



## Helen Utke

December 19, 1913 - July 10, 2015

Helen Utke, age 101, died Friday, July 10, 2015 at the Sheyenne Care Center, at the Valley City, North Dakota.

Helen was born in Eureka, South Dakota, on December 19, 1913, to Carl and Anna Liefeld. She attended Eureka Lutheran High School, where her father was the music director. In 1929, they moved to Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Two years later they moved to Rochester, New York, where she graduated from East High School. Helen worked as a baby nurse in private homes until 1937 when she married her Eureka High School friend, Herbert Utke of Enderlin, North Dakota. They were married on October 12, 1937, in Rochester, NY, and moved to a farm near Oriska, North Dakota, on November 1, 1937. They joined Zion Lutheran Church where Helen soon became the organist. Even though the church was built in 1904, she played the organ for every pastor the church has ever had to the present.

In addition to raising four children, Helen tirelessly worked with Herbert on the farm milking cows, cooking and operating machinery.

Herbert died in 1992, and she remained on the farm many years until she moved to Valley City, North Dakota to live with her daughter, Virginia Brekke. In 2008, she moved into the Sheyenne Care Center.

She is survived by her children, Gretchen Graybeal, Buckley, Washington; Mary (John) Cooley, Seattle, Washington; Virginia Brekke, Valley City; Thomas (Kathy) Utke, Oriska; eight grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Herbert; four

brothers, Paul, Waldemar, Albert and Erwin; three sisters, Rosa Elsing, Adelaide Sinclair, Esther; and son-in-law, Ken Graybeal.

Blessed be her memory.

The visitation will be 6 to 7 pm, Friday, July 24, with a prayer service at 7 pm, at the Zion Lutheran Church, Oriska. The burial will be 9 am Saturday at Memory Gardens, Valley City, followed by a Memorial Service at the church at 10:30 am.

Arrangements are by Oliver-Nathan Funeral Chapel, Valley City. An online guestbook for Helen is available at [www.oliver-nathanchapel.com](http://www.oliver-nathanchapel.com)

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 24. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church  
3725 - 110th Ave. SE  
Valley City, ND 58072

## Prayer Service

JUL 24. 7:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church  
3725 - 110th Ave. SE  
Valley City, ND 58072

## Memorial Service

JUL 25. 10:30 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church  
Oriska, ND 58063

# Tribute Wall

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“*Mrs. Utke, as we called her, was my and my sister Shirley's piano teacher when we were in grade school in Oriska. She was so kind and patient, and we learned a lot from her, including a love of making music. We have many fond memories of her and those days.*

*--Deanna Thilmony Kirchoff*

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**Deanna Thilmony Kirchoff** - August 05, 2015 at 04:40 PM