

Hiawatha , KS



Esther L. Middendorf, 93, of Hiawatha, went to be with her Lord Wednesday, December 7, 2016, at Hiawatha Community Hospital.

She was born on a farm south of Troy, December 6, 1923, the eighth of nine children born to Charles and Martha Kiehnhoff Ruhnke and was a northeast Kansas resident her entire life.

Esther attended rural schools K-8 near Troy. She worked as a nanny, hospital switch board operator and caregiver for an elderly lady before she married at age 24. Esther worked for 33 years as a secretary for Hiawatha Elementary School before retiring.

Esther was a longtime dedicated member of Zion Lutheran Church of Hiawatha and had held many offices in the LWML (Lutheran Women Missionary League). She was active in the Hiawatha Community as well: was a board member of Latchkey; Home Health Agency; and was a Grey Lady Volunteer for many, many years, at Hiawatha Community Hospital. In her spare time, she enjoyed quilting, sewing, reading, cooking, Scrabble, volunteering, and family activities.

She was married to Clarence Middendorf, June 6, 1948 at Zion Lutheran Church. They have made Hiawatha their home all of their married life. He survives. Also surviving are two daughters: Karen McNamee (Jim Keyser) of Portland, OR, Judy Middendorf of Ft. Collins, CO; a son David Middendorf (Lela) of Hiawatha; a sister Helen Schmidt of Stanton, NE; grand-daughters: Jessica Young (Jeff), Katie Knoll (Chris); step-grandchildren: Brandon Smith(Laura), Jenna Smith; great-grandchildren: Haley Young, Mitchell Smith; Ava Knoll, Meredith Smith, and Liam Knoll.

Esther was preceded in death by her parents; daughter-in-law Nancy Middendorf; brothers: Harold, Herbert, Raymond, Charles Ruhnke; sisters: Edna Benitz, Dorothy Bode, and Marguerite Damm.

A Celebration of Esther's life is planned for 11 a.m. Tuesday, December 13, at Zion Lutheran Church in Hiawatha, with Pastor Mike Dunaway officiating. Cremation will follow service with private inurnment at a later date at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Hiawatha.

Friends may call at the Chapel Oaks Funeral Home from 9-10 Monday morning, where the family will meet from 6 until 8 that evening.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Zion Lutheran Church or Missy Newell Memorial Fund, sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., 66434.

A special message may be sent to the family at www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com