



Rev. Peter A. Williams

April 27, 2025

The Reverend Peter A. Williams, 68, of Syracuse is now at peace, having struggled for four years with increasingly debilitating dementia. He died in the early morning hours of Sunday, April 27, 2025.

Father Pete was born June 12, 1956, the fifth child of the late Ed and Mary Williams of North Syracuse. He graduated from Cicero H.S. in 1974 where he was an honor student and played trombone with the award-winning Golden Eagles Marching Band. He studied at Binghamton University, earning a BA in English, graduating with honors in 1978.

Peter began to follow his childhood calling to become a priest by studying philosophy at LeMoyne College in 1978. From St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore MD, he earned a master's degree in sacred theology in 1982.

On May 14, 1983, he was ordained as a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in Syracuse and began his service to the Lord. His first assignment was as Assistant Pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Utica. From there he was Assistant Pastor at St. Lucy's Parish, Syracuse, where a deaf parishioner asked him when he was going to get off his ___ and learn sign language. He heeded that prodding and from 1988 to 1990 he took sign language classes at Onondaga Community College and Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. For 10 years, he then worked as the Director of the Catholic Deaf Ministry Office, while living at St. Mary Mount Carmel Parish, Utica. In 2001, he was assigned to be Assistant Pastor at St. Joseph "On the Hill", Camillus and then

Pastor at Holy Family-St. Michael's Parish, Fulton while still working with Deaf and Spanish ministries. The latter after completing an Intensive Pastoral Spanish Program at the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas.

After a great deal of discernment, Peter heeded the call to become an Episcopal priest. On October 18, 2008, at Grace Episcopal Church, Syracuse he was received as a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York. His ministry to the deaf community continued in association with the Ephphatha Parish. He served as Rector of Grace & Holy Spirit Church, Cortland, a combined Episcopal and Lutheran congregation until his retirement in 2022. Peter is survived by his siblings: Charles Williams, Arlington VA; Bill (Karen) Williams, Jacksonville FL; Margaret Coker, Clifton Park, NY; Elizabeth Williams, Syracuse, NY and Richard (Mary) Williams, Hollis, NH. Also surviving are 10 nieces and nephews; and 14 great nieces and nephews. Calling hours will be on Monday, May 5, 2025, from 3 to 6 pm at Ferguson Funeral Home, 215 South Main Street, North Syracuse. The memorial service will be held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 10 am at Grace Episcopal Church, 819 Madison Street, Syracuse, The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe officiating. The committal service will be at 2 pm in North Syracuse Cemetery, 555 South Bay Road, North Syracuse.

Donations may be made, in lieu of flowers, to Cortland Loaves and Fishes, 13 Court Street, Cortland 13045 (cortlandloavesandfishes.org); In My Father's Kitchen, Avenue, Syracuse 13203 (inmyfatherskitchen.org); Grace Church Food Pantry, 819 Madison Street, Syracuse, 13210 (gracesyracuse.org); or St. Lucy's Food Pantry, 425 Gifford Street, Syracuse, 13204 (saintlucys.org).

Cemetery Details

North Syracuse Cemetery

555 South Bay Road
North Syracuse , NY 13212

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 6. 10:00 AM.

Grace Episcopal Church

Committal Service

MAY 6. 2:00 PM (ET)

North Syracuse Cemetery
555 South Bay Road
North Syracuse , NY 13212

Tribute Wall

ST

“ Our family loved Fr. Pete during his time at Holy Family. He could hold the attention of our teenagers as well as the younger ones, which is impressive!! He also offered very helpful advice! When he spoke at a Lions club meeting about his ministry with the deaf, he said, ” when speaking to the deaf they need your full attention”. A good lesson for all of us!
We all loved him and were very sad when he left.
Our heartfelt sympathies to his family and friends. He will be missed

Susan Tallents - May 20, 2025 at 06:19 PM

M.

“ Fr. Pete was a friendly, welcoming priest at Grace and Holy Spirit, and I always enjoyed his passionate, heartfelt sermons. He truly espoused Christ's vision for humanity. He will be missed.

M. - May 06, 2025 at 11:35 AM

DS

“ Father Pete was very special to our parents when he lived in Fulton, NY. The rectory he lived in was right across the street from their house. They became great friends, with him eating many meals at their house. He and my mother loved popcorn. He would call my mother and say "I smell popcorn" and over he would come and she would make popcorn for the two of them. She even got him his own popcorn bowl with his name on it. He was a wonderful person and we loved so much.

Donna M Seeber - May 04, 2025 at 11:17 AM



“ *Peter Williams. Amazing human. Always there for you. His conviction was wise. Pete was never opposed to getting a Gannon's on a summer evening with friends.*

C - May 03, 2025 at 09:18 PM



“ *Father Pete welcomed me into ministry at Grace and Holy Spirit, Cortland as an intern and as a deacon. His love for God and all humanity guided his life's work and passion to serve. One of my first memories of him was when he visited my home church, St Matthew's, Moravia. He had us all laughing as he dressed up and had such fun props- his theology was profound, delivered with wit and brilliant connections. I am deeply grateful for Fr Pete's presence in my life and know confidently that he rests in eternal peace, surrounded by those who have gone before. I pray that Fr Pete's family finds comfort knowing his legacy of kindness lives on. Rev Pat Kinney*

Rev Pat Kinney - May 02, 2025 at 07:30 PM



“ *Father Pete was most welcoming He officiated my sons wedding. The guests all loved him leaving them open to his witness*

Joan Henry-Gates - May 02, 2025 at 02:56 PM

RD

“ Fr. Peter spent many years working with and supporting the Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Catholics and Friends Group. This is how we first came to know him. When my husbands father passed away in 2001, we knew that if the local parish priest were to preside over Dad’s Funeral Mass, then Dad would find a way to get out of the casket and run out of the church. At our request, Fr. Pete came down to St. Mary’s in Cortland to help us celebrate Dad’s life. When we were finally able to get legally married in 2014 (after an 18 year engagement) we approached Fr. Peter as the now-Episcopal Pastor at Grace & Holy Spirit. Peter was excited to help us craft our wedding ceremony in the traditions of the Anglican Church while blending the Sacred along with non-liturgical music and multi-cultural wedding traditions. This was the first same-sex wedding ceremony which Peter presided over and was symbolic of Peter’s “Welcoming” of LGBT Community to Grace & Holy Spirit.

Robert and Joseph Dodds-Fischer - May 01, 2025 at 10:58 PM

JD

“ I remember Pete from seminary and his sense of humor. He played his trombone in the car as we drove down to Alabama, that takes talent. Also spent Thanksgiving with him at his brother Bill's house in Annapolis as well as a Navy-Syracuse football game. Great person and great heart.

Jim Dane

jim dane - May 01, 2025 at 02:24 PM

JJ

“ At Seminary, Pete founded the St Mary's Rapid Transit Authority (SMaRTA) and organized the annual parade on the anniversary to connect our sprawling campus and diverse community with humor. We traveled to visit our Ghanaian classmate, Fr John Appiah Poku in February 1992, and enjoyed several excursions to the Adirondack High Peaks. May the Lord embrace him with love and eternal life! ~ John Jacquel

John Jacquel - April 30, 2025 at 08:54 PM

TJ

“ I worked in Deaf Ministry with Peter, who traveled to our Episcopal Diocese of Rochester regularly to preach to our deaf folks here. We also visited him and his deaf parish members in CNY. He had a wonderful sense of humor and was truly a person of God. I am sorry to hear of his passing. He will be missed.

the Rev Suzanne Johnston - April 30, 2025 at 08:45 PM

KK

“ Karen Kennedy lit a candle in memory of Rev. Peter A. Williams



Karen Kennedy - April 30, 2025 at 08:39 PM

RM

“ Rev. Pat Madden purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Rev. Peter A. Williams.



Rev. Pat Madden - April 30, 2025 at 11:55 AM

RM

“ Rev. Pat Madden planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rev. Peter A. Williams.

Rev. Pat Madden - April 30, 2025 at 11:55 AM