



A Celebration of Life

**Andover Lutheran Church
rural Windom, Kansas
Monday, December 19, 2022, at 2:00 PM**

Officiant

Pastor Anna Borders

Musical Selections

"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

"In the Garden"

Pam Johnston, organist

Pallbearers

Wendell Goertzen Lyle Goertzen Myron Ratzlaff
Richard Barcus Brock Slabach Troy Slabach

Ushers

Roger Aufdemberge Richard Ekholm

Final Resting Place

Andover Cemetery

Memorial Donations

Memorial donations are suggested to Andover Lutheran Church Cemetery Fund in loving memory of Hazel.

Following the graveside service, the family extends an invitation for all to join them back at the church for refreshments and fellowship.

Stockham Family Funeral Home

Hazel's Obituary.....

Hazel I. Ekholm, age 99, passed away at the Wesley Towers Thorne Care Center, Hutchinson, KS, on December 13, 2022. She was born August 26, 1923, on the rural Conway family farm. She was the daughter of Dewey C. Slabach and Lottie K. (Rump) Slabach. She graduated from Windom High School in 1941.

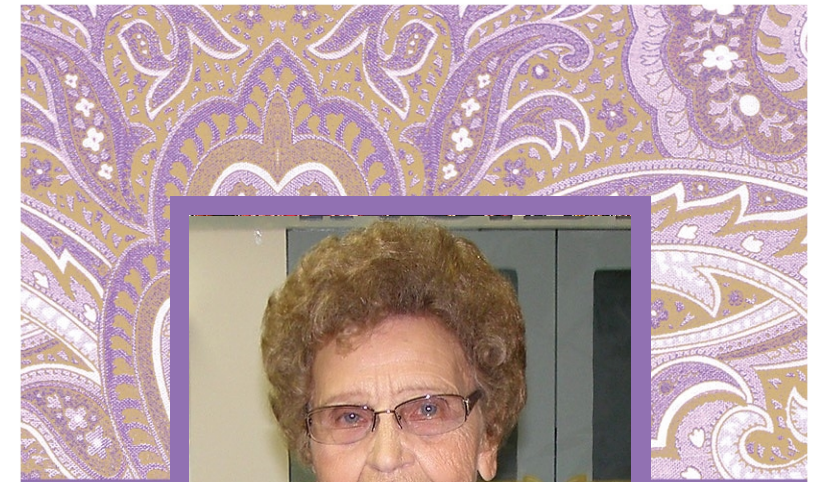
On March 24, 1946, Hazel was united in marriage to Wilmer Oscar Ekholm in Hutchinson, KS. They lived on a farm south of Windom all their married life until moving to Hutchinson in 2011. He preceded her in death on January 15, 2013.

She worked as a secretary for Farmers Alliance Mutual Insurance, McPherson and for Cessna, Hutchinson.

She was a longtime member of Andover Lutheran Church, rural Windom.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; sisters, Pauline Scott, Thelma Barcus, and Marjorie Goertzen; a brother, Kenneth Slabach; brothers-in-law, Myron Scott and Steve Barcus; and nieces, Peggy Pope and Sharon Davis.

Survivors include brother-in-law, Wayne Goertzen of Buhler; sister-in-law, Lois Slabach of Clearwater; nephews, Jim Barcus of Wichita, Richard Barcus (Kathy) of Wichita, Brock Slabach of Leawood, Troy Slabach (Michelle) of Newton, Lyle Goertzen (Natalie) of Buhler, and Wendell Goertzen (Terri) of Buhler; nieces, Kay McDoniel (Mack) of Wichita, Dee McCarty (Max) of Norwalk, CA, Becky Ratzlaff (Myron) of Bel Aire, and Julie Nauss (Jim) of Berthoud, CO. Survivors on the Ekholm side include nephews, Bob Raleigh, Jr. (Cindy) of Rockford, IL, Rick Raleigh (Pam) of Fremont, WI, and Richard Birkes (Mae) of McPherson; nieces, Judy Clark (Preston) of Hutchinson, KS, Gwen Oleen (Glenn) of Falun, KS, and Renee Raleigh of Rockford, IL; and many more extended family and friends.



In Loving Memory

Hazel I. Ekholm

Aug. 26, 1923 - Dec. 13, 2022

Memories of Hazel.....

Everyone who knew Hazel, loved her. She was a very kind and thoughtful person. Throughout her childhood, she attended Monitor Church of the Brethren, rural Conway. After graduating from Windom High School in 1941, Hazel attended a business college in Hutchinson. Little did she know she would be meeting her future husband at a Luther League gathering at Andover Lutheran Church. Wilmer Ekholm would often repeat his story of how they met for years to come. He claimed as the group was playing a game, Hazel grabbed him and said, "I want you!" Every time this story was shared, Hazel would roll her eyes. Hazel always said she didn't want to marry a farmer who milked cows. Her wish of not having to milk cows changed after they got married. It was March 24, 1946, when Wilmer and Hazel were married at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Hutchinson. They were lifetime members of Andover Lutheran Church, where Hazel was an active choir member and belonged to the women's group. Before working outside of the home, she would help Wilmer with field work. Hazel worked as a secretary for 10 years at Farmers Alliance, McPherson. Later, she worked as a secretary of sales for 20 years at Cessna, Hutchinson, retiring in 1988. Although Hazel was busy outside the home, she still found time for flower and vegetable gardening. While in the garden, she accidentally cut off part of their cat's tail with the hedge clippers. That cat was soon called Bobby. Red geraniums were her favorite garden flower. Hazel, being the classy dresser, she even wore heels in the garden. She loved the color purple!

Girl Scout Troop 701 from Hutchinson contacted Wilmer and Hazel in 1976 about preserving their area of the Santa Fe Trail project. After much work, the area on their property just east of the Little Arkansas River was cleaned up and made into a park area for

tours. While Wilmer gave hayrack rides, Hazel made sure everyone was comfortable on the hayracks, furnishing old quilts to sit on and Coleman jugs of iced tea and water. She saw to it that they were well equipped if a wiener roast was planned. Hazel had a way of making people feel comfortable. How many generations of kids loved going to their home on Halloween, where Hazel had huge popcorn balls ready to hand out? She always insisted they take more candy because there was plenty. Wilmer and Hazel had a soft heart for kids. They never had children of their own. The box of toys was always nearby, the Lincoln Logs, games, and tractors, and of course, cookies. Hazel always remembered birthdays and had a small gift on hand. Greeting cards were always sent out with her calendar filled with birthdays. While on the farm, Hazel enjoyed cooking and what a good cook she was. Her specialties were her mom's favorite Jumbo Raisin Cookies with frosting and her Peppernuts each Christmas. Her 12-cup stainless steel Presto coffee maker stayed on their kitchen counter all the time. It was always ready in case any company stopped by for a visit. It was such a joy to visit them!

Hazel was also a wonderful seamstress, making her own double knit pantsuits for work and later crocheting tea towels and hand towels she gave away as gifts. She also crocheted pot and pan scrubbers. When it was getting difficult for Hazel to take care of Wilmer in 2011, they moved to an apartment at Good Samaritan in Hutchinson. It was difficult, but a needed move for Wilmer. Hazel liked the convenience of shopping in town. However, being the cat lover she was, that part was hard for Hazel to move. All of their farm cats meant a lot to her. Wilmer passed away at the Good Samaritan Nursing Home on January 15, 2013. Hazel stayed in the apartment until 2019 as she was starting to need more assistance. She moved to Wesley Towers

Collier Assisted Living and enjoyed her nice apartment there. She easily made friends and every nurse and activity director stated how they wished all their residents were like her. The covid outbreak was a hard adjustment for Hazel. Visiting through windows or plexiglass just wasn't the same for all of us. The one thing that bothered Hazel during that time was not having a beautician come in each week. An activity director mentioned that was the only time she saw Hazel show frustration. She was excited once the restrictions were lifted. It was very difficult seeing Hazel bedridden, after her tragic fall on September 18, 2022. In her mind, she thought she would improve to be mobile again, but it just wasn't to be. Although her health was failing while she was at Wesley Towers Thorne Care Center, she always had a smile and loved visiting. She passed peacefully, Tuesday afternoon, December 13, in her recliner, happily anticipating getting her hair cut and curled. Her hair appointment was scheduled at 3:00 p.m., and she passed away around 2:30 p.m. Earlier that day, she had wonderful visits with the nurses and cousin Gladys Shook who faithfully walked from Collier Assisted Living to Thorne Care Center almost every day to visit Hazel. We are sure God didn't care if her hair was done or not when He came for her. Her famous words were, "It is what it is...life goes on!" Yes, it does Hazel. We will miss you dearly, but you are now healed for eternity! How happy we are for you!

Appreciation.....

Hazel's family would like to sincerely thank the healthcare personnel at Wesley Towers for their devoted care over the past three years, and Hospice of Reno County's supportive staff for their care the last three months. We greatly appreciate it.