



Shirley Lorraine Lenhart

December 12, 1933 - February 17, 2020

On Monday evening, February 17, 2020, Shirley Lenhart age 86, died peacefully, with Ralph by her side. Memorial services will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Monday, February 24, 2020 at Zion Lutheran Church in Glendive with Pastor Brenda Frelsi officiating. A luncheon will immediately follow services in the church basement. Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

December 12, 1933 Henry and Florence Nussear were overjoyed to welcome their first child into the world. Shirley Lorraine grew up on the family farm outside Eagle Bend, MN with her parents and little brother, George. Their Wykham Township community was family. Whether it was milking cows, building barns, studying fractions or the catechism, together they pushed through the depression, living and teaching their children the Christian values of compassion, generosity and gratitude.

Little did Shirley know that a bus ride in her early teen years to visit an aunt at a nearby lake resort would forever change her life. The boy with whom she shared a seat, after almost a decade of correspondence would become her husband and life partner.

After graduating from Eagle Bend High School, Shirley enrolled in the Northwestern Hospital School of Nursing in Minneapolis. Shortly after graduating Shirley and Ralph were married and made their home in the Twin Cities. Daughter Nan was born in 1958 and two years later they moved to

Glendive, Montana, where Ned and Kaia were added to the fold. Their children, and later, grandchildren always have been central to their lives.

The community – and people – of Glendive became home to Shirley and Ralph. She and Ralph were always a team: in the kitchen making “Shirley’s Buns” and “Ralph’s Lefse” and living out their faith wherever life took them. Shirley and Ralph spent summers with family and friends camping at Rock Creek, playing whist with friends, and throwing parties at their home to celebrate holidays and milestones in their friend’s lives.

While Ralph taught math at Dawson Community College, Shirley continued growing in her nursing career. Taking care of women – and access to family planning – was a passion for Shirley. With Ralph’s encouragement she returned to school and received her Nurse Practitioners degree, then becoming the Family Planning Director for Dawson County. Over the next three decades Shirley became a trusted confidant and counselor to Eastern Montana women. Even after retirement, it was not uncommon for someone to introduce Shirley to their family with these words, “this is a woman who was special in my life – I always knew I could trust Shirley.”

Shirley’s community involvement was expansive... Shirley served as state president of Jaycees, led Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, 4-H, P.E.O. and helped her friend Shirley Trangmoe start Dawson County Domestic Violence. Shirley was right by Ralph’s side when he served as a state legislator, campaigning with him in Dawson County, volunteering in the Helena statehouse taking blood pressures once a week, and as a member of the Legislative Spouses.

The foundation underlying it all, was her deep and abiding faith. And Zion Lutheran became the place where that faith was nourished and grew. From teaching Sunday School to hosting lutefisk dinners to the Sarah Circle, Altar Guild to parish nursing and delivering homemade buns to shut-ins, this was

her faith family.

Shirley is survived by her husband of 65 years, Ralph, and a son, Ned (Jill), a daughter, Kaia (Jen). She has five grandchildren, Grace, Clara, Thea, Joshua and Jayla; a brother George (Barbara), and their children, David, Susan, Christina, and Robin; and a niece Linda. Shirley is preceded in death by her beloved daughter, Nan.

The family suggests memorials be sent to Zion Lutheran Church or Dawson County Domestic Violence.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silhafuneralhomes.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB **24**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

Zion Lutheran Church
401 Riverview Avenue
Glendive, MT 59330

Tribute Wall



“ *Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *My most heartfelt condolences to all of you. Shirley was a pillar wherever she went a kind and warm spirit. I am guessing she is sharing her warmth in heaven. I remember Shirley was the one my mom sent me to before I got married for family planning advice. I would have been overjoyed to have been able to send my own two daughters to her too. I have many warm memories of your family. We thank God for Shirley
God Bless and Keep you all
Kari Engebretson Esarey*

kari Engebretson Esarey - February 29, 2020 at 04:32 PM



“ *Sincere loving condolences in the passing of Shirley. What a beautiful spirit she was and exemplified a life well lived. May you find comfort and love in the memories imprinted within your hearts. -
Mary Lou Ayre*

ML Ayre - February 29, 2020 at 12:06 PM



“ *Ralph, Kaia, Nan and Ned,
My condolences to you all on the loss of dear Shirley. Her skill as a nurse practitioner was only exceeded by her skills as a hostess and loving friend to everyone she encountered. Lucky you, Ralph, to have found the best seat on the bus! Kathie Harstad Nygaard*

Katherine Nygaard - February 26, 2020 at 03:07 PM

PF

“ *Ralph, Ned, Kaia and family. We were so sorry to hear of Shirley's passing. She sure was a special woman in so many ways! She was so kind and caring and always saw the best in people. We want you all to know that our love, thoughts, and prayers are with you all. May God bless and comfort you at this time and in the days ahead! Paul and Sandra Fasting*

Paul and Sandra Fasting - February 25, 2020 at 11:04 AM

CL

“ *I met Shirley and Ralph when my husband was in the Montana legislature. we enjoyed many luncheons and dinners and shopping at thrift stores. We took blood pressure s of the legislators and then went to lunch and a thrift store to find a bargain. I loved Shirley as a friend and confidant. I am very grateful to have known Shirley. I will remember Shirley with a smile and gentle prayers.*



Cathy Laws - February 24, 2020 at 11:34 AM

DR

“ *My day was always brighter when I had the spent a little time with Ralph and Shirley when they visited Jill and Ned. Somehow Shirley made my heart fuller just by her presence. What a blessing. My deepest sympathies to Ralph, Ned and all who mourn her loss.*

Deb Raehl

Deb Raehl - February 24, 2020 at 08:06 AM

TH

“ Speaking of Lutefisk, it was such a treat when S & R would come to EC right after the church dinner as they'd always bring some lutefisk, meatballs, leafs, etc. It was a wonderful time sharing a meal celebrating our heritage. Thanks Shirley!

Terrie Hanke

Terrie Hanke - February 23, 2020 at 07:44 PM

PS

“ Shirley was such a lovely woman and what an inspiration for her children who greatly admired her! It seemed like she was truly loved by everyone whom met her. Her family and friends will miss her wit and her great determination that she displayed all her life. God's peace be with you Shirley, Love, Patti and Mark Sontag

Patti Sontag - February 23, 2020 at 07:18 PM

KM

“ Dear Ralph and family. How sorry we are to hear about Shirley. You two were such special people in my life. You shared your home with me the summer I graduated from high school. It was such a special time for me. Shirley was also a special neighbor who took care of me when I was a child patient at Northwestern Hospital. She spent her time off taking care of me at the hospital. Her family has always been a special part of my family as we were neighbors growing up. Blessings and care to you all.

Karilyn and Paul Martinsen

Karilyn Martinsen - February 23, 2020 at 04:42 PM



“ *Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.*



February 22, 2020 at 08:48 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.*



February 22, 2020 at 12:47 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.*



February 21, 2020 at 05:36 PM



“ *It seems like Shirley was cheerful and optimistic all the time. I enjoyed the relationship we built together; it was real and meaningful. I will miss her. With sincere sympathy to all who loved Shirley.*



Teresa Hathaway - February 21, 2020 at 05:25 PM

BA

“ Shirley and Ralph's hospitality was amazing and they made it look effortless. God bless you all as you grieve and as you lean on resurrection promises.

Pr. Bob Albing, Mary Morrow

Bob Albing - February 21, 2020 at 03:19 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



February 21, 2020 at 02:46 PM

LS

“ Lin, Kathy, Nick Enger; Hope, Jesse, Sylvia purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



Lin, Kathy, Nick Enger; Hope, Jesse, Sylvia - February 21, 2020 at 01:47 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



February 21, 2020 at 01:28 PM

KA

“ I’m sorry for your loss. Growing up as friends with Kaia, it was always a treat to go to her house to play. Shirley was a great cook and always had something special for us girls. She was always smiling and so sweet. My heart goes out to Kaia, Ned, Ralph and family. God Bless
Kelli Alexander

Kelli Alexander - February 21, 2020 at 12:45 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



February 21, 2020 at 09:36 AM

CC

“ Clinton Crawley purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



Clinton Crawley - February 21, 2020 at 09:32 AM

GE

“ Grace Koffler Evinrude lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Grace Koffler Evinrude - February 21, 2020 at 08:37 AM

SV

“ Thinking of better days spent with Nan here in Beaverton and our days in Glendive with Carolyn. Although our meetings were in passing, they were memorable to me.
My heart goes out to your family. Keeping you in my thoughts and prayers.

Susan Voight - February 20, 2020 at 10:49 PM

DR

“ My sincere condolences to you Ralph, Ned, Kaia and family. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. I consider it a wonderful blessing to have grown up with knowing you all. I have fond memories of playing at your house and your mom's happy spirit. May you always feel her love. God bless,
Deb



Deborah Roeslein - February 20, 2020 at 09:56 PM

FP

“ From the Mayo Clinic Chippewa Providers purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.



From the Mayo Clinic Chippewa Providers - February 20, 2020 at 08:02 PM

Terry Knapp

“ Terry Knapp lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Terry Knapp - February 20, 2020 at 07:02 PM

NK

“ Sorry to hear of your loss!



NANCY KORB - February 20, 2020 at 06:39 PM

KS

“ Karen Schock lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Karen Schock - February 20, 2020 at 05:16 PM

CM

“ Dear Ralph, Kaia, Ned and families, I was saddened to hear that Shirley passed! My thoughts and prayers are with you all. My family had such fond memories of card club, all of our church activities we shared. She will be missed! God bless you all! Love, Correen Major

Correen Major - February 20, 2020 at 04:18 PM

TW

“ *Teresa Woodworth-Madsen lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



Teresa Woodworth-Madsen - February 20, 2020 at 02:04 PM

IS

“ *In Loving Memory! Deb, Gary, and Sheryl purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.*



In Loving Memory! Deb, Gary, and Sheryl - February 20, 2020 at 01:17 PM

GC

“ *There is a special place in heaven for this wonderful lady!!! She touched so many lives and was a blessing to so many!!*

Geri Cullinan - February 20, 2020 at 11:32 AM

DB

“ *I am truly sorry to hear of the loss of Shirley, her kindness and compassion will never be forgotten by those whose lives she touched. My heartfelt condolences to you her family.*



Dale & Alisa Boehning - February 20, 2020 at 11:02 AM

AF

“ *Ann Flowers purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart.*



Ann Flowers - February 20, 2020 at 10:31 AM

MK

“ *Ralph, Ned, Kaia, and families,*

Shirley has been an important part of my life as have you all. May she rest in peace. I am so sorry that I won't be able to attend her services due to eye surgery that morning, but I will be with you in spirit. Lovingly, Myrna



Myrna Kintz - February 20, 2020 at 09:50 AM

CH

“ Ralph, Ned and Kaia, I spent a lot of time at your houses on the south side and in the country. Nan and I got into some dandy predicaments but at the core of it was two giggly girls being teens in the 70's. Until the day he died, my dad referred to Nan as "Snowbird" after a 1976 incident where she had a compulsion to sing and make snow angels at midnight, alas it was under his bedroom window. But one thing I remembered about your house was the feeling of immense kindness to everyone that entered. It was my first experience of an entire family who unconditionally and mutually loved each other. And Ned and Kaia, as the term "curtain climber" is sometimes used, you two were great at it. But Shirley would pick up the spilled glass of juice, mop the floor, and give you a hug while complimenting you on your superb use of arms in animating a story you were telling. Calamity was always twisted into an expression of love. Kaia, one of the last times I was visiting with Nan before her accident she told me verbatim: "Is it strange that I aspire to some day grow up to be like my little sister?". She said she had never known a person as good as you are. Your foundations were laid early and consistantly by Shirley. She nurtured her new generation and helped a whole lot of other people along the way. Of all goofy things, Nan and I took square dance lessons with Ralph and Shirley! I choose to remember her twirling in her puffy-skirted dress with the widest of smiles. Much love to you all, ~ Connie (Newton) Hilger

Connie Hilger - February 20, 2020 at 09:47 AM

JL

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Shirley's passing. She was a very special lady who was loved by many. Special thoughts & love to Ralph, Kaia & Ned. I will be thinking of all of you.



Janette Legato - February 20, 2020 at 12:56 AM

VT

“ Virginia Tipton lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



virginia tipton - February 19, 2020 at 09:25 PM

PS

“ So sorry for your loss of Shirley, she was a very special lady. I have so many fond memories of the time we spent with the Lenhart family in Glendive and Minnesota.
You are in my thoughts and prayers. Patti

Patti Starr-Nemeth - February 19, 2020 at 07:48 PM

PS

“ Patti Starr-Nemeth lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Patti Starr-Nemeth - February 19, 2020 at 07:42 PM



“ Heidi Carney lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Heidi Carney - February 19, 2020 at 05:28 PM

LI

“ *Linda lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



Linda - February 19, 2020 at 04:53 PM

LF

“ *I am so sorry to hear of the loss of Shirley. She was such a pleasant person to be around. She will be missed by many.*



Linda Frank - February 19, 2020 at 03:40 PM

CH

“ *Ralph, Ned & Kia: I am sorry for the loss of a great wife, mother, and grandmother. I used to baby sit for your family starting when Ned was a few weeks old and continued all the while I was in high school. Shirley was the most wonderful person you could have ever met. God Bless all of you. Shirley can now RIP and fly high with the angels as they welcome her in heaven.*
Carol Hanson

Carol Hanson - February 19, 2020 at 02:36 PM

PC

“ *Patricia Callaghan lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



Patricia Callaghan - February 19, 2020 at 02:08 PM

EL

“ Our prayers for comfort and peace are with you, Ralph, Ned, Kia and family. Thinking of all of you and our treasured memories. Love and deepest sympathy Eula and family



Eula Langton - February 19, 2020 at 02:01 PM

GP

“ Ginger, Kelly & Kaye Pulse sent a virtual gift in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart



Ginger, Kelly & Kaye Pulse - February 19, 2020 at 01:32 PM

GK

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all! Ginger, Kelly & Kaye

Ginger, Kelly - February 19, 2020 at 01:34 PM

KM

Wow, what a life! A Life well lived! A life that was a testament to her deep Faith! A life of giving of herself to others! The Best kind of life! Welcome to Heaven, Shirley!

kevin mcgovern - February 20, 2020 at 08:52 AM

JS

“ Thinking of you all during this most difficult time. May you all find strength in all your wonderful memories. Sending prayers and hugs. Mike and Jacky Boje Saur

Jacky Boje Saur - February 19, 2020 at 01:10 PM

LS

“ *Linda Schuler lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



Linda Schuler - February 19, 2020 at 12:44 PM

AF

“ *Amy Frank-Casini lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



Amy Frank-Casini - February 19, 2020 at 11:48 AM

WM

“ *Wendy Chouinard Millspaugh lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



wendy chouinard millspaugh - February 19, 2020 at 11:24 AM

AH

“ *ANN HOFF lit a candle in memory of Shirley Lorraine Lenhart*



ANN HOFF - February 19, 2020 at 11:12 AM

ML

“ *Ned, Kaia, and families,
We are SO sad about Shirley and feel so far away. Thinking about
all of you especially dear Ralph. Please give him a big hug for us.
So sorry we can't be with all of you on Monday.*

Marlene and Vern Lindquist - February 19, 2020 at 11:07 AM