

# Death Notice

## Anita J. Howard

Anita J. Howard, 98, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, formerly of Cherokee, Iowa, passed away on Wednesday morning, February 25, 2026 at Lutheran Life Villages in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Funeral services are currently pending at the Boothby Funeral Home. The Boothby Funeral Home of Cherokee, Iowa is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences can be left at [www.boothbyfuneral.com](http://www.boothbyfuneral.com).

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

- **AA:** M 7 pm, W 8 pm, St. Paul's Methodist Church, 531 W. Main, Cherokee; Sat, 9 a.m., Crossroads Christian Church, 515 W. Main, Cherokee. Use the back door.
- **Aurelia Community Coffee:** Wednesdays at 9 am at the Aurelia Community Center.
- **Aurelia Kiwanis:** Thursdays at 7 am at the Aurelia Community Center.
- **Aurelia American Legion:** 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Aurelia Community Center.
- **Bondage No More:** Tu 6:45 p.m.-7:45 p.m., First Church of Christ, 772 N. 2nd St., Cherokee. Park in the south lot. Come join us for the first faith-based restoration meeting. Let us help each other not just get free, but stay free through the word of God! Let us share with each other how the chains are being broken. For questions contact Tamerra at 309-231-5216.
- **BuenaVista Parkinson's Support Group:** Second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm in the library at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. For more information contact Glenn Schulz at: Home - 712-732-1792 mobile - 201-317-3318.
- **CAP Food Bank:** Tu & Th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., IC Church, 709 W Cedar. Anyone in need of food is welcome to stop.
- **Cherokee Community Blood Drive:** the last Thursday of the month from 12 to 5:30 p.m. at the lower level of the Cherokee Community Center. Schedule a blood donation appointment online at [lifeservebloodcenter.org](http://lifeservebloodcenter.org) or call 800-287-4903.
- **Cherokee Community School Board of Education:** The regular board of education meetings are held in the Cherokee Washington High School library on the third Monday of each month. Agendas are posted on the school's website typically on the Friday prior to the meeting although they may be changed up to 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of each meeting. Visitors wishing to speak during the meeting should sign up prior to the meeting being called to order. Comments should be submitted to the superintendent, Tom Ryherd, at [tryherd@ccsd.k12.ia.us](mailto:tryherd@ccsd.k12.ia.us) by 2 pm the day of the meeting.
- **Cherokee County Conservation Board:** 2nd Monday of each month at the 5 pm at the CCB Headquarters on River Road.
- **Cherokee Memorial Presbyterian Church** will hold a movie on Sunday, March, starting at 6 pm. The movie is "The Prince of Egypt." This is a free community event. Popcorn and drinks provided
- **Cherokee Public Library:** READit Book Discussion, Thursdays from 10 to 11:30 am. Come as you are, bring what you're reading, and be part of our growing community of book lovers!
- **Cherokee VFW LA Wescott Post:** 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Kee Stirs building.
- **Christ for You Nite:** Bethlehem Lutheran and Memorial Presbyterian Churches unite in Christ for You Nite weekly Christian Education for all 4 year olds- High School youth in the Cherokee Area Community for food, fun and learning on Wednesdays, January-April, at lower level of MPC, 127 E Willow St. starting at 5:30 with the meal followed by other activities dismissal at 7:05 for 4 year olds through 8th grade. The High School students Bible study 7:15 - 8:00. For more information contact Marilyn. Call or text 712-229-1868.
- **CRMC Cancer Support Group:** Cherokee Regional Medical Center has a Cancer Support Group meeting once a month on the 2nd Tuesday at 5pm. This is held at the hospital in Cherokee.
- **The Gardens:** Join us on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 for The Gardens Assisted Living Community Coffee! Enjoy complimentary coffee, sweet treats, and great conversation in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Bring a friend or come meet new ones. We look forward to seeing you!
- **MMC Food Pantry:** Marcus Senior Center, 405 N. Main St., Marcus. Hours of operation are Wednesdays 6 to 7:30 pm and Saturdays 9 am to 10:30 am.
- **Quimby Public Library:** Quimby Public Library has "Story Time" every Wednesday at 3:00. Join us for fun books, games, and crafts!
- **Siouxland Food Bank:** the third Friday of the month at Trinity Lutheran Church, 230 N. Roosevelt, 5:30 pm. Please bring your own bags. If you are unable to come to the Food Pantry, but need assistance with food security, please call 712-229-4443 or 712-221-0350.
- **Welcome Plate:** The Welcome Plate is a free meal served at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 300 E. Bow Drive! This month's meal will be on Saturday, February 28 from 12 pm to 1 pm. Devotions begin at 11:45 am. Food pantry and clothes closet will be open. All are welcome. Please listen to KCHE for cancellation information due to weather.
- **Sermons a la Carte Wednesday, March 4**  
Held at Memorial Presbyterian Church, 127 W. Willow in Cherokee, this is a time of worship and fellowship that does not cater to just one Christian denomination, but is the joint effort of area churches. The programs begin at 12:05 pm. Pastor David Hall will present the sermon.  
Lunch will be provided by Washta Church of Faith, Washta; 1st Baptist Church, Cherokee; Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Rural Cherokee; and Iglisia Evangelica El Leon de la Tribe de Juda, Cherokee.

## LARRABEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

# PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sunday, March 1st from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*Larrabee Community Center*

**Everyone Welcome**

## Bethlehem Lutheran Church

300 East Bow Drive, Cherokee

Welcomes

### Pastor Alan Cummins

Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> • 5 p.m.

Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> • 9:30 am.

*You're invited*

to the installation of Pastor Cummins  
by Bishop Scott Dalen  
on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>  
during 9:30 a.m. worship service.



## Geraldine A. "Gerri" Gallagher

Geradine A. "Gerri" Gallagher, 81, of Cherokee, Iowa, passed away on Friday, February 20, 2026 at Unity Point St. Luke's in Sioux City, Iowa.

Memorial services will be held at a later date. The Boothby Funeral Home of Cherokee, Iowa is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be held at [www.boothbyfuneral.com](http://www.boothbyfuneral.com).

Gerri was born on December 10, 1944 at Reedsburg, Wisconsin to Adelbert and Gynith (Abbs) Hoff.

She graduated from North Central High School. She was the valedictorian of the Class



## Karen B. Thomsen

Karen B. Thomsen was born on March 10, 1947, in Denison, Iowa, to Thomas and Irene (Brensel) Thomsen. She was baptized and later confirmed in the Lutheran faith. Karen graduated from Dow City High School. From an early age, education was a priority in her life, and she carried that passion with her throughout her years.

Following high school, Karen continued her education, attending Midwestern College in Denison before pursuing further studies at Morningside College in Sioux City and later Drake University. She is especially proud to have earned two Master's Degrees, one in Elementary Education and the other in Learning Disabilities, reflecting her deep commitment to academic excellence and to meeting the individual needs of her students. She also studied American Sign Language, further demonstrating her dedication to serving all learners.

Karen was especially proud to have earned two Master's Degrees, one in Elementary Education and the other in Learning Disabilities, reflecting her deep commitment to academic excellence and to meeting the individual needs of her students.

Karen began her teaching career in Manning, Iowa, where she taught for several years before continuing her work in Cherokee. She taught in the Cherokee Community School District from 1978 until her retirement in 2004.

Throughout her career, she also spent time teaching special education, sharing her patience, compassion, and steady encouragement with students who needed extra support.

Fourth grade was always her favorite to teach. She loved all of her students and devoted countless hours of time and energy to her classroom.

The father of one of Karen's former fourth grade students, an educator himself, once shared that his son and his classmates never realized how much they were learning from Miss Thomsen because they were always having so much fun in her classroom.

of 1963. She attended the University of Northern Iowa and earned her Bachelor's degree in teaching.

She was an extremely talented artist and worked as an art teacher in the Fort Dodge School District, Quimby-Washta School District, and then retired from South O'Brien Schools in 2001.

She was united in marriage to Frank X. Gallagher on June 19, 1978 at Manly, Iowa.

Gerri loved traveling with Frank around the country, especially to New York to see his family, enjoyed all things football and knew everything about her favorite team, the Green Bay Packers.

She spent lots of time in her studio drawing and being artistic.

She loved anything to do with bears.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Frank in 2022, and her brother Danny.

Gerri is survived by her son Shawn (Rebecca) Gallagher of Omaha, Nebraska; grandchildren Ryan (Jacelyn) Swanigan, Sarah, and Faith Swanigan; siblings Charlene (Dennis) Hauser of Manly, Iowa, David (Becky) Hoff of Aurora, Illinois, Dale Hoff of Sun Valley, California; sister-in-law Lanetta Hoff; also many nieces and nephews.

Karen remained devoted to her students until she was forced to retire due to her health.

Karen was a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association, and a local Senior Citizens group.

A longtime member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Dow City, she later became an associate member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cherokee, where she was active in Women of the ELCA, Lydia Circle, and the Evangelism Committee, and faithfully led the annual Gift Tree for local care center residents each Christmas. She also volunteered at four local care centers, providing treats for Bingo, organizing crafts, serving refreshments at special events, and, most importantly, being a friend to residents.

Karen had an enormous heart and found great joy in giving, whether for birthdays, holidays, special occasions, or simply because she felt someone deserved a gift.

Hundreds of people were touched by her generosity. She often said she did not have many local family members, so her church and community became her family.

Karen was especially devoted to the Lily of the Valley country school in Cherokee, where she cleaned, organized third-grade onsite experiences, donated countless items, and proudly oversaw the building, work that brought her tremendous joy.

Karen passed away on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at CHI Immanuel Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska at the age of 78 years, 11 months and eight days.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents; brothers: William "Bill" Thomsen and Larry Thomsen; and sister, Sheryl Thomsen.

She is survived by her two brothers: John Thomsen of Dow City and Jerry Thomsen of Winchester, Kentucky; sister-in-law, Lory Thomsen of Denison; and other relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were held at 1:00 PM, Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Dow City, Iowa. Rev. Chad Trunkhill officiated the service with interment in the Dow City Cemetery.

Recorded musical selections included "Angel" by Sarah McLachlan and "Amazing Grace" by Judy Collins.

Serving as honorary pallbearers were Gary Thomsen, JoAnn Hennings, Gary Newland, Diane McCaffery, Rick Vogt, Earl D. Norris, Steve Norris, Chuck Thomsen and Harold Lee Brensel. Serving as pallbearers were Pat Putnam, Shawn Gordon, Randy Norris, Daniel Dandurand, Jason Dandurand and Troy Price.

Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

# Obituaries



## Aaron Michael Hanson

Aaron Michael Hanson, 37, of West Fargo, ND, passed away on February 19, 2026, at Sanford Medical Center Fargo, following a brief illness due to complications from chronic liver disease.

Aaron was born on February 10th, 1989 to Russell and Merleen (Ballantyne) Hanson in Las Vegas, NV.

Aaron was born into a military family. His early years were spent at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, NV, Hill AFB in Ogden, UT, Robins AFB in Warner Robins, GA, and Dyess AFB in Abilene, TX.

Aaron enjoyed playing soccer as a child. He loved horseback riding, horse camping, playing cards, video games, cooking, writing in calligraphy, and spending time with family and friends.

His rescue dog, Finley, brought him immeasurable love and companionship his last 8 years.

Aaron graduated from Vermillion High School in 2007. He enjoyed singing in the high school choir and had a beautiful voice.

Aaron held a variety of

jobs including; cook and bartender at Bunyan's, manager at Pizza Hut, clerk at Pump and Pak gas station, and front desk clerk and bookkeeper at Thumper Pond Resort.

Aaron was diagnosed with liver disease around 2018, and the next several years would prove to be a testament to his strength and determination to live. He endured many painful procedures over the years as he battled this disease, but he never complained about his condition or his frequent hospital stays. Aaron was the sweetest, most caring, appreciative, and generous person you could ever have had the pleasure of meeting.

He truly cared about others and wanted to make a difference so he became an organ donor.

In his final act of kindness, he donated his organs to those in need as well as to medical research. Aaron's healthy heart now beats in the chest of a 51 year old man.

Aaron was a cherished son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, godson, and friend.

He will be lovingly remembered and deeply missed by his brother, Tony Hanson of Fargo, his dog Finley, as well as several aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

Aaron was preceded in death by his parents, Russell (2000) and Merleen (2022) Hanson, his paternal grandparents John (2003) and Susan (2024) Hanson of Cherokee, and his maternal grandparents, Merlin (2014) and Ruth (2009) Ballantyne also of Cherokee.

Boulger Funeral Home, in Fargo, assisted with cremation services.

A Celebration of Life will be planned by Tony Hanson at a later time.



## JoAnn Johnson

JoAnn Johnson, age 94, passed away peacefully on February 22, 2026. A funeral service will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3, at Christy-Smith Funeral Home in Sioux City, IA. Burial will follow at Logan Park Cemetery.

It is respectfully requested that in lieu of any flowers, memorials may be made in care of the Shriner's Children's Hospital.

Online condolences may be made by viewing JoAnn's memorial page at [www.bridgmanfuneralhome.com](http://www.bridgmanfuneralhome.com). Bridgman Family Funeral Home in Scottsbluff, NE is entrusted with arrangements.

JoAnn was born on November 22, 1931, to Hurley and Rose (Fisher) Fouts in Sioux City. She attended school in Sioux City and spent much of her childhood with her grandparents, Frank and Rose Fisher, at Sunset Nursery and Fisher Florist.

JoAnn graduated mid-year from Central High School in 1950.

She attended Briar Cliff College and later transferred to Morningside College, where she met the love of her life, Harry Johnson. JoAnn and Harry were married on October 26, 1952, beginning a beautiful partnership that lasted 71 years.

During the first four years of their marriage, they lived at several Air Force bases in Texas, Kansas and Florida while Harry served in the United States Air Force.

After his discharge, they settled on a farm near Grand Meadows, Iowa. During their years on the farm, JoAnn was the heart of the home-- busy with gardening, church activities, and raising their three children. She truly embodied the spirit of a devoted farm wife. The coffee pot was

always on, and there was always a delicious homemade treat ready to share.

JoAnn was especially known for her wonderful cooking and baking, including her famous brownies, chocolate chip bars, apple pie and homemade angel food cake. Family and friends also fondly remember her taverns served with fresh corn on the cob from the farm.

After retiring from farm life, JoAnn and Harry moved to Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, where they lived for 14 years. In 2022, they relocated to Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

In their retirement years, JoAnn and Harry enjoyed traveling across the United States and attending as many Air Force reunions as possible. Their adventures always began with a giant atlas and countless maps, carefully planned and full of excitement.

They loved seeing new places, meeting new people, and reconnecting with dear friends.

JoAnn also created many treasured family traditions that continue today. Her Swedish Christmas celebrations—complete with meatballs, brown beans, lutefisk, and more—brought generations together and created lasting memories for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Our "Pomma" will be deeply missed by her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all who knew and loved her.

JoAnn is survived by her children Bill (Jill) Johnson of Scottsbluff, Nebraska; Fred (Tammy) Johnson of Waverly, Iowa; and Cindy (Jim) Wurr of Ankeny, Iowa; her beloved granddaughters Amy (Matt) Symes of Las Vegas, Nevada; Melissa Johnson of Ankeny, Iowa; Jessica (Dave) Allen of Runnels, Iowa; Christina Johnson of Chicago, Illinois; and Breanna (Ben) Stainbrook of Waterloo, Iowa; her great-grandchildren: Tyler and Camden Johnson; Lucy and Annie Symes; Remington and Reagan Allen; and Sebastian and Charlotte Stainbrook.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 71 years, Harry Johnson; her parents, Hurley and Rose Fouts; and her brother John "Jack" Fouts.

JoAnn's legacy of love, hospitality and family traditions will live on in all who had the joy of knowing her.

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