

IN LOVING
Memory
John Edward Nelson



Mass of Christian Burial

Saturday, August 9, 2025 - 10:00 AM
St. Ann Catholic Church - Slayton, Minnesota

Celebrant - Father Peter Schuster

Eulogist - Bradon Nelson

Reader - Butch Engbarth

Scripture Readings

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 John 15:12-17
Philippians 3:20-21

Organist - Stella Lingen

Cantor - Michelle Wood

Congregational Hymns

"How Great Thou Art" "Be Not Afraid"
"The Old Rugged Cross" "Softly and Tenderly"

Recorded Music Selection

"Amazing Grace" - as recorded by Chris Tomlin

Honorary Casket Bearers

Wayne Howe Tony Talamantez

Casket Bearers

Jerry Pischke Dan Davidson
Keith Mortenson Darrin Haroldson
Brad Engbarth Erick Engbarth

Interment

Sillerud Cemetery
Balaton, Minnesota

Arrangements Entrusted To
HARTQUIST FUNERAL HOME



Celebrating
THE LIFE OF
John Edward Nelson
October 8, 1970 - July 31, 2025

John Nelson, 54, of Mankato, MN, passed away on July 31, 2025, after bravely facing an illness that had no cure. If heart alone could have conquered it, John would have been the one to beat it. He left this world surrounded by love, pride, and an unshakable spirit.



John was born on October 8, 1970, in Pipestone, MN, during a great blizzard - a dramatic arrival that seemed to foreshadow the strength and resilience he would carry throughout his life. His work ethic was inherited from his father and began developing from birth, and through growing up on a family farm. Early mornings, hard labor, and responsibility were a way of life; whether it was baling hay, milking cows, or tackling field work, John learned early what it meant to show up and work hard, every single day. John held several jobs simultaneously while in high school. He often would reminisce of his time with DeBoer Motors in Tyler, MN and his time working alongside Gene Dressen - a mentor who helped spark a lifelong passion for automotive repair and who also gave him the nickname "The Flat Head Stud." During this time, John was able to take ownership of his beloved 1950 F100 and bring it back to life. John graduated from RTR High School and went on to earn a degree in Automotive Technology from Mankato Technical College, completing his program in 1991. His passion for repairs and helping others followed him into a long career as a trusted and gifted mechanic. He spent years working with Ernie Zinke and credited much of his development to mentors like Ernie, Terry Stelton, and Ed Pankratz - men he deeply respected. John also worked for the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a mechanic and with the City of Mankato for over 20 years where he was a mechanic at the central garage and then in the water treatment department. Throughout his career, John forged friendships. His friendships were strong, rooted in loyalty, humor, shared experience, and the kind of trust that only comes from always showing up and doing the right thing. If John called you a friend, you knew you had someone you could count on - always.

On September 26, 1992, John married Janine DeVos. Together they raised two incredible boys, Bradon and Bryce, and loved watching them grow into the men they are today. John was devoted to being involved in their lives - from taking them to activities and events, sharing daily phone calls, to simply cheering them on every step of the way. His greatest pride and joy in life were his boys! He was their rock, their teacher, and their biggest fan.

John was an avid outdoorsman. He found much peace and pleasure in hunting, UTVing, snowmobiling, boating, and fishing - always happiest with the wind in his face and a project on the horizon. He loved the water, the land, and the freedom those outdoor adventures brought him. John treasured the relationships he built throughout his life. He made deep, lasting connections everywhere he went - from the shop, to the lake, to the lodge.

As a proud 16-year member of the Elks Lodge #225 in Mankato, he found purpose in giving back. He was a natural teacher and often reminded those around him to "always help someone out and make the time - you're only as busy as you want to be." He was also the kind of man who always put the needs of others before his own. Whether it was fixing a car, staying late to help a friend, or offering support to someone in need, John showed up - not for recognition, but out of genuine kindness.

John is lovingly remembered by his mother, Sharon Engbarth-Nelson of Balaton; his children, Bradon Nelson of Detroit Lakes, and Bryce Nelson of North Mankato; the love of his life, Brenda Dobie of Mankato; his siblings, Darla (Paul) Philipp of Fairmont, and Kindel (Deb) Nelson of Lake Wilson; and by his nieces and nephews: Amanda Philipp, Austin (Anna) Philipp, Josh (Sara) Roggenbuck, Jett Nelson, along with Macie and Layla Roggenbuck - all of whom he held close in his heart. John was preceded in death by his father, John Arden Nelson.

John believed deeply in living a life worth loving. He wanted to be remembered saying, "Don't waste your life. Be with the person you love! Life is too short." And that's exactly how he lived - with grit, humor, generosity, and heart. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered by his family, his friends, and all those whose lives he touched.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages you to honor John's memory by helping someone in need, picking up a wrench, or simply making time for those you love - just like he always did.