



Obituary: Wesley Ray Yoder 1956-2023

On August 26, 1956, our parents Clyde and Lena Yoder received a special gift from Heaven, a precious baby boy whom they named Wesley Ray.

Wesley was one of God's special children who lived with extra mental and physical limitations. Wes began school at Harris but his needs for special education eventually resulted in a transfer to Halsey and then to Junction City for the rest of his school years.

When our parents learned about patterning, we began to make trips to Salem to see if this could help Wesley. Our kitchen table saw many patterning sessions. Wesley made much good progress through this, so much so that he was able to get his driver's license.

Wesley accepted Jesus as Savior and was baptized at Harrisburg Mennonite Church. He was a member there until gradually withdrawing from faithful membership years later. Then in the past year he resumed attending Sunday morning services there. By then he was no longer driving, so various members of the congregation would transport him to church. We trust his eternal destiny to the righteous Judge who knows what He requires of each of us. God alone is both grace and truth, both mercy and justice.

Through the years, Wesley gave and endured much teasing. He learned to laugh about things, even though some of them hurt.

Wesley enjoyed people, weddings, anniversary celebrations, and potlucks. He loved holidays, especially Christmas, and tried to give gifts to all his family. During harvest, Wes liked to go ride the combine with whoever would accept his presence. He also enjoyed watching field fires, trains, and sheep.

The same God who sent Wesley among us called him away from us to his eternal reward on July 17, 2023. He is survived by his two sisters, Celestia Nelson (Frank) of Scio, Oregon, and Ruby Roth (Mark) of Woodburn, Oregon. He is also survived by five nieces, four nephews, thirteen great nieces, and thirteen great nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Special people in Wes' life that he talked about include...

- Carol Williams, special ed teacher, great encourager, and family friend down through the years
- Paul and Dorothy Stutzman
- Trevor and Gina Derstine (who invited him for meals)
- Charity and Michael Hershberger
- Lowell and Jeanette Kropf and sons (he rode combine with them)
- Wayne and Pauline Miller
- Darren and Ruby Birky
- Steve "Smiley" Miller

There are others, of course. Whether we name you or not, thank you all who interacted with Wes in ways that made him feel special, loved, and wanted. Whether we acknowledge you or not, He who notices how we treat "the least of these" has important words for you...and all the rest of us too.