

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord: When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

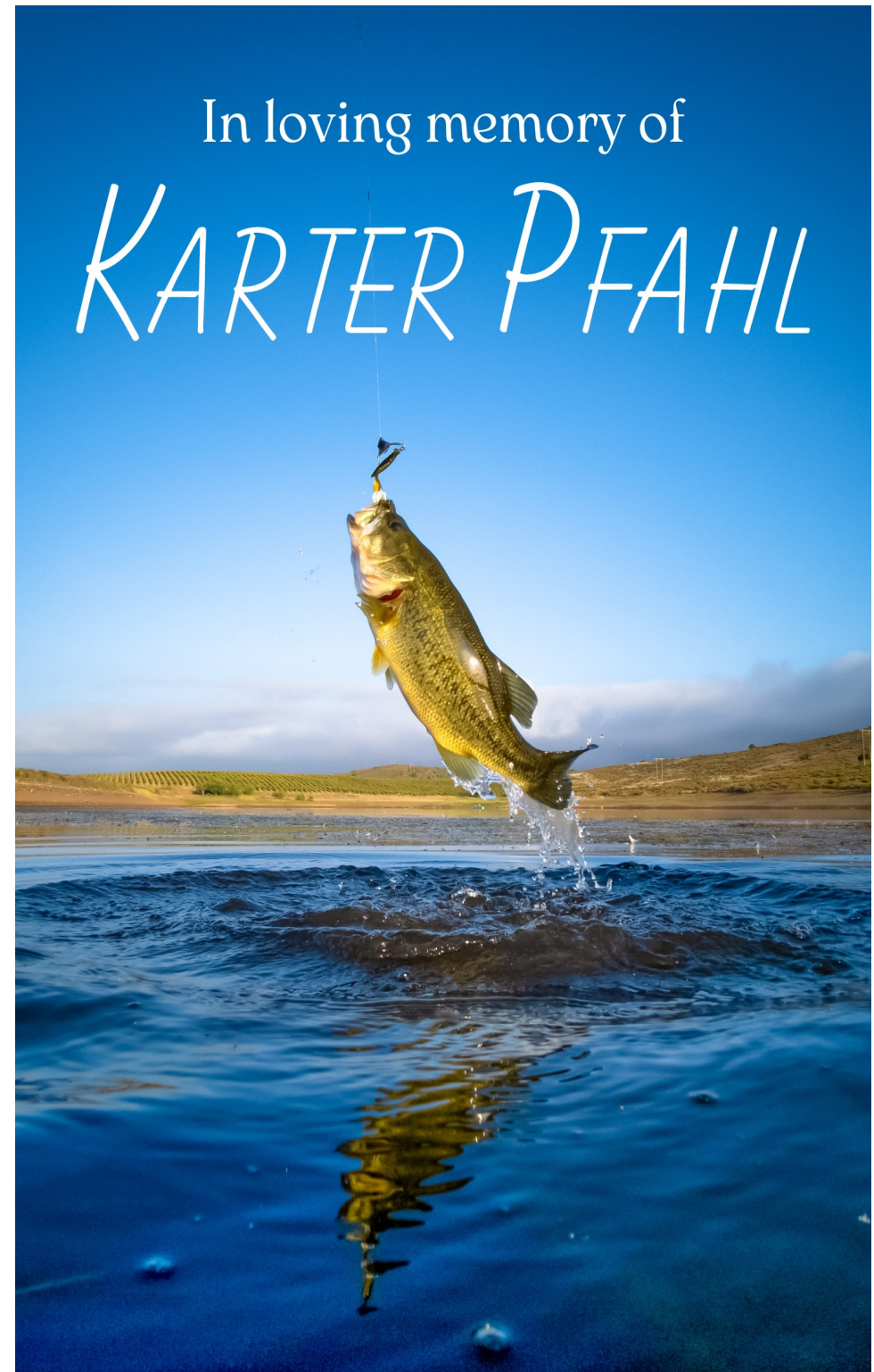
He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

“Lord, you said that one I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way, but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.

“The Lord replied, “My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”





Karter Patrick Pfahl, 17, Mandan, passed away at his home on March 4, 2024, after a hard-fought battle with mental illness, depression, and autism.

Karter was born in Fargo, ND on June 21, 2006, to Stephen and Leslie (Igou) Pfahl. Raised in Ashley, ND, Karter learned about hard work from a young age as he helped (and played) at the motel his parents owned where he liked to vacuum and shovel snow. Karter loved when his Dad read him bedtime stories and he'd always incorporate the Three Stooges into the story. His Mom enjoyed reading him nursery rhymes and making silly jokes about them. Karter was effortlessly smart, with a vocabulary and intellect beyond his years, especially with math as he enjoyed calculus. He was a World War II history buff and was very talented at building all sorts of models and Lego sets. A self-taught mechanic and car guy, he was working on a 1955 Buick, fixing it up for someday. Karter liked traveling with his Dad to different hotels and construction sites and spending time at the cabin on Swan Lake, near Fergus Falls, MN, where Karter loved to kayak all over the lake. Karter was an old soul in

many ways and enjoyed old music like Johnny Cash and Johnny Horton among others. He was always well groomed and cared about his appearance whether he was sporting slick hair or fashionable glasses. Karter was a funny jokester and very witty. He always had a quick comeback and often asked "Wanna hear a fun fact?" Karter was an avid collector of Hot Wheels and Coke memorabilia. In the past year he learned to cook and bake and especially loved cooking fish he or his Dad caught. A young Jack of all Trades, Karter also worked on converting a yard shed into a tiny home for himself and had wired, insulated, and sheet rocked it himself, hoping to stay in it when the weather was nicer.

In 2020, Karter moved with his Mom to Mandan where he attended Mandan High School. During his freshmen year, he focused on getting healthy and fit and took great pride in the weight he lost and healthy eating habits and also participated in FFA for one year. The staff at MHS, especially Mrs. Cava, was so great working with Karter throughout his ups and downs. He liked riding his bike all over town. Karter worked at Family Fare in Mandan where he was a cashier and utility man. His family says that the staff and management were so good to Karter and supported him through everything he was dealing with, always wanting him to keep working there. Karter talked about going to trade school after graduating and he wanted to work in construction or welding and mechanics. Know to his family as Bug, Buddy, and Karteroo, this talented young man brought his unique spirit and light to the world. Unfortunately, life had many challenges, many of which Karter worked hard to overcome. His Mom always told him to embrace his quirks and uniqueness and be himself.

Blessed to have shared in his life is his mom, Leslie Pfahl (Andy Pack), Mandan; dad, Stephen Pfahl (Sharon Walz), Moorhead, MN; siblings, Kathrine (Adam) Sommer, Fargo, Courtney (Michael) Wolter, Fargo, Derek Michaelson, Fargo, and Sierra Igou, Ohio; nieces and nephew, Lily, Lola, Avery, Everley, Verity, and Kayden; grandparents, Ray Pfahl and Betty Trapp, both of Fargo; several aunts and uncles; many cousins; his dog, Jax; and turtle, Mac. They will carry Karter's legacy - his intelligence, quick wit, and uniqueness.

Preceded in death by his grandma, Kathryn (Sorge) Igou; grandpa, Orvin McKinley Igou II; and an infant brother, Dustin Stephen Pfahl.

It is impossible to prepare for the harsh reality of losing a loved one, especially a child, at far too young of an age. To lose Karter in this manner is unfathomable. It is a finality difficult to accept. It has left behind a desperate longing to understand the rationale and insanity behind mental illness and the fact that suicide by people with autism is four times higher when compared to the general population. His death has scarred us in significant, painful and permanent ways. Suicide is a complicated end and compounds with an array of feelings and stigma. One person taking their own life every 40 seconds is an epidemic of massive proportion, leaving no family untouched. The ensuing recovery for families must find a balance between the crushing punches of abandonment, betrayal, rage, doubt, shame, shock, blame, fear, sorrow, loss, guilt, regret, and confusion and the light-filled promises of presence, love and joy through our memories and the legacy left behind. It has left us utterly breathless.

This silent epidemic is catastrophic. If talking about it, exposing it, shouting it from the rooftops, will help even one person find a way to talk about their pain, a difference can and must be made. Show kindness, an openness to talk, and more importantly to listen, to see, to hear without judgement. If only to save one family from the pain and anguish of losing a loved one through bringing awareness to this tragic and senseless loss of life, then our beloved Karter's death will not be in vain ... we cannot afford to lose another light.

Funeral Service

Tuesday | March 12, 2024 | 11AM
American Lutheran Church | Mandan, ND

Officiant

Pastor Rev. Dean R Johansen

Pianist

Clara Stack

Pallbearers

Katherine Sommer | Courtney Walter | Sierra Igou

Derek Michaelson | Adam Sommer | James Thigpen

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF KARTER PFAHL

Opening Prayer – Let us pray... *(You may be seated)*

Hymn # 588 In the Garden (Red Hymnal, HFG)

Reading of the Obituary

Scripture Reading: John 3:16-18

Psalm 23 - *"The Lord is my Shepherd"* (Please join in reading)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (ESV)

Remarks: Kathy Sommer; Leslie Pfahl

Homily/Meditation – John 10:9-11 (1-8)

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Please join in reading)
*Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.*

Benediction – Numbers 6:22-26; 1406 B.C.

Pastor: The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you; The LORD turn His face toward you, and give you peace.

People: Amen.

Hymn: # 107 Amazing Grace

Postlude