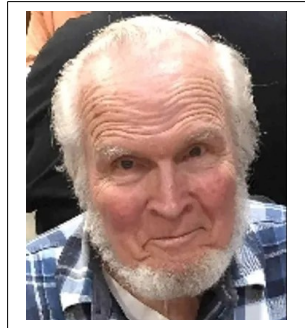


# Roger Burtner

## A founder of the Baltimore County Christian Workcamp



Roger Ellsworth Burtner, 96, passed from this life into his heavenly home on Saturday, 16 September 2023.

Roger was born on 18 October 1926 near Sharpsburg, MD, the son of Howard Wyand and Reta Louise (Miller) Burtner, and grew up on the family farm in Keedysville, MD. A graduate of Boonsboro High School, he went to serve his country in the U.S. Navy 1943-1946. He attended the University of Maryland, with a brief period of working the family farm, and graduated in 1951 (BS - Agricultural Education). On 12 August 1950 he and Sylvia Creeger, of Thurmont, MD, were united in marriage.

In 1951 Roger responded to God's call to be a pastor and was licensed to preach as a probationer in the PA Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church. He first served as pastor for three small rural EUB churches in the Ortanna, PA, charge (1951-1958). During this time, he pursued his studies at Gettysburg Theological Seminary, receiving his BD in 1958 after he was already ordained as a pastor in the EUB church in 1956. In 1958 he was appointed to be the pastor at York Second EUB church in York, PA (1958-1962).

First Sylvia, and then Roger, felt God's call to serve in the mission field and they were commissioned as missionaries in 1962 at Salem EUB (now UM) church in Keedysville. In the years 1962-1965 Roger was first responsible for maintenance at Guinter Memorial Hospital in Bambar, Nigeria, where he also taught manual arts in the local senior primary school, and was then an evangelist and church developer in Lankoviri, Nigeria. After a year of furlough in the US, living in Dayton, OH, and graduate studies at United Theological Seminary, the family returned to Nigeria, 1966-1969, and lived in

Pero, where Roger continued the work as he had in Lankoviri, held a number of administrative offices, and served as mission field treasurer.

On the family's return to the US, Roger served as Mid-Atlantic regional director for CROP (Church World Service), 1970-1977, and was the initiator of the CROP Hunger Walks in the Mid-Atlantic area, with the first one in York, PA, in 1970. Since then, CROP Hunger Walks have been held in hundreds of communities annually, raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty.

Apart from interludes of working on the home farm in Keedysville, individual speaking engagements, and many mission trips (including several returns to Nigeria), Roger served local churches for over 20 years: Manor Church of the Brethren (Boonsboro, MD, 1976-1979); Grace Reformed UCC (Kearneysville, WV, 1981/82); Bosley and Grace Falls Road UMC (Baltimore County, MD 1983-1987); Bethel UMC (Rohrersville, MD) and Mt. Carmel UMC (1987-1990); Eilerslie UMC charge (Lanaconing, MD, 1990-1993); Calvary UMC (Great Cacapon, WV) and Mt. Zion UMC (Orleans Crossroads) (1995-1998) and several interim pastorates.

While at Bosley & Grace UMC, Roger started the Baltimore County Christian Workcamp in 1984, which has continued for 40 years, making repairs to homes for area residents in need each year in July. He also served as the Refugee Resettlement Coordinator of the UMC Baltimore/Washington Conference during 1990-2000. Well into his late eighties, Roger organized countless volunteer day trips to the CWS warehouse in New Windsor, MD, to help with "quality checks" on the health kits staged there for distribution to disaster areas. Roger was, in his later years, a member of Salem UMC in Keedysville, MD.