



Rev. Laverne Jacobs

December 11, 2025

The Reverend Canon Laverne Valentino Burton Jacobs of Walpole Island First Nation passed away peacefully in Wallaceburg on Thursday, December 11, 2025 at the age of 83. Laverne was the son of the late Burton Norman and Dorothy Evelyn (Isaac) Jacobs. Beloved husband of Lynn Anne (Bee). Loving father of Mary Sue Jacobs (the late Michael Myers), Cynthia Jacobs and Charles Jacobs. Dear Mishoo of Calvin, Krystal (James), Shawn (Heather), Eric, Sylvia, Daniel and Adrian and Great Mishoo of Caden, Jackson, Marrissa, Kaldr and Caspian. Brother of Elaine, Alan (Bernita), Gayleen (the late Frank) and the late Ralph (Marguerite). Uncle of Clinton (Anika), Inez (Darren), Alexis, Athena (Stephane) and Great Uncle of Salem, Shelby, Corbin and Liberty.

Reaching beyond his own family, Laverne dedicated himself to the service of his expansive, extended family—his people. Inspired by the visionary leadership of his father, Burton, and with the loving support of family and community, Laverne both began and ended his ministry within his home, Walpole Island First Nation. He was ordained an Anglican priest in 1975, and served churches at Forest and Kettle Point, as well as Walpole Island. His Christian faith was deep, solid and thoughtful.

Laverne spent the middle years of his ordained ministry reaching out to Indigenous people across Canada and indeed, around the world. He

dedicated much of his life to pushing the Anglican and United churches to live up to Christ's inclusive, loving vision.

Although he was a gentle, soft-spoken man, Laverne also possessed an iron resolve, a wise political sense and a commitment to educating and cultivating non-Indigenous allies. During his decades-long guidance leading national Indigenous ministries in first the Anglican Church and then the United Church he pushed tirelessly and with a surprising amount of success against obstinate colonial structures and systemic racism. He played a key role in opening a space in those institutions where once very marginalized Indigenous Christians have increasingly been able to find full belonging and to express their Indigenous and Christian identities as equals with the non-Indigenous parts of the churches.

Laverne also showed outstanding leadership in pushing both churches to own their shameful residential-schools history, and played a key role in instigating and guiding their healing responses, often despite much reluctance and foot dragging within the governing structures. Despite many obstacles, he never lost his love for people, and his ability to laugh with friends at the absurdities. He often said: "If you are going to be a bridge, you have to be prepared to be walked on." Laverne was respected and loved by all who knew him in these circles.

Family and friends are invited to gather for visitation at the Haycock-Cavanagh Funeral Home, 409 Nelson Street in Wallaceburg on Tuesday, December 16 from 5 – 7 PM. The funeral will be celebrated at the Walpole Island United Church (159 New Ferry Rd) at 1 PM on Wednesday, December 17 with visiting at the church from 11:30 – 1 pm, prior to the funeral. Interment to follow at Highbanks Cemetery. Cherished stories and tributes may be left for the family at www.CavanaghFuneralHome.ca

If desired, donations to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Center may be left at the funeral home 519.627.3231 or at 290 Zielke Dr. Beausejour, MB., R0E 0C0 / 204-268-3913 / Connect@sandysaulteaux.ca

Tribute Wall



“ Haycock-Cavanagh Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Rev. Laverne Jacobs



Haycock-Cavanagh Funeral Home - December 16, 2025 at 11:16 AM

KS

A beautiful tribute to a beautiful man. My condolences and love.

Kim Sargent

Kim Sargent - December 17, 2025 at 07:42 AM

LC

Remembering Laverne through his dedicated leadership with Indigenous Committees in the United Church. His leadership was an inspiration to me. Lewis Coffman

Lewis Coffman - December 17, 2025 at 07:22 PM

RJ

“ Lynn:
I am sorry to hear of Laverne's passing him. It was when I was a choir member at All Saints when he and Erwin Oliver served at All Saints. My condolences to you and your family.

*Bob Jones
Organist & Choir Director,
St. Stephen's Church (Ottawa)*

Robert Jones - January 28 at 11:34 PM

JC

“ My condolences to the Jacobs family. It was a blessing to speak with him one last time in October when I visited the Island. He displayed, as always, a strong, yet gentle presence rooted in our culture and love as truly required in the Christian faith. I miss him.

Janice Command - December 21, 2025 at 11:51 PM

WP

“ I am so grateful for the conversations I have had with Laverne, including at Walpole Island where he welcomed me and others for day of learning and appreciation, gathering in the beauty of the land. Grateful for his kindness which he so willingly shared. Condolences and peace to Laverne's family and his community and may the many memories offer strength and wisdom. Will Postma

Will Postma - December 18, 2025 at 08:25 AM

NS

“ I just learned of Laverne's death..... too late to attend the funeral. He was such a valued colleague when we served together in the United Church. I often think of his wisdom. My deep sympathy to his family and to all those who cared about him,

Nora Sanders - December 17, 2025 at 06:03 PM

DR

“ Condolences to Reverend Jacobs' immediate and extended family. The church and the community have lost a beautiful soul here on earth. He has “ascended into Heaven and is seated on the right hand of God”



Diane Rohrer - December 17, 2025 at 10:33 AM

CK

“ I appreciated Laverne’s gentle, deeply-spiritual leadership. He was so kind and respectful and worked to build bridges of faith and love. I honour the gift of his ministry in this area. My sympathy to his family and community.

Cheryl Kirk - December 17, 2025 at 10:11 AM

AN

“ abee Nahdee-Southgate sent a virtual gift in memory of Laverne Jacobs



abee Nahdee-Southgate - December 16, 2025 at 02:09 PM

SS

“ The United Church of Canada gives thanks for all the gifts Laverne has shared with us, both in Indigenous Ministries and across the whole church. His leadership was both firm and gentle, and we are better for the time we had with him. We pray for the Jacobs family, and Laverne's spirit journey home.

Sara Stratton - December 16, 2025 at 01:06 PM

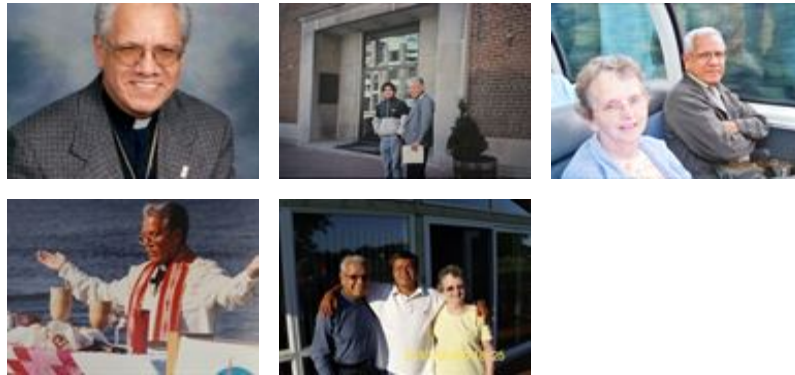
RD

“ So sorry to hear of your passing. Laverne married us 29 yrs ago and we are still married. He has always had kind words to share with us. Now we are praying for him as he prayed for us all these yrs. Rest in peace Laverne. Thank you for being a part of our lives.

Ray & Harriet Dodge - December 16, 2025 at 11:23 AM



“ 125 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Haycock-Cavanagh Funeral Home - December 16, 2025 at 11:11 AM

DS

“ *Laverne’s faith, kindness, and willingness to guide those he worked alongside were a profound gift to the work of reconciliation. There are hardly words to express the great esteem in which I held him. His quiet wisdom, generosity of spirit, and unwavering commitment left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. I will miss you deeply. Travel well.*

Debbie Siertsema - December 16, 2025 at 10:41 AM

SM

“ To Laverne’s family,

As a former colleague of Laverne’s, I wish to thank all of you for sharing this incredible man with all those of us who grew to love him. Laverne was a man of immense faith not only in God but in God’s people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. A more humble and gentle man I have never known. Although we did not know each other well, his gentle spirit touched me in ways too numerous to count. May rest eternal now be his.

*With sympathy and blessings,
Rev. Sue McCullough*

Sue McCullough - December 15, 2025 at 06:30 PM

MM

“ *I met Laverne and Lynne through Victorious Ministry Through Christ and although I did not meet him often, he left an impression on me as a gentle, kind man of God. Hearing of his early life challenges and his accomplishments enhances the memories I have of him. My prayers are with Lynne and their family as they entrust him to God and receive the promised comfort of the Holy Spirit. P. Marg Moriyama*

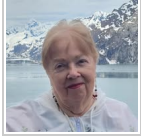
Margaret (Marg) Moriyama - December 15, 2025 at 05:17 PM

GH

“ *George Heldt lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs*



George Heldt - December 15, 2025 at 04:44 PM



“ *Laverne was a very dear friend to both my husband and I. So many wonderful memories of times shared together. My love and prayers to Lynn and the family.*



Beverly Lombard - December 15, 2025 at 03:19 PM

EM

“ *Eileen Myers lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs*



Eileen Myers - December 15, 2025 at 11:55 AM

RK

“ *Condolences to Laverne's family. Kind, gentle, respectful...these are just a few words that come to mind when thinking of him. Randy and Nanette Kewayosh*



Randy and Nanette Kewayosh - December 15, 2025 at 08:17 AM

LD

“ *Many years ago as a young pastor, I had the privilege of know Laverne Jacobs. Today I am still grateful for his gentle witness of faith.*



Lance Dixon - December 14, 2025 at 01:57 PM

JS

“ *Laverne was a giant in almost every way! As a friend, an advisor, an elder, a wisdom keeper, an advocate for "relationship", a bridge between cultures, and a spiritual guide, I loved him dearly, and will miss him. Travel well, dear friend!* ”

James Scott - December 14, 2025 at 11:05 AM

GF

“ *Gerry Flynn lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs* ”



Gerry Flynn - December 13, 2025 at 02:07 PM

DL

“ *Don & Kris Lee lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs* ”



Don & Kris Lee - December 13, 2025 at 11:24 AM

RB

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall* ”



Rebecca Boucher - December 13, 2025 at 10:56 AM

TS

“ Tracy Shaw lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs



Tracy Shaw - December 13, 2025 at 09:22 AM



“ I remember when all of us grandkids, would come together around Christmas. With our families of course. Mishoo would always get us all to try new foods. with different kinds of hot sauce, for the boys. It was funny watching them all try the hot sauces, with there tongues sticking out asking for water afterwards. Mishoo would have a little laugh about it too. Grandma would say Lavern in a stern tone. I've always loved Christmas get togethers at the grandparents house with everyone. Love you mishoo, forever in my heart.

Krystal Jacobs-Connell - December 13, 2025 at 08:50 AM



George McGaffey

“ George McGaffey lit a candle in memory of Laverne Jacobs



George McGaffey - December 13, 2025 at 08:15 AM