blood clot in his leg.

In an interview for the StoryCorps Project in 2013, Arlin said he wanted to be remembered "for my sick sense of humor, and for being a caring person." He will, indeed, be remembered for those things, and for much more -- among them, his music, his weaving, his cooking, his mischievous smile, and his ready laugh. He spent most of his working life in financial services, which is ironic, because he hated dealing with money -- he disliked even managing his checkbook.



His great love, aside from his family and friends, was Lutheran liturgy and hymnody. The church was always vital to him, from his baptism at Stiklestad Free Lutheran Church a few miles from his family's Minnesota farm, through twenty years at Christ Lutheran Church (El Cerrito, California), to his last Sunday at St. Raphael's Episcopal Church (Oakhurst, California), where he led worship music on the day he was taken ill. He loved playing the organ and piano for services, and especially loved leading congregational singing. He designed and printed the service bulletins for his churches; he performed weddings and baptisms; and he wrote and self-published a communion service, "Even As Christ Has Loved Us."

He was a skilled craftsman, too. He wove liturgical stoles and wedding bands, built a Scandinavian-style spiral staircase for his home office, and made wedding rings for himself and his husband Philip.

To list everything he loved in life would take many pages, but here is a short random selection: good Scotch; ABBA; his dogs Kai, Chester, and Fritz; dirty jokes, silly puns, and word games; hugs; making pizza; and all things Norwegian.

He grew up on a farm near Doran, in western Minnesota's Red River Valley, the son of Theodore Aasness and Gloria (Vigen) Aasness. Born July 22, 1960, in Fergus Falls, he was the youngest of seven children in the family.

He attended grade school in Doran, then graduated from Breckenridge High School in 1978. In 1980 he graduated from Free Lutheran Bible College (Plymouth, Minnesota). After working in food service in Wahpeton, ND, and as a youth pastor in Tioga, ND, he moved to Minneapolis in 1984, where he worked in food service again and in a church office.

In 1985 he was introduced by friends in St. Paul to Philip, another newcomer to the Twin Cities. They moved in together the following year, and they were a couple for the next 37 years. In 1991 they moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where Arlin worked in the financial industry and Philip worked as a librarian. They became domestic partners in 2001, and they married in 2014. Also in 2014, after Philip's retirement, they moved to five beautiful acres in the Sierra Nevada foothills, a few miles from Yosemite National Park. Arlin continued to work in financial services from his home office until his death.

Arlin was preceded in death by his parents, Theodore and Gloria Aasness, his brother Terry Aasness, and his brother and sister-in-law, Owen and Bonnie Aasness.

He leaves behind his husband, Philip Youngholm; his siblings and their spouses: Richard Aasness (Jane McEvoy), Elaine Kronberg (Roland), Glenda Ellingson (Paul), and Joyce Kackmann (Ray); sisters-in-law Julie Aasness (widow of Terry), Betsy Anne Youngholm, Janet Youngholm (Kathy Davis), and Caryn Lee Youngholm (Brendan Moles); brother-in-law Mark Youngholm (Diane); and many beloved nieces, grandnieces, nephews, grandnephews, and godchildren.

Services will be held at later dates in Oakhurst, California, and Evansville, Minnesota, with interment at Stiklestad Lutheran Church, Doran, Minnesota.

You may make a contribution in his memory to Manna House of Oakhurst, 40398 Junction Drive, PO Box 1658, Oakhurst, CA 93614, or to an organization in your own community that feeds and shelters the needy. Matthew 25:35-40.