

Merle was born on March 16, 1930, in Chamberlain to parents Emil and Frieda (Drafahl) Ketelhut. He was baptized and confirmed at Emmanuel Lutheran Church near Ola. When the church closed, his family joined the Zion Lutheran Church in Chamberlain, where he remained a member for the rest of his life. He attended Pretzer County school and graduated from Chamberlain High School in 1948. He played football and basketball, and at the urging of his older sister Betty, got involved in chorus, which gave him a better appreciation of music. He attended one year of college at South Dakota State University, where he was a member of the football team, and then decided to return to the family farm. In 1952, he was drafted into the service and served two years with the United States Marine Corps. He was originally stationed at Camp Pendleton in California, and then spent six months in Japan. Merle married Nila Korzan on November 17, 1957, at Zion Lutheran Church. To this union, three sons were born Brian, Mark, and James.

Merle was a hard-working, innovative farmer. He wasn't afraid to implement new farming practices or equipment. He was one of the first to plant soybeans when it was thought they wouldn't do well in this area. When big round balers became available, he was one of the first in Brule County to purchase one. He built two big barns and had a successful farrow-to-finish hog operation until 1975, when a devastating tornado did extensive damage to the buildings. In 1976, center-pivot irrigation systems were installed in this area, and Merle operated two systems for several years.

Merle enjoyed hunting, fishing, and sports when he was younger. In his later years, he and Nila fell in love with golf and spent many enjoyable hours on the golf course with friends and family. He especially enjoyed his weekly outings with the "Old Guys" at the Chamberlain County Club, which consisted of a little golf and a lot of bragging and harassment! Merle and Nila also enjoyed playing cards with grandkids, family, and neighbors. When he was semi-retired, they went on several fun trips, one of which was an Alaskan cruise to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Merle was survived by wife Nila, sons Brian (Tammy), Mark (Terice), and James (Natalie), grandchildren Kayla (Matt) Coronado, Nathaniel (Carli) Ketelhut, Colton (MiKayla) Ketelhut, Tate (Brooklynne) Ketelhut, Laurel Ketelhut (girlfriend Kasey), and Abigail Ketelhut (boyfriend Logan), and great-grandchildren Carter, Ethan, and Zachary Coronado and Lauren Ketelhut.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a brother Ivan, sisters Betty Callen and Genevieve Yocum, and brothers-in-law Joe Callen and Ralph Yocum.

Merle loved his family and his Lord. The family is extremely blessed to have had him for as long as they did and are grateful that he is now with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



# Close The Gate

For this one farmer the worries are over,  
lie down and rest your head,  
Your time has been and struggles enough,  
put the tractor in the shed.

Years were not easy, many downright hard,  
but your faith in God transcended,  
Put away your tools and sleep in peace.

The fences have all been mended.

You raised a fine family,  
worked the land well and always followed the Son,  
Hang up your shovel inside of the barn;  
your work here on earth is done.

A faith few possess led your journey through life,  
often a jagged and stony way.

The sun is setting, the cattle are all bedded,  
and here now is the end of your day.

Your love of God's soil has passed on to your kin;  
the stories flow like fine wine.

Wash off your work boots in the puddle left by  
blessed rain one final time.

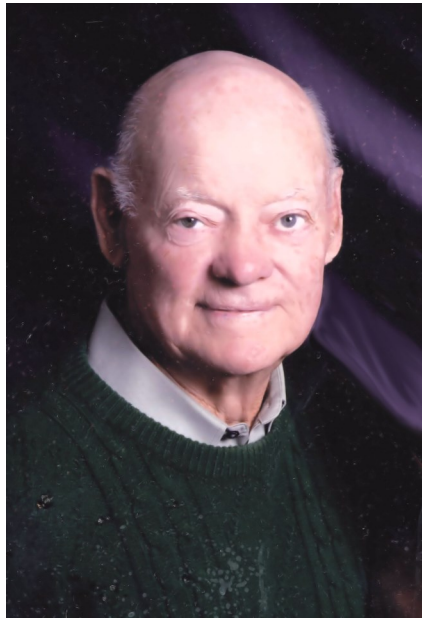
You always believed that the good Lord would provide  
and He always had somehow,

Take off your gloves and put them down,  
no more sweat and worry for you now.

Your labor is done, your home now is Heaven;  
no more must you wait,

Your legacy lives on, your love of the land,  
and we will

*Close the gate.*



*Merle Eugene Ketelhut*

March 16, 1930 ~ September 1, 2022



**Prayer Service**

Zion Lutheran Church  
Chamberlain, SD

7:00 p.m., Monday, September 5, 2022

**Funeral Services**

Zion Lutheran Church  
Chamberlain, SD

11:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 6, 2022

**Officiating**

Rev. Robert Hinckley

**Music**

Mel Hargens ~ Organist/Pianist

Patti Juhnke ~ Soloist

Brian Jones ~ Soloist

**Military Graveside Rites By**

American Legion Potter Post No. 3

VFW Post No. 6436

Chamberlain, SD

**Interment**

Riverview Cemetery

Chamberlain, SD

2:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 6, 2022