



David Buchanan Rivers

September 20, 2025

David Buchanan Rivers

1937 – 2025

Reverend David B Rivers passed into eternal life on Saturday, September 20, 2025, in Wyncote Pennsylvania, following a long illness.

Born May 22, 1937, in New Haven, Connecticut, he was the son of Reverend Burke Rivers and Phyllis McCausland Rivers, who predeceased him. A brother, Richard Rivers, also preceded him in death.

David Rivers spent his childhood largely in Johnson City, New York and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where his father was the priest serving All Saints Church, Johnson City and St Stephen's Church, Wilkes-Barre. He loved vacations on the Maine coast with his family. He graduated from Wyoming Seminary, Kingston and Haverford College. After teaching English at The Pennington School in New Jersey, he earned a Master of Divinity degree at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 1961, Rev. Rivers was wedded to Elizabeth Zeller; Dave and Liz recently celebrated 64 years of marriage. He viewed his ministry as their ministry. Their first parish was St. Elizabeth's Schnecksville, where he was ordained in 1965 by Bishop Frederick Warnecke. Interested in adventure, they explored mission opportunities. After several months learning Spanish in Cuernavaca, Mexico, Rev. Rivers became the Priest in Charge at San Esteban, San Pedro de Marcoris in the Dominican Republic. After 3 years as a missionary, they returned to the United States and Rev. Rivers was called to Gloria Dei (Old

Swedes) Church in Philadelphia, PA. Rev. Rivers was the Rector at Old Swedes Church from 1972 through 2004. While serving this historic church (the oldest church in Pennsylvania), he oversaw renovations and commemorated the 300th anniversary of its construction. For several years, he was Dean of the Episcopal Southwark deanery. He was a member of the Swedish Colonial Society. Rev. Rivers then served in interim and part-time roles at Philadelphia area churches, including Holy Trinity Church, Lansdale and St. Dunstan's Church, Blue Bell.

Rev. Rivers was a gifted preacher of the word of God, following in his father's footsteps. He was a leader by example, and genuinely interested in people from all walks of life who he welcomed to church. His sense of humor, fondness for jokes and love of a good party extended throughout his lifetime. He could be an irreverent reverend.

A fishing, hunting and camping enthusiast, Rev. Rivers enjoyed time outdoors particularly at the New Jersey shore, in northeast Pennsylvania and at Algonquin Park, Ontario. He was a devoted Eagles, Phillies and Penn State fan. He was a skilled photographer, particularly for black and white photos, and maintained a dark room for many years. Rev. Rivers appreciated classical and folk music, and sang bass in church choirs as a boy and adult. He supported music as part of services as well as separate musical programs, considering music to be an integral part of church life.

Rev. Rivers is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Zeller Rivers; children Christine (Stephen Albert) Rivers; Julia (Mark Chatman-Royce) Rivers; Diana (Lawrence) Bloom; and John (Frances) Rivers. He is also survived by his grandchildren Meagan, Nicholas, Kyra, Lukas, Alexander, Robert, Noel, Larson and Beatrice; great grandchildren Julian and Sienna; and numerous nieces and nephews. Rev. Rivers is survived by his sister-in-law Virginia Rivers. Please join us for a memorial service and celebration of life on Saturday, November 15, 2 pm, at Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Church, Philadelphia. Officiants will include Rev. Christopher Micklewright of Old Swedes Church and Rev. Christopher Exley, All Hallows Church, Wyncote.

Internment in the church graveyard will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Church, Philadelphia.

For information or to send condolences, please visit rachubinskiandrogersfh.com.

Cemetery Details

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes)

916 South Swanson Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 15. 2:00 PM (ET)

Gloria Dei (Old Swedes)
916 South Swanson Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Tribute Wall

BM

“ Liz, I'm holding you in prayer and light through this time to weep... after so many decades of life with Dave by your side. And for your whole family who walk through this together with you. God bless you all, my friend. <3

Bernadette McBride - October 27, 2025 at 11:43 AM

BG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Brian Gochez-Kerr - September 26, 2025 at 12:38 PM



Nice picture.

Susan Steele - September 28, 2025 at 07:58 PM