

# E-Share

Living Skies Regional Council of  
The United Church of Canada  
January 6, 2026

## John Russell Barker April 2, 1943 – December 18, 2025



Suddenly at Kingston General Hospital on December 18, 2025 John passed away surrounded by loved ones. Left to mourn his passing are: his beloved wife, Mary (Sweet, Whitney), his cherished sons, Michael and Thomas and grandchildren, Killian, Rowan and Siresha, and his dear sister Janet and her husband Rod Saunders. John was predeceased by his first wife Nan in 2004. John extended his love to Mary's family: Christie (Dwain) and her grandchildren, Ben and Ethan, and her siblings Jane (Greg) McCarthy and David (Ruby) Sweet.

John was born in Sudbury to parents Russell and Norma. He was fiercely proud of his Northern Ontario heritage and felt most at home in 'Shield' country. After high school he got, what he always called, an "excellent" university education at the Royal Military College of Canada and subsequently was posted at Base Gagetown in New Brunswick. While living there he met Nan, and after he had repaid his time to the military, he - in his words - "decided there had to be a better path to world peace than armed conflict". And so, with his new wife beside him, began his Theological Studies at Queen's University in Kingston. As clergy he worked within the United Church of Canada as a longtime member of the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Unit working on peace and disarmament, social justice and human rights. John was also one of the representatives from the United Church of Canada on the board of 'Project Ploughshares', an independent research institute and advocacy organization committed to peace. As well, he was on the Board of World Food Grains Bank – All these important commitments while he was serving churches in Seeley's Bay, Capreole, Amherstburg, St. Thomas, Essex, and Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

John retired to Stratford because he loved the plays, but soon after he moved back to Seeley's Bay when he and Mary married. John loved the warm sense of community with friends and Mary's many extended family members in Seeley's Bay.

His funeral was held at Seeley's Bay United Church on Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>. For those wishing to do so, a donation in his memory may be made to the Seeley's Bay Pastoral Charge by cash, cheque or e-transfer and would be gratefully received. [spbpastoralcharge@gmail.com](mailto:spbpastoralcharge@gmail.com)

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant".

Arrangements entrusted to Scotland Funeral Home of Elgin, Ontario