

Thelma Hepper, our dear little mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, teacher, and friend, passed away from heart failure on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Although we rejoiced that her last illness was so short, her death took us by surprise and in her swift flight to Heaven, she carried off a part of each of us who loved her.

Thelma lived a full, lengthy life of almost 92 years. She had a great memory and a gift for storytelling, so we'd like to share a few of her memories.

1. She learned to milk cows when she was 8 years old. As she and her dad milked together he would sing songs from WWI and teach her simple English folk melodies that he'd learned as a child. This time together was very precious to her.

2. She attended Roy School, a country school in Potter County where she had only 3 classmates, one was her cousin Doris Crane. Roy School had indoor, commercial toilets. No farm family in the area had indoor plumbing at this time, so Thelma felt fortunate to attend "such a progressive school."

3. Thelma's 4 years of high school were in Gettysburg during WWII. She remembers that Freshman initiation "consisted of wearing our clothes inside out and backwards for several days, sporting big green ribbons in our hair, and carrying baby bottles with us everywhere."

4. Due to the war, by her senior year, her class had shrunk to half of its original size. By January, when 5 more boys had volunteered for Service, the class decided to hold an early class picnic. It had to be held in the Home Ec. Room instead of the school's traditional spot at the river.

5. Immediately after high school, because of the shortage of teachers, Thelma took an accelerated summer school course and became qualified to teach. Her first school was Copp School with 11 students in grades 1-7. What a way to jump feet first into a teaching career!

6. Thelma met her future husband, Herbert (Arnold) Hepper at a roller skating rink in Lebanon. It was an instant, mutual attraction. Being a social person, Thelma knew everyone there except a guy and girl who came in together. She thought the guy was "so good looking", but figured he was dating the girl because he helped the girl put on her skates. However he soon left the girl and skated off. Thelma then hoped the girl was his sister and went over to her to subtly find out.

Their love lasted a lifetime. After a few years of marriage, Mom and Dad joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and were married this time for eternity in the Idaho Falls Temple. Their grandchildren felt this love because most family sing-a-longs ended with Dad and Mom singing as a duet the Vince Gill song,

"Look at Us"

Look at us After all these years together  
Look at us After all that we've been through  
Look at us Still leaning on each other  
If you want to see How true love should be  
Then just look at us

Dad Look at you Still pretty as a picture  
Mom Look at me Still crazy over you  
Look at us Still believin' in forever  
If you want to see How true love should be  
Then just look at us

7. Thelma and Herb married and lived a short time in Gettysburg, then moved to a farm North of Gettysburg. They had 9 children with 8 of them living to adulthood.



We children remember an upbringing full of music, reading, hard work, and faithful church attendance. Although we groaned and complained, the hard work produced a powerful sibling unity and lots to joke about in later years.

The grandchildren remember all of the singing, with their Grandma playing the accordion or the piano and Grandpa playing the guitar. They loved Grandma's "thin pancakes" which she made by the boat load for hungry kids. Her snowball candies were a must-have. They also remember tormenting her by throwing objects down the laundry shot, which ended in her basement kitchen.

In her later years, Thelma lived in Gettysburg, a town she dearly loved and always called "home." We wish to thank the

people of Gettysburg for loving her and helping make those last years so pleasant for Mom. She loved receiving marriage and graduation announcements from former students. She enjoyed her hours visiting and playing cards with friends at the Senior Center. She greatly appreciated the delivery of food right to her door.

Thelma had a strong belief and faith in God and Jesus Christ. She looked forward more and more to her reunion with Dad and our baby sister Sherry and our brother Mark who preceded her by exactly three weeks. We can picture the joyful reunion that took place.

Mom, we love you and will miss your vibrant, loyal, loving presence in our lives.



Thelma outlived her parents, Vic and Carrie (Crane) Norris, her 9 siblings: Helen Edlund, June Simon, Dorothy Pranger, Betty Masters, Lewis, Duane, Lloyd, Ray and Jim; two children: Sheryl, and Mark and also three of her 23 grandchildren:

In company with many extended relatives and friends, Thelma will be much missed by her 7 children: KATHY (Steve) Reid and her 3 children and 3 grandchildren; PAT (Duane) Snyder and their 2 children and 4 grandchildren; LAUREL Lemler and her 4 children and 6 grandchildren; GERRY (Allison) and their 2 children and 3 grandchildren; JAN (Lance) Hardman with their 3 children and 7 grandchildren; MARK's wife, Tiffany, and 3 children; SCOTT and his 4 children: and PHIL (Angel) with 2 children and 1 grandchild.

That's 23 grandchildren and their spouses and 23 1/2 great grandchildren. Hopefully, Thelma's "crop that never fails".



## Steps

*Serenely we must pass from place to place  
Not claiming any as a permanent home.  
The Supreme Spirit wants not to suppress  
Nor shackle us, but raise us step by step.*

*As soon as we are settled anywhere in  
Comfort and at leisure...we grow stale;  
He only who is willing to take leave  
And wander on throws drowning habit off.*

*It may be that even the hour of our death  
Will send us young to unimagined worlds.  
Life's call to us will never cease nor end.  
Come now, my heart, take leave and be content.*

*By Hermann Hesse*

*In Loving Memory Of*

# Thelma Hepper

*July 1, 1927 - May 30, 2019*

### **PRAYER SERVICE**

*7:00 p.m., Monday, June 10, 2019  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Gettysburg, SD*

### **FUNERAL SERVICE**

*10:00 a.m., Tuesday, June 11, 2019  
United Methodist Church ~ Gettysburg, SD*

**PRESIDING** ~ Jason Rogers

**CONDUCTING** ~ James Crowshaw

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** ~ Alec Hepper  
*The Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23*

**SPEAKER** ~ Marion Eliason

**OBITUARY** ~ Lorraine Cavanaugh Tennant  
Joanne Hall Stoddard

**CASKET BEARERS** ~ All of Thelma's Grandsons

### **HONORARY CASKET BEARERS**

*All of Thelma's Granddaughters, Great Grandchildren,  
Medicine Rock Historical Society Members,  
Senior Citizen Friends and Card Players*

**SOLOIST** ~ Colleen Simon "Each Step I Take"

### **HYMNS**

*"In the Garden" #314 "Nearer My God to Thee" #528*

**GRAVESIDE RITES** ~ Gerald Hepper  
Gettysburg Cemetery ~ Gettysburg, SD



Gettysburg, South Dakota  
[www.familyfuneralhome.net](http://www.familyfuneralhome.net)



*In Loving Memory Of*

# Thelma Rose Hepper

*July 1, 1927 - May 30, 2019*