



## Rev. John Elwood Birkelbach

September 7, 1940 - June 16, 2025

John Elwood Birkelbach was born on September 7, 1940 in Rosebud, Texas. His parents were Rev. E.J. and Juanita Arney Birkelbach.

John attended South Park High School in Beaumont, and Rusk High School in Rusk, Texas. He graduated from Rusk High School in 1958.

Rev. Birkelbach began his United Methodist ministry in 1959, while attending Lon Morris College in Jacksonville. He graduated from Sam Houston college in Huntsville, and then finished his graduate work at Perkins School of Theology (SMU) in Dallas, in 1965.

John retired from active ministry after serving as Senior Pastor at Humble UMC in Humble, TX.

He and his wife Pauline then moved to Bellville where they made many good friends, but later moved to Rusk in order to be nearer to their families.

John was preceded in death by his brother Ron Birkelbach.

Rev. Birkelbach is survived by his lovely and gracious wife, Pauline; his eldest son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Amy Birkelbach of Nacogdoches; daughter Elaine and her husband Tom Petterson of Lufkin, Texas, and his youngest son, Michael L. Birkelbach, of Rusk. He is also survived by his sister, Mrs.

Lester (Fay) Hughes of Rusk; three step children, David, Phillip and Chris Haydel; 10 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Rev. Birkelbach's grave stone is located in the Texas Methodist Conference Cemetery, near the Lakeview Methodist Center South of Palestine.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at the First United Methodist Church, 255 S. Henderson. Rusk, Texas.

# Previous Events

## Memorial service

JUN **19**. 11:00 AM (CT)

First United Methodist Church  
255 S. Henderson St  
Rusk, TX 75785  
(903) 683-4675

*Please have flowers delivered to the church Thursday morning.*

# Tribute Wall



“ *Sherry Jo Mars lit a candle in memory of John Birkelbach* ”



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**Sherry Jo Mars** - June 17, 2025 at 12:30 PM