

Elsie Louise Kephart was born January 29, 1926, in Maysdorf, (Campbell County) WY, to Guy S. and Elaine (Nordgren) Kephart. The family moved to South Dakota in the late 1930's due to Elsie's health. She joined the First Presbyterian Church in Sturgis and graduated from Sturgis High School in 1944. She attended National School of Business in Rapid City, completing her coursework in 1945 and worked for the next 16 years at Black Hill Implement, Sturgis. During this time, she continued her faith journey by teaching Sunday School and in 1961, she felt the call to be the Christian Education (C.E.) director at a Presbyterian Church in Omaha, NE. She soon realized that while C.E. was not for her, she knew that teaching was her forte. She attended the University of Nebraska-Omaha and graduated in 1965 with her degree in Elementary Education. During the tumultuous 1960's, Elsie marched for Civil Rights in Omaha, wanting equal rights for all.

In 1965, Elsie returned to South Dakota and began a 29-year career as a teacher at Knollwood School. She taught primarily fifth grade, but also taught some fourth-fifth grade and fifth-sixth grade classes. She went above and beyond for her students. In 1979, she graduated from USD with a Master of Arts Degree, major in Elementary Education.

She retired from elementary teaching in 1994 to begin a second career as a Literacy Network volunteer and advocate. She worked tirelessly to help people of all ages develop their reading and writing skills, as well as teaching many "English as a Second Language" students. She made many lifelong friends from around the world during this time. She received lifetime awards for her work in literacy and was especially humbled to receive the Rotary Club's Paul Harris Award, which recognizes individuals who have performed exceptional community service.

She was also a faithful member of First Presbyterian Church of Rapid City for many years, filling many roles as both a leader and as a quiet worker behind the scenes. Very active in Presbyterian Women, she was a strong advocate for education. Elsie always had time for "Church."

Elsie, 93, died on Monday, May 27, 2019, in Sturgis, SD.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Gail, who died as a child in Wyoming; and her sister, Bernice Szymanski.

She will be missed tremendously by her family and friends. Survivors include nieces, Kathryn "Kate" Karrels and Elizabeth "Beth" Bauer of Sturgis, and Mary Szymanski of Texas; and nephew, William "Bill" Szymanski of Texas; as well as many great-nieces and great-nephews. She also left many special friends, including Paula Klein (and faithful dog, Maggie), a fellow teacher and close friend who wrote her a letter every day; and her Friday night Bible Study Group, where Elsie always made them laugh.

A special thanks to the staff and residents of Mountain View Care.

True to her values of education, she donated her body to science where, even in death, she will be teaching students. Her legacy is built on a love of education, her service to others, and her faith in the Lord. She taught us the value of lifelong learning while having fun. She was quick-witted, loved to laugh, and was easy to love!

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Salvation Army.

Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.kinkadefunerals.com](http://www.kinkadefunerals.com).

*The family invites you to join them for fellowship and lunch in the church hall following the memorial service. We thank you for your presence and condolences.*



*In Loving Memory*

**Elsie Louise Kephart**

*January 29, 1926 ~ May 27, 2019*





## *In Memory Of Elsie Louise Kephart*

### *Date of Birth*

January 29, 1926  
Maysdorf, Wyoming

### *Date of Death*

May 27, 2019  
Sturgis, South Dakota

### *Memorial Service*

Tuesday, June 11, 2019, at 11:00 a.m.  
First Presbyterian Church  
Rapid City, South Dakota

### *Officiating*

Pastor Paul Henschen  
Pastor Jeff Kintner

### *Musicians*

Candy McKay  
Carolyn Bobbitt

### *Songs*

"Just A Closer Walk With Thee" "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"  
"How Great Thou Art" "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)"  
"On Eagle's Wings" "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

### *Honorary Pallbearers*

Dean Szymanski John Szymanski Sean Karrels  
Jake Karrels Adam Karrels Lia Karrels Hare  
Brenna Bauer Ben Bauer

### *Final Resting Place*

At A Later Date  
Mount Pisgah Cemetery  
Gillette, Wyoming

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*I thought of you with love today,  
but that is nothing new.  
I thought about you yesterday,  
and days before that too.  
I think of you in silence.  
I often speak your name.  
All I have are memories,  
and your picture in a frame.  
Your memory is my keepsake,  
with which I'll never part.  
God has you in His keeping....  
I have you in my heart.*

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