

Services set for Rev. Armstrong

Rev. Robert M. Armstrong, for nine years pastor of United Evangelical Church in Canton, died Sunday after a long battle with prostate cancer. He was 72 years old.

He retired from United Evangelical, known in the neighborhood as Batz's Church, on September 1.

A memorial service will be held at United Evangelical Church, S. East Avenue and Dillon Street, on Friday, November 19, at 4 p.m. Other services will be private.

Armstrong embraced many social causes, establishing a food bank at his church and providing companionship to troubled youths. United Evangelical sponsored a "super pantry," a service which not only provided food, but job training, counseling and money management advice to mothers on welfare.

Armstrong and the Rev. Joseph Bochenek, pastor of St. Brigid Roman Catholic Church across the street, had a special



relationship, attending each other's services at times and even concelebrating at Easter, with Armstrong visiting St. Brigid's for the Easter Vigil and Father Joe coming to "St. Batz's," as he called it, for the sunrise service.

The two churches also held a joint vacation Bible school. "He is really going to be missed here," said Marie Dunn, parish secretary at St. Brigid.

Armstrong was an active member of the Canton Ministerium, participating in ceremonies such as the Palm Sunday procession and the annual blessing of the animals.

"He was a very good ecumenist," said Lee Hudson, pastor of Messiah English Lutheran Church in Canton. "All of us were committed to working together across the divide."

One of the hallmarks of his tenure was that he really did have a passion for Canton as a neighborhood," said Hudson. "He did all the community-building kinds of things. And an aspect of his spirituality was that he was very upbeat. He had a pat on the back for everyone in the room and handed out encouragement and affirmation to everyone."

He is survived by his wife, Priscilla; a daughter, Sarah Alice Herrmann, of Buffalo, N.Y.; a son, Keith R. Armstrong, of San Francisco, Calif.; a sister, Evelyn Fisher, brother, Richard W. Armstrong; and three grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to Hospice of Baltimore, Gilchrist Center, the American Cancer Society or the church of your choice.