



## *I Am Free*

*Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,  
I'm following the path God laid for me.  
I took His hand when I heard Him call,  
I turned my back and left it all.  
I could not stay another day, to laugh,  
To love, to work or play.  
Tasks undone must stay that way  
I've found peace at the close of the day.  
If parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Ah, yes, these things I too will miss.  
Be not burdened with times of sorrow  
I wish for you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My life's been full, I savoured much  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.  
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now the undue grief.  
Lift up your hearts and share with me,  
God wants me now, He set me free.*



Scan to watch Joanne's  
Celebration of Life video.

**WEIGEL**  
Funeral and Cremation Service

**Buehler-Larson**  
Funeral and Cremation Service

# *Celebrating*

THE LIFE OF



## JOANNE BECKMAN

November 25, 1950 - February 16, 2025

**Joanne Beckman**, 74, of New Salem, passed away peacefully at her home on February 16, 2025, after a courageous seven-year battle with cancer, surrounded by the love of her family.

Joanne was born on November 25, 1950, to Frank and Frances (Pierce) Wherley in Minot, ND. The Wherley family later moved to Dickinson, ND, where she graduated from Trinity High School in 1968. She went on to attend Dickinson State College where she met the love of her life, Dale Beckman, in the admissions line, in their freshman year. Joanne graduated from Dickinson State College in 1972 with a B.S. Degree in English and Speech.

Joanne and Dale were married on May 29, 1971, at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Dickinson, ND. Their love story was one of partnership, laughter and devotion. Together they built a life full of joy, adventure and deep family bonds. They were blessed with two daughters, Erin and Megan, who, along with their families, were the pride and joy of Joanne's life.

Joanne dedicated her life to education and public service. She began teaching at New Salem Public School, where she spent 24 ½ years teaching English. Joanne was an incredible teacher and imparted the importance of good grammar, a well-rounded vocabulary and an ability to write effectively on to her students. She passed on her love of literature as well. Her lessons have undoubtedly benefited all of her students throughout their lives. Her passion for coaching Speech and Drama helped shape the confidence and creativity of countless students. In 1997, Joanne changed course and became the Administrative Assistant to Roger Johnson, North Dakota's Commissioner of Agriculture, before spending six years as a Field Representative for Senator Heidi Heitkamp. Through every role she took on, Joanne's heart for service and her ability to connect with people made a lasting impact.

Joanne's interests and talents were as vibrant as her personality. She was a loyal fan of New Salem-Almont Wrestling, always supporting Dale and the countless coaches and wrestlers she knew throughout the years. You always knew when she was in the gym because of her signature "screech" when things got hairy for one of her wrestlers. She was an encouraging and supportive force for her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in all their endeavors. Her baking skills were legendary – her brownies and decorated sugar cookies were famous among family and friends. She often joked about inventing an oven that could bake treats on an engine while she commuted to Bismarck. Joanne also loved decorating for every season, turning her home and office into festive, welcoming spaces. She cherished time with her family and friends, whether playing games, traveling or enjoying her beloved BUNCO and Book Club nights.

Deeply committed to her community, Joanne served on the Boards of the Dickinson State Alumni Association, the North Dakota State Fair Foundation, the Kennedy Foundation and the Mandan Library. She was also actively involved in politics, serving as the State Secretary for the Democratic Party for 24 years, acting as District Chair, assisting with numerous campaigns and even running for the legislature. In New Salem, she was active in Women's Life, served on the New Salem City Council and was a dedicated member of St. Pius V Catholic Church.

The greatest joy in Joanne's life was her family. She will be profoundly missed by her loving husband of 53 years, Dale; her daughters, Erin (Wade) Hannig and Megan (Dan) Riddle; her grandchildren, Brady (Jerilyn) Beckman, Reed Beckman, Levi (Jocelyn) Hannig, Gabby Hannig, Owen and Cole Riddle; and her great-grandchildren, Hattie and Birdie Beckman, Miloh and Baby Hannig, arriving soon. She is also survived by her siblings, Nancy (Tom) Sivak and Michael (Jude) Wherley; In-Laws, Judy Martinez, Cleo (Rodney) Blair, Arne (Janet) Beckman, Sally Rugroden, Sherry Gunderson, and many cherished nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Patrick Wherley, In-Laws, Carl and Sylvia (Bjelland) Beckman, Tony Martinez, Allan Beckman, Jerry Rugroden, Ron Gunderson, Elsie, Cindy and Kay Beckman.

Joanne's warmth, kindness and boundless energy touched so many lives. Her legacy will live on in the hearts of those who loved her.

**Parish Rosary/Vigil**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025; 7:00 PM**  
**St. Pius V Catholic Church, New Salem, ND**

**Funeral Liturgy**

**Friday, February 28, 2025; 10:00 AM**  
**St. Pius V Catholic Church, New Salem, ND**

**Celebrant**

**Fr. Stephen Foloronso**

**Eucharistic Minister**

**Tim Morman**

**Musicians**

**Robin Doll, Rocky Schaaf, Joell Letzring, & Dana Pazdernik**

Opening Song

*"Here I Am, Lord"*

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**Liturgy of the Word**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

Lector

Mary Lou Klemisch

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 122

*"The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want."*

New Testament Reading

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

Lector

Kathy Holle

Gospel Reading

John 14:1-6

Homily

Prayers of the Faithful

Gabby Hannig

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**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of Gifts Song

*"Age to Age"*

Presentation of Gifts

Erin Hannig & Megan Riddle

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Song

*"In Every Age"*

Final Commendation

*"Quietly, Peacefully"*

Closing Song

*"All Is Well With My Soul"*

**Graveside Service**

**St. Pius Cemetery**  
**New Salem, ND**

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***The family invites you for lunch and fellowship in the church luncheon hall following the graveside service.***

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*"The purpose of life is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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