



Karen Helen Nelson

September 15, 1978 - October 31, 2025

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It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Karen Helen Nelson, a beloved wife, daughter, mother, grandmother and friend who peacefully left this world on October 31, 2025. Born September 15, 1978 in St Paul Minnesota to Leon "Red" and Sharon Heskett, Karen lived a life full of energy, love and laughter - often fueled by coffee and new project ideas, which more times than not led to multiple trips to Menards.

Karen is survived by her beloved husband of 18 years, Jeff, daughter Kailee (Henry) Poling, granddaughter Rae Poling, mother Sharon, mother-in-law Joanne, countless friends and her constant companion and loyal dog, Charlie, who rarely left her side. A natural nurturer with a generous spirit, Karen was happiest when she was caring for others - as evidenced by prioritizing the needs of her loved ones over her own, even through her final days with us on earth. Karen's loss is felt deeply, and she will be profoundly missed by all those close to her.

Karen is preceded in death by her father, Leon "Red" Heskett, her grandparents, and her beloved dogs Oliver and Cindy.

Karen was a natural giver at heart with a kind, caring soul, constantly putting others ahead of her own needs. She would fill her days finding ways to contribute to the community and give back to those around her, even when unprompted. Her greatest joy was filling the hearts of her loved ones with

love, peace and acts of service. No one experienced this love more than her pride and joy, her only child Kailee, who on more than one occasion would return home from a trip to be surprised to find a new, undiscussed, but very beneficial "project" to have been completed at her home.

Karen also found great joy in being able to spend the past 10 months being heavily involved in the life of her granddaughter Rae. From being there for her birth, to the care she provided both to Rae and Kailee throughout the early months of her life, she found great peace in knowing that her love and impact will be felt by another generation.

Another joy of Karen's was found in the kitchen. Often trying new recipes, frequently found on Instagram on a whim, Karen was known for the slightly mischievous motto "whatever happens in this kitchen, we are eating it."

A lover of all animals, big and small, Karen's big heart and caring soul continued to shine through all the love she projected onto her four legged friends. From her dogs who she loved as her own children, to her "grand kitties", Donnie and Rue, to all the beautiful wildlife around her, no animal Karen encountered was spared from feeling her warmth and support. Karen had a special affinity for squirrels, which she joked were her spirit animals, and could often be found leaving the occasional scraps outside for them to enjoy.

Beyond the landscape of her home and close family, Karen found joy in giving back to her community. Recently, she could be found volunteering her time at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

Karen approached everyday and every task with a positive mindset, even during challenging times. Despite the difficult battle with cancer affecting her health in her final year of life, her unrelenting love and dedication for those she cherished continued to stand as her main priority. Karen was a beacon of love, support and comfort, and a model of resilience for those around her. She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

A visitation will be held for Karen on Sunday, November 16th 2025 at

Washburn-McReavy Chapel (7625 Mitchell Rd, Eden Prairie MN, 55344) from 3-6pm. All are welcome to come pay respects to the wonderful life that Karen lived.

In lieu of any gifts or offerings, Karen would appreciate any donations made to Our Lady of Peace Hospice or Reign In Sarcoma.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

NOV **16**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Eden Prairie Chapel
7625 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Tribute Wall



“ *Until we meet again, my friend. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Karen Helen Nelson.*

Until we meet again, my friend. - November 14, 2025 at 02:16 AM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Karen Helen Nelson.*



November 14, 2025 at 02:16 AM



“ *The Grover & Hoffies Family purchased the Pretty Please for the family of Karen Helen Nelson.*



The Grover & Hoffies Family - November 13, 2025 at 03:28 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Karen Helen Nelson.*



November 13, 2025 at 03:14 PM



“ To Jeff, Kailee, Henry, Rae, and Sharon,

Wishing you peace and strength in this heartbreaking time. Karen's friendship was a light to everyone who knew her. The memories we hold and the love she shared are gifts we get to keep forever. I am deeply grateful to have been part of her life, and she will always remain in my heart.

I guess Heavenly Father needed her to head up there and keep Red from getting into shenanigans!

Amber Grover - November 08, 2025 at 01:33 PM

JP

“ I first met Karen at a company gathering in fall 2019. Seated across from each other at dinner, we were both quietly taking everything in. I knew two things about her – she was an introvert and loved animals. I thought, "Perfect, one of my people is here."

I asked her about pets, and she lit up talking about dogs, a gentle smile on her face. We talked through the whole dinner, and I was so grateful for that connection.

Over the years, I came to know Karen in a different way – through every story Kailee and Jeff told. I could hear her laughter, see her expressions, feel her presence in their words. She was kind, funny, resilient, stubborn, selfless, and a wonderful wife and mother.

Kailee and Jeff – my heart is with you both. I'm forever grateful to Karen for the role she played in your lives, and for raising and loving the two people who mean so much to me.

*With love,
Julie Prestegard*

Julie Prestegard - November 06, 2025 at 01:50 PM