



GOD,  
grant me the  
*Serenity*  
to accept the things  
I cannot CHANGE;  
*Courage*  
to CHANGE  
the things I can;  
and  
*Wisdom*  
to know the DIFFERENCE.

*Celebrating* THE *Life* OF  
*Merrill "Punk" Carlson*

**AUGUST 7, 1939 – APRIL 18, 2024**

**Services At:**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church - Chokio, Minnesota  
Saturday - May 11, 2024 - 10:30 a.m.

**Officiating Clergy:**

Minister Minette Stalheim Johnson

**Musician:**

Julene Amborn

**Military Rites:**

Chokio American Legion, V.F.W. & AmVets

**Honorary Urnbearers:**

Cody Carlson, Kaylee Bigger, Sydney Carlson  
Samuel Carlson, Noa Carlson

**Interment:**

Artichoke Lake Cemetery  
rural Chokio, Minnesota

**M**errill “Punk” Lee Carlson, son of Earl and Evelyn (Berven) Carlson, was born August 7, 1939 in Graceville, Minnesota. He was baptized and confirmed at Our Savior’s Lutheran church in Chokio. He began his schooling in Chokio, graduating from Chokio High School. He continued his education at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, earning an Agriculture degree. As a young man Merrill helped his dad on the farm raising cattle and working the crops. When he was young, the hired man started calling him ‘Punk’, a nickname he took on proudly. Punk served proudly in the United States National Guard from 1962 to 1963. On March 19, 1966, he was united in marriage to Judith Ann Koenck Bartsch at Trinity Lutheran Church in Johnson, MN. Following their marriage, the couple continued to farm and raise their two sons, Allen and Joel. Punk retired from cattle farming in 1977, focusing thereafter on crop farming until 1999, after which he helped multiple farmers with fair rent so they in turn could support Chokio’s economy. Punk and Judy built a home in Chokio, which they enjoyed for 16 of their retirement years. In 2022, they moved to Grand Arbor in Alexandria, MN, and soon after made a graceful transition into their memory care unit in December, 2022, where he was treated well and enjoyed for his light-heartedness and amazed for his strength.

Punk was a member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Chokio, where he served as president and Sunday school and confirmation teacher. Regular attendance was very important to Punk, even during the harvest season. Punk also served on the Stevens Township Board, the Chokio City Council and the Artichoke Cemetery Board. He was a community leader, helping to build a car wash and grocery store, planning the Memorial Day events and speakers, volunteering with the Chokio First Responders and teaching gun safety training for over 20 years. Punk recovered from alcoholism in his younger 40’s, helping many others with similar struggles. He and Judy provided foster care for seven unique children at all ages, as well took in numerous relatives. Punk always cared for Judy and his family’s medical and educational needs.

Punk died on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at Grand Arbor in Alexandria, Minnesota; he was 84 years old.

He is survived by his wife, Judy of Alexandria; two sons: Allen (Kathy) Carlson of Minnetonka and Joel (Diedra) Carlson of St. Paul; five grandchildren: Cody (Rose) Carlson of San Diego, CA, Kaylee (Jacob) Bigger of Mound, Sydney (Nikita Polovenko) Carlson of Austria, Samuel Carlson of St. Paul and Noa Carlson of Juneau, AK, one great-grandchild: Lila Carlson of San Diego, CA, and his one brother: Lauren Carlson of Chokio, MN and multiple nephews and nieces. He was preceded in death by his parents.



Guestbook QR Code



Tribute Video QR Code

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