



## MERLE EUGENE JOHNSON

May 20, 1927 - May 6, 2021

The funeral for Merle will be livestreamed on Immanuel Lutheran Facebook page.

On Thursday, May 6, 2021, loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather, Merle Johnson passed away at the age of 93. Merle was two weeks shy of his 94th birthday.

Merle Eugene Johnson was born on May 20, 1927 to Melvin and Ruby Johnson in Decorah, IA, the eldest of four siblings. His family spent the first seven years of his life in the Locust area of Northeast Iowa before relocating to Caledonia, where he has resided ever since. Merle attended Caledonia High School and during Christmas Break of his junior year, enlisted in the Navy to help the USA in World War 2. He was a hospital apprentice with the Navy Hospital Corps while stationed in San Diego, CA. At the completion of his military service, he returned to Caledonia to finish school, and graduated in 1947. After high school, he worked a number of careers including for the Trane Company and the United States Postal Service. Upon retirement, he helped at Hardware Hanks and in recent years, he enjoyed helping in the cafeteria at the St. Mary's Grade School. He really loved the kids!

Merle married Catherine Gilbertson on August 22, 1948. They were married for 60 years before Catherine's passing in 2008. Merle and Catherine have four children: Sonja (Russell) Chesnut, Mark, Cheryl (Bruce) Johnson, and Beth Grau. Grandpa Merle has 9 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren!

He is also survived by a sister, Imy (Bill) Dorival, a brother, Harold (Mary) and nieces and nephews.

Merle was a devout Christian and lifelong member of Immanuel Lutheran. Merle and Catherine's greatest passion was polka dancing and they travelled the country making many great friends. He was instrumental in bringing wrestling to Caledonia and is in the Caledonia Wrestling Hall of Fame. In October of 2008, Merle proudly participated in a Freedom Flight for Veterans when he traveled to Washington DC to be honored and visit the National Memorials. Merle was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Catherine, his brother Ron, and granddaughter Heather Millet.

A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, May 11 at 11:00am at Immanuel Lutheran Church; with a visitation on Monday, May 10 from 4-7 pm at the church. Merle will be buried with Catherine at Evergreen Cemetery in Caledonia.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 10. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

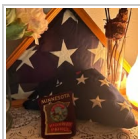
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
419 E Grove St  
Caledonia, MN 55921

## Service

MAY 11. 11:00 AM (CT)

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
419 E Grove St  
Caledonia, MN 55921

# Tribute Wall



“ I was sad to hear of Merles passing. He always had a smile, whistle and that mustache will never be forgotten like his kind virtues. Sorry to his family but now he is dancing with Catherine. They were inseparable.

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**Heather Lynn** - July 28, 2021 at 08:22 PM

KP

“ I am so sorry to hear of Merle's passing. I just found out today. What a wonderful man he was. He and Catherine were my God parents and I couldn't have had better role models. So kind, caring, and faith filled. They never missed an event of mine well into my adult life. I cannot say enough about what great human beings they both were. To Merle's family, I am so sorry for you loss. May you find peace knowing he and Catherine are together again. ❤️ Karla (Knoke) Paciorek

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**Karla Paciorek** - May 24, 2021 at 03:46 PM



Gretchen  
Massenbu

“ I just learned of Merle's passing today and am so terribly sorry I missed his funeral. I got to know Merle while working as the church secretary for Immanuel Lutheran Church for several years. Words just aren't sufficient to say how very special Merle was to me. A dear dear man who I know loved his family so very much and missed them greatly when he couldn't see them. Very bright man and a true heart of gold!  
Much love Merle, I will definitely miss you. Glad you can be with your Catherine now.

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**Gretchen Massenburg** - May 13, 2021 at 03:34 PM

HR

“ *Our deepest sympathies to the family.  
John and Helen (Waldron) Rusert*

Helen Rusert - May 13, 2021 at 11:45 AM

BS

“ *Enjoyed being in choir with Merle and Ed. Very much appreciate his support with wrestling. With our sincere sympathy, Blaine and Dianne Schuldt*

Blaine Schuldt - May 11, 2021 at 06:44 PM



“ *I will sure miss his smile! He was a blessing to all who met him. My sympathies to his family. Joan Crawford*

Joan Neitzel Crawford - May 11, 2021 at 05:11 PM

DK

“ *Deepest sympathy to the Johnson family. I'm very sorry for your loss.*

Duane Kinneberg - May 11, 2021 at 01:03 PM

JK

“ *I sure will miss those Sunday morning hugs! Always with a smile and something to say about lutefisk! He was so special! Jan Klug*

Jan Klug - May 11, 2021 at 12:50 PM

CS

“ We remember his smiling face as he moved around the dance floor enjoying the music and all of the lucky ladies who got to dance with him. Our sympathy to his family.  
*Carol Steffenson from Robhester Mn.*

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**Carol Steffenson** - May 11, 2021 at 08:50 AM

TG

“ *the Ron and Lois Johnson Gang purchased the Pretty Please for the family of MERLE EUGENE JOHNSON.*



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**the Ron and Lois Johnson Gang** - May 10, 2021 at 01:50 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of MERLE EUGENE JOHNSON.*



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May 09, 2021 at 11:25 PM

CW

“ *I was next door neighbors with Merle growing up. Merle was always a gentle carrying man who always had a smile on his face. Love there whole family, glad I'll be able to attend the wake Monday night. Lots of fond memories to share.*

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**Connie Wermager** - May 09, 2021 at 08:18 PM

JT

“ Always enjoyed visiting with Merle at Elsie's during breakfast sure will miss him. Sympathy to the family.

Judy Tollefsrud - May 08, 2021 at 06:17 PM

LB

“ Miss you Merle! It was such a blessing and honor being with you and your family while we were growing up! Love, Lucas Buxengard family

Lucas Buxengard - May 08, 2021 at 04:21 PM



“ Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of MERLE EUGENE JOHNSON.



May 08, 2021 at 07:08 AM

TM

“ I will definitely miss running into him from time to time on my walks. We certainly had some great chats. I feel honored to have known Merle. He made me smile. My sincere sympathy and God bless you always. Teresa MacLeod

Teresa MacLeod - May 08, 2021 at 02:17 AM