

Letting Go

The Angels gathered near your bed,
so very close to you.
For they knew the *pain and suffering*
that you were going through.

I thought about so many things,
as I held tightly to your hand.
Oh, HOW I WISHED that you were strong
and happy once again.

But your eyes were looking homeward,
to that place beyond the sky.
Where JESUS held His outstretched arms,
it was time *to say goodbye.*

I struggled with my SELFISH THOUGHTS,
for I wanted you to stay.
So we could walk and talk again,
like we did - just yesterday.

But JESUS KNEW THE ANSWER,
and I knew He loved you so.
So I gave to you life's greatest gift,
the gift of letting go.

Now my heart will carry MEMORIES
of the love you gave to me
Until we meet again in heaven,
where the best is yet to be.

Celebrating THE *Life* OF

Karleen Marie Wernsing

OCTOBER 8, 1957 – JULY 4, 2026

Services At:

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Chokio, Minnesota
Wednesday, July 15, 2026
11:00 a.m.

Officiating Clergy:

Pastoral Minister Abby Weick

Musician:

Kristie Olson

Pallbearers:

Dennis Wernsing, Tony Wernsing
Matt Dorweiler, Ben Dorweiler
Bob Dorweiler, Asher Wernsing

Interment:

Summit Cemetery
Morris, Minnesota

Karleen Marie Wernsing was born on October 8, 1957, to Eldon and Lorraine (Anderson) Bakken. She was baptized and confirmed in Donnelly, where she also attended school until its merger with Morris. As a teenager, she enjoyed being a camp counselor at Elks Camp Grassick for children and adults with disabilities and special needs. She looked back on those summers as a joy and a privilege.

After graduating from Morris High School, Karleen moved to Fargo to pursue an education in interior decorating and cosmetology. During this time, she worked as a nursing assistant in different nursing homes and care facilities. After moving back to the Morris area, she met and married Dennis Wernsing. Together they had two children and raised them on their farm near Chokio. While raising children and crops they also raised cows, rhea, pheasants, and horses, but most notably, elk. If you ever knew Karleen, you know she loved animals. Their farm even became known as an “island for misfit dogs” as she never turned down a dog needing a new home.

Kar stayed at home with her kids until they went off to school. She often joked that, “When they went to school, I just followed them but stayed way longer than they did.” She worked at the Chokio-Alberta school district for over two decades. These were wonderful years for Karleen and she always looked back fondly on the time she shared with her students. During that time, she was also a Chokio First Responder and taught Sunday School music at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, where her beautiful singing was often louder and more enthusiastic than that of the children. For a season, Karleen needed to step back from a lot of those commitments when she was diagnosed with breast cancer and suffered from a brain tumor. Despite the hardship and wear on her body, she was a fighter.

All through her life, Karleen’s endless pursuit of conversation meant she never met a stranger. At times, this could be confusing for the person she had struck up a conversation with who had never met her before. However, after some witty banter laced with her fluent sarcasm, she quickly won over anyone in her vicinity. As you can imagine, outings (especially grocery shopping) took a little extra time with Kar but she typically came home with plenty of new acquaintances and stories. In her final years, even as communication became difficult, she still loved to interact with others. A few months prior to her death, both of her children noticed this during their last car rides with Karleen. No pedestrian was left without a smile, nod, and wave.

Karleen passed away peacefully on July 4, 2026, at West Wind Village surrounded by family. She was 68 years old.

Left to mourn are her husband Dennis Wernsing, son Tony (Rachel) Wernsing, and daughter, Anna (Matt) Dorweiler; grandchildren, Ben and Bob Dorweiler, Addie and Asher Wernsing; her sisters, Julie Bakken and Stacy Bakken (Darrin); many nieces and nephews as well as great nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Eldon Bakken and Lorraine Bakken Giese, and Clarence Giese; her mother-in-law and father-in-law Frances and Earl Wernsing; her infant brother, and her sister, Alane Schauster.

I N L O V I N G *Memory*



*Please use this QR Code to access
Karleen's online guestbook and
tribute video.*



Pedersen
Funeral & Cremation Service