



JOHN MITCHELL RAY

February 13, 2026

John Mitchell Ray born June 07, 1947, in Glasgow, Kentucky and following a 10-year battle with cancer, peacefully departed this life to be in the presence of his Lord and King Jesus Christ Friday February 13, 2026, at Grandview Hospital in Hoover, Alabama. He was preceded in death by his parents Teddy S. Ray and Helen B. Ray. His sister Susan Carol Phifer, his mother-in-law Rachel Howton, father-in-law Troy Howton, best friend from childhood Jessie Ferguson, minister mentor and friend James “Jim” Savage.

He is survived by his loving wife of 38 years Karen Ray, sons Jeff Ray (Georgia), Jonathan Howton (Kathy), grandchildren Hannah Kate, Jackson, Rowan, Brooklyn, Julia and was waiting in excited anticipation for twins coming in July, brothers William “Billy” Ray (Mary) Roger Ray (Hui) brother-in-law Mike Howton, Sherrill Howton, nieces Jenny, Jamie, Josey, Jandee, Joleene, Lauren, Valerie, Jessica, nephews Bradley and Joseph.

John worked in the retail world for over 32 years in management at Grants, Service Merchandise, Golbro’s (where he met Karen), Office Depot, Montgomery Ward – Electric Avenue and Home Image, Waccamaw and Marks Fitzgerald; living in Kentucky, Indiana, Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Wisconsin, before answering the call to go into the ministry on a Sunday morning in 1999, at Riverchase UMC while singing the congregational song - Here I Am Lord. In 2000 he studied at Emory in Georgia

and became a Licensed Local Pastor appointed to Riverchase UMC where he served continuously teaching a 2-hour class on Wednesday mornings and assisting in the Sunday services and even still preaching from time to time right up until his transition to Heaven February 13, 2026. John loved the studying and teaching the history of the Bible. He loved people and he loved helping people develop a relationship with Christ, so they could know not only who they were but also WHO'S they were. He was a loving supportive, encouraging husband, father, and friend. Known for using his Kentuckyisms like "Fine as a frog hair split three ways" or "Make you stand on your head and gargle peanut butter" or "If I was any better, I would have to take something for it" (to make people laugh). John LOVED others, and he knew others loved him.

There will be a viewing and visitation service on Thursday February 19, 2026, 5:00 – 7:00 PM in the sanctuary of Riverchase United Methodist Church as well as a Celebration of Life service on Saturday February 28, 2026, beginning at 2:00 PM with visitation to follow - also in the sanctuary. Please be thinking of your favorite John Ray memory so it can be recorded on a brief video on the site of the services for the family to have to assist them in their healing of the loss of this remarkable, wonderful man. The service will be live streamed from the church website, riverchaseumc.org Riverchase United Methodist Church located at 1953 Old Montgomery Highway, Hoover, AL 35244 (205)987-4030.

Tribute Wall

CM

“ *Carla and Michelle purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.*



Carla and Michelle - February 25 at 12:38 PM

AW

“ *I to am miss you my friend Rev john Ray*

Allen Word - February 23 at 03:33 PM

JE

“ *Kelley & I will always have fond memories of John Ray. He was our Sunday School teacher years ago at Riverchase when the church was growing & on fire in the truth of God's word.*

John had a profound influence on me & contributed to my spiritual growth & transformation as a follower of Jesus Christ.

We will see our brother again because we believe. 🙏🔥

Love to Karen & the family, ❤️

Jay Evers, Birmingham, AL

Jay Evers - February 21 at 02:11 PM

JP

“ Of course I am very saddened by the loss of John. I consider John a close friend and someone I looked up to. Marcia and I were in John's Bible study for 19 years. To say the least, we really learned a lot and always looked forward to class. In addition to his deep religious knowledge, John was a learned historian. Being a bit of a history buff myself, it was always a treat to exchange knowledge in class. One of the other things that always stood out to me about John was the fact that he had a business background before he became a pastor. I always looked at that as a tremendous asset for the Riverchase UMC staff.

While I am saddened, I am relieved to know that John will not have to suffer anymore. Above most others, he has certainly earned his heavenly reward.

James Pressler - February 19 at 10:28 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.



February 19 at 03:58 AM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.



February 19 at 02:47 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.*



February 18 at 08:32 PM



“ *Steve & Betty Dyer purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.*



Steve & Betty Dyer - February 16 at 06:03 PM



“ *Steve & Betty Dyer planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of JOHN MITCHELL RAY.*

Steve & Betty Dyer - February 16 at 06:03 PM



“ *To a great brother in law he is greatly missed.*

Michael Howton - February 16 at 11:20 AM



Mr. Ray was a wonderful boss and a trusted friend of my family. I have known him for almost 40 years and will miss him terribly. May he rest in peace.

Linda Raymond - February 16 at 04:37 PM