



## Joan Evelyn Christensen

May 22, 1944 - November 13, 2025

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Joan passed away peacefully and surrounded by family on November 13, 2025. She was 81. Born in Oakland, CA to Rev. Ansle T. & Hazel E. Severtson, Joan was the eldest of 5 siblings. The family lived in Northfield, MN from 1947-1950, then relocated to San Diego, CA. She spent a happy childhood there, with church and music at the center of their lives. She attended Hoover High (1962), California Lutheran College (B.A. Music 1966) and the Univ of MN (B.S. Music Ed. 1991). At CLC she met her future husband, Jerrel Christensen.

Joan and Jerry were married in 1966 and lived in Arcata, Woodland and Davis, California before they moved to Minneapolis in 1978 where they raised their 3 children, Karly, Paul & Kirsten. They were married for over 59 years. Joan worked as a kindergarten teacher, a music teacher, in administrative roles for National Lutheran Choir, Luther Seminary, and Trinity Lutheran Congregation, and at Odegard Books St. Paul. Pianist/Musician at Grace University Lutheran Church proved to be her longest career at 30+ years. In this role she supported singers and instrumentalists of all ages, in all manner of celebration and worship. Making music with others was her calling and a theme throughout her life.

Making life more beautiful was a special gift of Joan's, from the music she made to the flowers she grew to the meals she made and shared with others. Her warm smile, empathy, and the connections she built with people were

always authentic. Joan was a curious person who enjoyed asking people questions, becoming acquainted with them, learning things about them and finding things they had in common.

In addition to music, Joan loved art, entertaining, her garden, her Norwegian heritage, and spending time with her beloved family and her many dear friends. She will be missed for her warmth and humor, for her ability to make people feel safe and seen, for her beautiful piano & viola playing and singing, her delicious food and her curiosity about the world and the people around her. She faced her health issues and hospitalization with bravery, optimism and grace.

Preceded in death by her parents Ansle & Hazel Severtson and sister-in-law Carlene Capelli. Survived by her husband Jerrel B. Christensen, her children Karly Randall (Frank), Paul Christensen & Kirsten Christensen and her grandchildren Francis, Nina & Jens Randall. Joan is also survived by her siblings James Severtson (Marianne), Paul Severtson (Susan Schafer), Susan Robboy (Ronald) and David Severtson (Jacqueline Rolfs), as well as brothers-in-law David Christensen (Maria) and James Capelli, many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends. Memorials preferred to Grace University Lutheran Church, Second Harvest Heartland, Minnesota Orchestra, or a charity of your choice.

Memorial Service will be held at Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis Saturday January 10, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. with visitation one hour prior. 324 Harvard St. SE, Minneapolis MN 55414