

# *Safely Home*

I am home in Heaven, dear ones;  
Oh, so happy and so bright!  
There is perfect joy and beauty  
In this everlasting light.

All the pain and grief is over,  
Ever restless tossing passed;  
I am now at peace forever,  
Safely home in Heaven at last.

Did you wonder I so calmly  
Trod the valley of the shade?  
Oh! but Jesus' love illumined  
Every dark and fearful glade.

And He came Himself to meet me  
In that way so hard to tread;  
And with Jesus' arm to lean on,  
Could I have one doubt or dread?

Then you must not grieve so sorely,  
For I love you dearly still:  
Try to look beyond earth's shadows,  
Pray to trust our Father's Will.

There is work still waiting for you,  
So you must not idly stand;  
Do it now, while life remaineth —  
You shall rest in Jesus' land.

When that work is all completed,  
He will gently call you Home;  
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,  
Oh, the joy to see you come

## **Norene Claire Gorder**

***Born to Hans Kristen & Nora Lenia Haugen***

July 26, 1935

Watford City, North Dakota

***Returned to Her Heavenly Father***

September 12, 2026

Williston, North Dakota

### ***Funeral Services***

Monday, September 21, 2026 ~ 1:00 PM

Our Redeemers Lutheran Church

Williston, North Dakota

### ***Officiating***

Pastor Greg Stenzel

### ***Music***

"In The Garden"

"Tell Me How Is Heaven"

"Amazing Grace" & "My Redeemer Lives"

Pat Lund ~ Musician

### ***Pallbearers***

Brad Gorder      Nolan Gorder

Tyler Bell      Trevyn Sundby

Don Johnson      Alex Johnson

### ***Final Resting Place***

Riverview Cemetery

Williston, North Dakota

### ***Arrangements By***

Fulkerson Stevenson Funeral Home

Williston, North Dakota



*In Loving Memory Of*  
***Norene C. Gorder***

July 26, 1935 - September 12, 2026





Norene Claire Gorder, 91, of Williston, North Dakota, passed away on September 12, 2026, surrounded by the love of the family she spent a lifetime nurturing and holding together.

Norene was born July 26, 1935, in Watford City, North Dakota, to Hans Kristian Haugen and Nora Lenia Granlie Haugen. She grew up in and around Arnegard alongside her siblings Linda, Cheryl, Loren, and Holly, and half-

siblings Harold, Lawrence, Maurice and Ruth, as part of a large family whose roots reached back to Norway and Sweden. Of these siblings, only her brother Loren remains. Her father immigrated to the United States from Norway at the age of 18, and the stories, perseverance, faith, and strength of the generations before her remained an important part of Norene's own story.

Norene often remembered her childhood with great detail and affection. She grew up during years when life could be difficult and money was scarce, but her memories were also filled with skating, sledding, neighborhood friends, church, music, family meals, and community. She played clarinet in the school band, participated in church and Luther League, and grew up with a strong sense that family and community were meant to care for one another.

After graduating from Arnegard High School, Norene attended summer college in Minot and began teaching in a rural country school. She later worked as an assistant bookkeeper at the Farmers Union Lumber Yard. It was during those years that she met a handsome young farmer named Raymond "Ray" Gorder at dances in Alexander. Norene later remembered that Ray looked like Rock Hudson, danced well, and drove a Kaiser, apparently more than enough to capture her heart. Ray proposed in October 1954, and the two were married January 3, 1955, at Wilmington Lutheran Church in Arnegard. A winter storm changed their wedding-night plans and became one of the first of many stories they would share throughout their life together.

Norene and Ray built a life together through both joyful years and difficult ones. Farming was an important part of their early life, and when circumstances changed, the family

eventually made Williston their home. Norene was not afraid of hard work or change. Through farming struggles, raising children, Ray's life-changing accident, moves, and the many unexpected turns that come with a long life, she remained devoted to her family. Her brother Loren later remembered that Norene became Ray's "resident business partner" as they built a successful business and home together. The tribute he prepared for Norene's 91st birthday paints a picture of a woman who continually adapted, cared for those around her, and made things work no matter what life placed before her.

Of all the things Norene accomplished, however, family was her greatest joy. She and Ray were blessed with four children: Rocky, Rodney, Valorie, and Vikki. In her own reflections, Norene called her children their "most precious gifts" and wrote with gratitude not only for them, but also for the daughters-in-law, son-in-law, and grandchildren who expanded the family she loved so deeply. "WE ARE SO BLESSED," she wrote, words that captured the gratitude with which she looked back on her life.

Norene became a matriarch in the truest sense of the word. She was the kind of woman who helped keep a family connected. Holidays mattered to her. Gatherings mattered. Being together mattered. She understood that family was not simply something a person belonged to; it was something that had to be tended, cared for, and continually brought back together. Her home became a place associated with meals, celebrations, grandchildren, stories, laughter, and the simple comfort of knowing Grandma was there.

She was also an exceptionally loving and kind woman. Norene had a way of making the people she loved know that they belonged. Her love did not require everyone to be exactly alike or follow exactly the same path. She welcomed her family as they were, while still never being afraid to offer her opinion when she thought it was needed. That combination of unconditional love, honesty, humor, and kindness was uniquely Norene.

Faith was woven throughout her life. As a girl, Sundays meant Sunday School, church, choir, family dinner, games, and time together. That faith continued through adulthood and remained part of the rhythm of her life.

Norene understood something reflected beautifully in 1 Corinthians 13:8: "love never ends." Her earthly life has ended, but the love she gave has not.

Norene was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Ray, who passed away December 20, 2001. In 2004, Norene married Alvin Bratlien, and his family was added to ours. Al passed away in 2010. She leaves behind generations of family who carry her stories, her strength, her faith, her humor, and especially her love.

For those who knew Norene, her legacy will not be measured only in dates or accomplishments. It will be found around family tables, in stories told to grandchildren and great-grandchildren, in holiday traditions, in laughter over memories from years gone by, and in the simple decision to keep showing up for one another.

She came from generations of people who worked, endured, loved, and built lives on the northern plains. Now Norene takes her place among those ancestors whose stories become part of the foundation for the generations that follow.

Her family will miss her deeply, but they will continue to carry forward what she spent 91 years teaching them: love your family, stay connected, be kind, have faith, and be grateful for the people God has placed in your life.

Norene often looked back on her life and recognized how blessed she had been.

Her family can look back now and say the same thing:

*We were blessed to have her.*

