

Gaylan Westhoff, 76, passed comfortably and peacefully at Bethany Retirement Living in Fargo, ND, on February 27, 2026, under the watchful care of Bethany staff and Sanford Hospice Care.

Gaylan was born to mother Emma Popken and father George Westhoff on March 23, 1949 in Le Mars, Iowa.

A few years later, Gaylan was lovingly accepted by Uncle Johnny and Aunt Dora, and was raised on the family farm in nearby Craig, Iowa.

Receiving his primary education in a one-room schoolhouse, many of his days were full of feeding the farm animals, baling hay, and driving tractors, in nearby proximity to the Wells Blue Bunny ice cream factory, a personal favorite.

In September 1968, Gaylan enlisted in the United States Navy, spending four years in service, completing two tours in Vietnam.

After returning to civilian life, Gaylan attended courses at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. There he met Barbara Jean Koenig among a group of friends, took her hand, and they began their lives together.

Additional jobs for Gaylan included work as a machinist with Gus Pech Manufacturing, some time as a private investigator, and after the family (with young son Michael) moved to the rural farming town of Westby, MT for Barbara's first (and only) church call, Gaylan took a job as a county and small region dispatcher, taking calls for assistance, organizing and maneuvering local police, firefighting services, ambulances, and first responders to assist those in need, even taking additional classes and pioneering the development of the 911 system in the area.

Card games, laughter, a little handyman work around the church parsonage, volunteer operation of the water truck for the local fire department, listening to radio and attending in-person baseball games, cheering on Michael at T-Ball and Little League games, on occasion filling in as lay minister for local services at the ELCA parish that Barbara served, watching Star Trek on television out of Saskatchewan Canada thanks to the large roof antenna, days were varied and full.

Over the years, retirement came for both Gaylan and Barbara, with them moving to Fargo to be closer to son, Michael, in 2015.

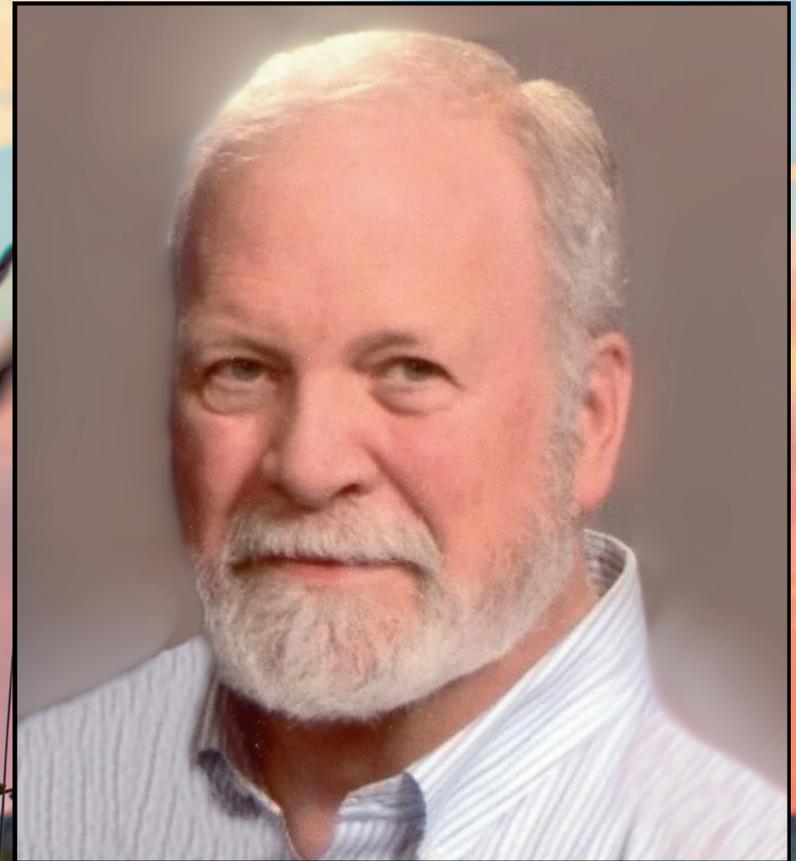
Life continued with finding St. John as their new home church, attending local pub trivia on occasion, keeping up with doctor's appointments, watching entertainment comfortably at home, sharing bad jokes, and good stories.

Moving to Bethany Retirement Living in early July 2025, Gaylan was wonderfully cared for, visited by friends and family, until his passing. Family would like to very fully and gratefully thank the staff, nurses, and chaplain of Bethany for their ministrations to and for Gaylan in their capacities.

Gaylan was preceded in death by his mother, Emma; father, George; sister, Glenda; wife, Barbara; brother, Wilbur; and extended family.

Gaylan is survived by his son, Michael; his sister-in-law, Nancy; and her family and extended family.

IN LOVING MEMORY



GAYLAN G. WESTHOFF

March 23, 1949 - February 27, 2026

TAPS

Day is done, gone the sun
from the lake, from the hill,
from the sky.
All is well, safely rest. God is nigh.

Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky.

As we go, this we know. God is nigh.

There is never a life without sadness,
There is never a heart free from pain;
If one seeks in this world for true solace,
He seeks it forever in vain.

So when to your heart comes the sorrow
Of losing some dear one you've known,
'Tis the touch of God's sickle at harvest
Since He reaps in the fields He has sown.

And He will wipe out every tear from
their eyes,

And death will be no more,

Neither will mourning nor outcry

Nor pain be anymore.

The former things have passed away.

~ Revelation 21:4

Remembering

GAYLAN G. WESTHOFF

March 23, 1949 - February 27, 2026

Funeral Service

Monday, March 9, 2026 - 10:30 AM
St. John Lutheran Church
Fargo, North Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Chad Brucklacher

Congregational Hymns

Dawn Papenfuss, *Organist*

“Amazing Grace” #779

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” #504

“Spirit of Gentleness” #396

Military Honors

Navy Honor Guard

Fargo Memorial Honor Guard

Burial

Monday, March 9, 2026 - 1:00 PM
Fargo National Cemetery
Harwood, North Dakota

All are invited to a luncheon following the service.



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Cremation • Burial