



## Mary Elizabeth Betterman

November 7, 1957 - May 22, 2026

Mary Elizabeth (Ahles) Betterman, a beloved child of God, devoted wife, amazing mom, and caring grandma, entered her heavenly home on May 22, 2026, after courageously navigating a cancer diagnosis. She lived life to the fullest, exemplifying unwavering faith and remarkable strength. Surrounded by her family, she was called by Jesus into eternal rest. Though her earthly absence brings deep sorrow, we rejoice that she now sings with the saints and angels in the presence of her Creator, where there is no sickness, sadness, or pain. The Lord's work in her is now complete.

Mary was born on November 7, 1957, to Valentine and Elizabeth Ahles of Rockville, Minnesota. Her story began as a country kid on a dairy farm, the second youngest of twelve children. Farm life was a place of work, adventure, and growth. There she learned the values of hard work and perseverance—responsible for daily chores, tending the gardens, weaning calves, gathering hay, and threshing grain. Yet she always found time for fun, often in the front yard where neighborhood kids gathered for afternoon play. One such adventure involved a barbed wire fence—though Mary alone knew the full story.

In 1972, her parents sold the farm and moved the family to Cold Spring. Mary embraced the change, perhaps relieved to retire from bean-picking duty. She traded farm chores for babysitting jobs, self-funded driver's education, and a role in *Guys & Dolls* at ROCORI High School. That same year she was

confirmed in the Catholic Church. After attending St. Mary's Cathedral School and John Clark Elementary, she graduated from ROCORI in 1976. She briefly worked at a stuffed-toy company before attending Alexandria Technical College, where she earned an AA degree in interior design.

The small-town farm girl then moved to Minneapolis, sharing a rental near the Lake Harriet rose gardens-fitting for someone who loved flowers and gardening. She worked at Gottlieb's, a family-run carpet and furniture store in Northeast Minneapolis, and later enrolled in drafting classes at Hennepin Tech. With those new skills, she joined Wheeler Hildebrandt, a respected interior design firm near the historic Foshay Tower. After leaving Wheeler Hildebrandt, she later worked part time at Hirshfield's in Southdale, Ridgedale, and Wayzata, where it eventually turned into a full-time position. While working at Hirshfield's, she also worked part time at Rainbow and Cub Foods. She was quite the worker bee. In addition, she was a brand ambassador for Young Living Essential Oils, championing health and wellness through various expos, farmers markets, and one-on-one encounters.

Mary's beaming smile and country charm made her memorable wherever she went. She loved being out with friends and family, and people always seemed to know who she was. She first met Lyle during a weekend night at Bunny's in St. Louis Park, when Lyle's roommate discovered that both she and Lyle were Alexandria Tech alumni. A simple conversation blossomed into friendship and, eventually, a love that led to marriage.

Mary and Lyle were married on September 28, 1985. After nine months in an apartment in Hopkins, they purchased their first home in St. Louis Park. It was there that the Lord's work in Mary blossomed over the next four decades. She was a devoted wife, loving mother, skillful homemaker, and faithful member of Zion Lutheran Church (Hopkins), Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church (Plymouth), and Christ Lutheran Church (Maple Plain). Family was always her

focus, and everything she did was guided by love for her family and her Lord.

Mary continued working at Wheeler Hildebrandt until shortly after Jeffrey was born, when she embraced her calling as a stay-at-home mom. She poured herself into raising her children, teaching them lifelong lessons, shuttling them to activities, packing school lunches, and ensuring hats and mittens were ready for Minnesota winters. Her commitment to Lyle was steadfast; she lived her vows daily, and the couple celebrated 40 years of marriage last September.

At Zion, Mary served joyfully, working in the nursery, running the kitchen for an after-school program, teaching Sunday School, participating in Bible studies, and even playing church-league softball. She worked hard for what she loved and faithfully served the Lord in countless ways.

Mary was an avid gardener, faithfully planting backyard vegetables and flowers each summer. Canning vegetables and making jellies and jams were also part of her skill set. She loved the outdoors and happily traded comforts for a tent and a campfire. As life ebbed and flowed with growing kids, shifting jobs, and changing friendships, her creative energy was poured into relationships, family, and community. When grandchildren arrived, her long-quiet sewing machine came alive again as she lovingly stitched blankets for each one. She enjoyed cross-stitch, weaving palm fronds after Palm Sunday, and playing table games that became family traditions: Yahtzee at "The Lake," Scrabble with Joshua, Sequence with Lyle's family, and UNO with anyone willing to join. Holidays were among her favorite times because they meant gathering with those she loved.

The final year of Mary's earthly life brought challenges and uncertainty, yet her faith never wavered. Through doctor visits, scans, medicines, and treatments,

she remained anchored in Christ-walking with Him through prayer, scripture, and journaling. She will be remembered as a woman of deep faith, warm personality, and loving character. Though she will be profoundly missed, we find joy knowing she is now perfected and glorified in heaven.

Mary is survived by her husband, Lyle; her children Jeffrey (Hope), Jared (Emily), Julie, and Joshua; and her grandchildren Eloise, Henry, Logan, Peyton, and Sadie. She is also survived by siblings Jim (Candy), Carol, Ralph (Carol), Louise, Valerian (Christine), Vern, Fran, Theresa (Tom), and Roger (Sally). She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Joan, and her brother Bob.

Visitation will be held June 18, 2026, from 4-7 PM at Washburn-McReavy Chapel in Hopkins, MN.

Celebration of Life Service will be held June 19, 2026, at 11 AM at Zion Lutheran Church in Hopkins, with an hour of visitation prior.

Memorials are preferred to Zion Lutheran Church in honor of Mary Elizabeth Betterman.

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

JUN 18. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Hopkins Chapel  
1400 Mainstreet  
Hopkins, MN 55343

## Visitation

JUN 19. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church (Hopkins)  
241 5th Avenue North  
Hopkins, MN 55343

## Memorial Service

JUN 19. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church (Hopkins)  
241 5th Avenue North  
Hopkins, MN 55343

# Tribute Wall



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mary Elizabeth Betterman.* ”



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Yesterday at 03:06 PM