



Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs

October 2, 1956 - September 28, 2025

Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs- Born: October 2, 1956 in Greensburg, PA- Died: September 28, 2025 in his home in Sweetwater, TN surrounded by his loving family.

On Sunday, Jerry Downs had the experience of his spiritual life as his faith became sight! A man of God, chosen for such a time as was entrusted to him, Pastor Jerry was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, pastor, and friend to many. His devotion to Christ and his love for others allowed him to live a life that radiated brightly in dark places.

Jerry spent a large portion of his childhood and teen years in Latrobe, PA, where he attended Greater Latrobe High School. Not only was he a football and baseball star but also performed the lead role in several school musicals and was a member of the Pennsylvania All-State Choir. While in high school, he was proud to have the opportunity to caddy for the Arnold Palmer family at Latrobe Country Club. He was awarded a football scholarship to West Point Military Academy where he began his college career. He completed his college work playing baseball at The University of Tennessee Chattanooga earning a degree in business. He lived and worked in Cleveland, TN, where he married the love of his life, Melody, and then moved his young family to Sweetwater in 1979 to take the position as branch manager of Cherokee Valley Federal, later working at Textron and for many years at Gemtron prior to retirement.

In his heart, Jerry was always a Pastor. He involved himself in his Sweetwater

community in countless ways. He and Melody became active members at First Assembly of God where he held several ministerial roles over the years. As worship minister, youth pastor, and Sunday School teacher, Jerry took on whatever work was needed at the time he was called on. He was instant in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2).

Pastor Jerry served diligently as the founding pastor of SonRise Assembly of God in Vonore, TN, a church whose growth and development under his leadership has blossomed into a newly appointed church in Madisonville. The mission of SonRise was, is, and will always be to show the love of God to all and provide for those in need in order to lead people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Pastor deeply loved his church family and invested his time and diligent care as their shepherd. He had a heart for the lost and for missions, and his vision will continue to prosper throughout our community and beyond.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents, Rev. Gerald Eugene Downs & Margaret (Pegge) Downs; Father-in-law Willie Dalton Hamm & Mother-in-law Wilma Virginia Hamm; brothers-in-law Jesse James Hamm, William Hardy Hamm and Dalton Daniel Hamm; he is survived by his beloved wife and the song of his heart for 47 years, Melody, daughter Jaime, son Ben & his wife Carey; grandsons Franklin, Cooper, & Josiah; devoted sister Bonnie Harr (Dennis), sisters-in-law Mary Findley (Kinnith) & Vangie Cannady; brothers-in-law Howard Hamm (Wanda), Robert Hamm (Betsy), Charles Hamm (Lucy), & Jeff Hamm (Trella); and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews and extended family who loved him dearly.

Jerry's favorite activities in recent years have included spending time with his three grandsons and cheering them on in their sporting endeavors. He cherished witnessing their successes and coaching them through their struggles. Moments spent fishing with his boys were his favorite times. Pop loved his boys beyond measure!

Jerry loved music and sports equally. He wrote many poems and songs, played guitar, and sang his heart out every chance he got. He spent several years singing and traveling with Southern Gospel quartet The Evangels. He spent countless hours playing and singing worship to God in the privacy of his own space. He adored football, baseball, and golf and energetically cheered on his teams including the Sweetwater Wildcats, Norris Senators, Anderson County Mavericks, Tennessee Tech Golden Eagles, Chattanooga Mocs, Army Black Knights, Tennessee Vols, and the Pittsburgh Steelers! He was multi-talented, intelligent beyond measure, and blessed with the gifts that God himself crafted for Jerry alone to exhibit. He will be missed in ways that words cannot capture, but his family knows he is with the One whose faithfulness has never waivered and never will.

The family will receive friends Friday, October 3rd, from 4:00-7:00 at Kyker Funeral Homes in Sweetwater with a celebration of life to follow. Dr. Jeff Hamm, Dr. John Looper, & Reverend Dennis Banks will officiate.

The family would like to express deep gratitude to the healthcare professionals who had a hand in Jerry's extensive medical care. A very special thank you to Dr. Sigrid Johnson. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Sweetwater Area Ministries, Good Shepherd Center (Madisonville), or Miracle Lake Inc (Etowah).

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 3. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Kyker Funeral Homes
OUR SWEETWATER CHAPEL
PO Box 309, 113 W. North Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874
(423) 337-5033
julie@kyker.net
<https://www.kykerfuneralhomes.com/>

Memorial Service

OCT 3. 7:00 PM (ET)

Kyker Funeral Homes
OUR SWEETWATER CHAPEL
PO Box 309, 113 W. North Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874
(423) 337-5033
julie@kyker.net
<https://www.kykerfuneralhomes.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Kyker Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs*



Kyker Funeral Home - October 01, 2025 at 01:20 PM

JR

Sorry for the loss of Jerry. I know he really did enjoy singing with all his heart. Jerry signing with the Evangels gospel group and I know he enjoyed that with all his heart because I played the drums for that group. Love you Jerry and family, Jeff Raper

Jeffrey Raper - October 04, 2025 at 01:18 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



October 03, 2025 at 11:21 AM

TF

“ *The Chambers Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



The Chambers Family - October 03, 2025 at 08:45 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



October 02, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ *Michael, Erica, and Spencer Campbell planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*

Michael, Erica, and Spencer Campbell - October 02, 2025 at 09:12 AM



“ *Michael, Erica, and Spencer Campbell purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



Michael, Erica, and Spencer Campbell - October 02, 2025 at 09:12 AM



“ *Adam, Kayla, and Gabriel Watson purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



Adam, Kayla, and Gabriel Watson - October 02, 2025 at 09:05 AM

AB

“ Anderson County Mavs Baseball purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



Anderson County Mavs Baseball - October 01, 2025 at 05:57 PM



“ 80 files added to the album Life Tributes



Kyker Funeral Home - October 01, 2025 at 01:14 PM



“ Footprints Tribute Blanket was purchased for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



October 01, 2025 at 12:57 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



October 01, 2025 at 09:33 AM



“ *I did not know him personally but knew be his son he was good godly well liked man god bless u all* 🙏🙏🙏

kenny ward. ac fan - September 30, 2025 at 07:25 PM



“ *Bill, Emmie, & Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.*



Bill, Emmie, & Family - September 30, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



September 30, 2025 at 11:56 AM

DJ

“ Dr Sigrid Johnson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.

Dr Sigrid Johnson - September 29, 2025 at 11:48 PM

DJ

“ Dr Sigrid Johnson purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



Dr Sigrid Johnson - September 29, 2025 at 11:48 PM

NW

“ What an amazing life he lived, and what an amazing example he is for his children and grandsons. I didn't know Jerry well but knowing Ben, Jaime, Cooper, Josiah and Franklin, I know the kind of man he was. The Wade family is deeply sorry for your loss, and will be in our prayers.

Nathan Wade - September 29, 2025 at 04:36 PM

PT

He will always be “Little Jerry” to me too. My mother loved him dearly and he made his way to our house when you all visited Pennsylvania! He will be missed by all who knew him! Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this time.

Peggy Tustin - September 30, 2025 at 03:55 PM

AB

“ AC Boys Basketball purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Reverend Gerald (Jerry) Edward Downs.



AC Boys Basketball - September 29, 2025 at 03:55 PM

DD

“ Oh my ! what to say about memories with Jerry. Our families have been connected for so many years. He was Cody's buddy and our football buddy. Jerry was a very prayerful man and extended his love and prayers to everyone he knew. Even though it's hard on us, I know that he is rejoicing with his family there and will watch over us while we are still here. Much love and appreciation to the whole family.

Debbie Devine - September 29, 2025 at 03:27 PM

DB

We only met Pastor Jerry about 2 years ago and immediately he and Melody opened their heart and brought us into the family at Son Rise Assembly. We have been privileged to watch this man of God following Jesus and directing his congregation to purchase a building in Madisonville, remodel it and move into it in December 2024. Thank you Pastor for inspiring us to run our race with patience.

Dennis and Penny Banks - September 29, 2025 at 04:07 PM