

Donald Franklin Peterson

1925 - 2026

Don was predeceased by his parents Alice and Gus Peterson, his two brothers Peter and Clarence, two children (John and Elizabeth) who died in infancy, first wife Peg Peterson, second wife Florence Houseman, and partner of eight years Nini Almy. He is survived by his daughters Joanne Abed, Karen Peterson, Kristen Hopkins; sons in law Shukri Abed and Rob Hopkins; grandchildren Peter (Dawn) Abed, Emily Hopkins (Mariot Huessy), Daniel Hopkins (Eden Heller), Laura Hopkins (Puranjay Singh); great-grandchildren Parker and Maile Abed, and Henry August "Hal" Hopkins; several step-children, their spouses, and children; as well as numerous beloved nieces, nephews and other relatives.

The Family of Don Peterson welcomes you to a reception downstairs in the Assembly Room following the service.

Anyone wishing to honor Don's memory may consider donations to:

Community Presbyterian Church
Checks payable to CPC can be mailed to:
1459 Deer Path
Mountainside, NJ 07092

or online by scanning the QR Code:



South Dakota Mines (Don's alma mater)
Checks payable to SD Mines CARA can be mailed to:

SD Mines CARA
330 E Kansas City St
Rapid City, SD 5770

Or online by scanning the QR Code:



Community Presbyterian Church of Mountainside



Donald Franklin Peterson

1459 Deer Path
Mountainside, NJ 07092
(908) 232-9490
www.cpcmountainside.org

Rev. Marcus C. Lambright, *Pastor*
Sung-Hae Jung, *Organist & Choir Director*
Dr. Kelsey Lambright, *Family Faith Formation Facilitator*
Lisa Arent, *Office Administrator*

A Witness to the Resurrection
and
Service in Memory of
Donald Franklin Peterson

July 7, 2026

2pm

PRELUDE *Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee* J.B.Dykes/P.Jeveren

WELCOME Rev. Marcus C. Lambright

OPENING PRAYER Rev. Marcus C. Lambright

INTROIT *Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus* H.H.Lemmel

*HYMN #836	<i>Abide with Me</i>	W.H.Monk
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WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE Peter Abed and Molly B. Schonenberg

ANTHEM *How Great Thou Art* - traditional Swedish folk tune C.Boberg/S.K.Hine
Dawn Abed - Piano and Vocals

FIRST READING Isaiah 40: 28-31 Jan Bennett

SECOND READING Hebrews 13: 1-3 Joanne Abed

HOMILY Rev. Marcus C. Lambright

*HYMN #39 *Great is Thy Faithfulness* W. M. Runyan

*THE LORDS PRAYER

SENDING SONG *I'm Free*
Soloists - Dawn Abed, Joanne Abed, Helen Sive Paxton, Karen Peterson

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE #539 *Jubilation* G.F.Handel/H.Hopson

* Those who are able are invited to stand

I'm free.
Praise the Lord, I'm free.
No longer bound.
No more chains holding me.
My soul is resting.
It's just a blessing.
Praise the Lord, hallelujah, I'm free.
(sung multiple times)

I'M FREE



Donald Peterson Life Story

Donald Franklin Peterson was born on June 26, 1925, in McIntosh, SD. The youngest of three sons born to Per August ("Gus") and Alice Peterson, Don came from hardy stock. His father had emigrated from Sweden to the U.S. in 1904 at the age of 25. Gus then worked his way west to South Dakota, plying a number of different trades, including a stint as steelworker in Pittsburgh. Alice Anderson was a farmer's daughter from Minnesota, who at 14 was thrust into the role of surrogate mother to several younger siblings when her own mother died. Once said siblings were old enough to fend for themselves, Alice left the family farm to homestead in South Dakota - she was roughly 28 and a survivor of childhood polio. As young, single, homesteaders of Swedish descent, Gus and Alice had much in common when they met in McIntosh in about 1915. If independence, resourcefulness, diligence, stamina, and perseverance are inherited characteristics, Don received each trait in ample measure from both of his parents.

Along with his older brothers Peter and Clarence, Don spent his early years in McIntosh, where the three sons all worked at the P. R. & H. Lumber and Construction Company Gus had formed with two other local men. In addition to mastering the administrative and financial aspects of running a business, the sons learned carpentry, masonry, and plumbing from their contractor father. During the Dust Bowl, many in McIntosh were forced to abandon their land and leave town in search of less stricken areas. Gus accepted deeds to their farms in payment for debts owed him. If a family later returned, as most did, he sold their farms back to them for the "purchase price" plus any taxes he had incurred since. Don learned from his dad about the obligation to not just look out for one's own family but also be a positive force in the larger community. And he practiced that lesson throughout his own life, whether that meant joining with others to found a fledgling church; taking in foster children over many years; welcoming international exchange students into his home; or helping establish a local chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

In 1943 at the age of 18, Don enlisted in the Army. During basic training, his commanding officers discovered the new recruit's uncanny ability to accurately hit targets with tank-mounted guns. Don was told he could best serve his country by remaining in the U.S. and training wave after wave of fellow soldiers to shoot more accurately. Shortly before the war in Europe ended, he was deployed to Germany. He was slated serve in the Army of Occupation there, which he did. But not before he helpfully volunteered to "drive a truck" and suddenly found himself manning one of the 6,000 trucks of the hazardous Red Ball Express, depicted in a 1952 movie of the same name. Prior to leaving Germany, Don took a sanctioned leave to visit Sweden in search of some cousins he had grown up hearing about but had never met.

The long voyage back to the U.S. aboard a troop ship brought Don into contact with Jack Felderman, a New Jersey native who arranged a "blind date" for Don with Peggy Colbeth, a neighbor from Jack's hometown attending Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA. Two years, many letters, and a cross-country jaunt later, Donald married his mystery date. The couple spent their first two years in Rapid City, SD, while Don completed his bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology on the GI Bill. Daughter Joanne was born in 1950, 6 months before Don's graduation. After graduation, the growing family moved to New Jersey, where daughter Karen was born in 1951. Don held several different jobs - as a plant engineer at Baker Castor Oil, at Honeywell, and at an independent engineering outfit. After the birth of daughter Kristen in 1960, Don incorporated as Peterson Associates in the mid-60s, becoming a manufacturer's representative handling HVAC products. General contractors in his region came to value his integrity, along with his ability to service what he sold.

Don's work with HVAC systems, his experience of the energy crisis that followed the Oil Embargo of 1973, and a long-standing interest in ecology all prompted him in the late '70s and early '80s to research, design, and build his own passive solar home in Watchung, NJ. His vision was thereby realized of a nearly energy-neutral structure with an HVAC system he himself designed. Don and Peg enjoyed their new home for more than a decade before Peg succumbed to multiple myeloma in 1998. In 2000 Don married Florence Houseman, a widow who had been a long-time friend to both Don and Peg. After initially splitting the year between Florie's home in New Jersey and Don's near Tampa, FL, they eventually moved to Florida full time. Florie passed away in spring of 2016.

Later that year Don began considering the next phase of his life, where he envisioned himself further north, closer to his children, and possibly in a retirement community that would support his lifelong interests in staying physically, mentally, and civically active; enjoying music; and making friends. At age 91, he landed at Collington, a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Mitchellville, MD. While Don enjoyed meeting his many new neighbors, in unguarded moments he admitted that he was lonely, which he described as "needing a soul mate." Then his yoga teacher at Collington introduced him to a fellow yoga practitioner two years his junior. Nini Almy quickly became the new social and emotional center of his world. Like both Peg and Florie, Nini was a highly educated woman with strongly held views; and he enjoyed engaging with her on political, environmental, and social justice topics. It didn't hurt that she loved music too. They weathered COVID together and remained a committed couple until Nini passed away in October of 2025, several months before Don himself slipped quietly away on January 5, 2026. He was 100 years old.