



## Pastor Thomas Kolden

January 1, 1952 - September 29, 2024

The funeral service celebrating the life of Pastor Thomas Kolden of Wadena will be held at 10:30a.m. on Friday, October 11, at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wadena, with Pastor Nate Loer presiding.

Family and friends may gather on Thursday, at the Johnson-Schuller Chapel in Wadena from 5:00 until 8:00p.m. and at the church on Friday from 9:00a.m. until the time of the service.

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To view Pastor Tom's service go to Immanuel Lutheran Church's YouTube page: [www.youtube.com/@ILCWadena](http://www.youtube.com/@ILCWadena)

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Burial will be next to his wife in Zion Cemetery near Arlington, MN, with Pastor David Fleener officiating.

Tom, age 72, passed away due to a car accident on September 29, 2024, near Park Rapids, MN.

A 1952 New Years baby, Thomas Ty Kolden was born to Ervin and Evelyn (Kathryn) Larson at Minot, ND. He went to White Shield High School on the Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation, Roseglen, ND. His education continued at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, and Concordia College in Moorhead.

On June 13, 1981, Tom married Barbara Louise Mueller at the Old Zion Lutheran Church in Arlington, MN. Over the years, they lived in Steinbach Canada, and later in Minnesota at Nielsville, Audubon, LeRoy, and Minneota. After Barbara's passing, Tom lived in Wadena, where he was a member of Rotary and the Immanuel Lutheran Church. In hours away from being a substitute pastor in area pulpits, you could find Tom sharing caring conversations with others whether it be over a cup of coffee, visiting a shut-in, or fishing in the great outdoors. He will be remembered by many for his great sense of humor.

Preceding Tom in death were his wife, Barbara (2012); parents Ervin and Evelyn; grandson, Gabriel Kolden; parents-in-law, Robert and Carol Mueller; and sister-in-law, Mary Lou Kolden.

Forever loved, Tom is survived by his daughters, Sarah (Pastor David) Fleener of Alexandria, Rebekah (Kenny) McMahan of Fargo, ND and Rachel Kolden of Austin, TX; and one grandchild; brothers, Wade (Linda) Kolden of Garrison, ND and Kent Kolden of Douglas, ND; numerous nieces and nephews; along with a host of friends and faith community members.

Memorials in Tom's name may be directed to Immanuel Lutheran Church (402 2nd St SE, Wadena, MN 56482) and Wadena Rotary Club (PO Box 533, Wadena)

# Cemetery Details

## Zion Lutheran Cemetery (Arlington, MN)

NE of Gaylord, MN  
Arlington, MN

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **10**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Johnson-Schuller Chapel  
205 4th Street Southwest  
Wadena, MN 56482  
(218) 631-3632

## Visitation

OCT **11**. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Immanuel Lutheran Church - Wadena  
403 2nd St. SE  
Wadena, MN 56482

## Service

OCT **11**. 10:30 AM (CT)

Immanuel Lutheran Church - Wadena  
403 2nd St. SE  
Wadena, MN 56482

## Burial

OCT 11. 4:00 PM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Cemetery (Arlington, MN)  
NE of Gaylord, MN  
Arlington, MN

# Tribute Wall



“ *Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden*



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**Schuller Family Funeral Homes** - October 08, 2024 at 08:09 PM

DT

*Our sympathy to Tom's family in this time of loss. We have special memories of Tom when he served in LeRoy, ministerial meetings, conversations, visits to his home in LeRoy, and periodic phone conversations since then. Caring, compassionate, helpful, easygoing, delightful sense of humor. We will miss conversations to chat, and catch up on life realities. Blessings of hope and peace to family and friends. Dennis and Jane Timmerman*

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**Dennis Timmerman** - October 10, 2024 at 09:21 AM

CN

“ *Sending deepest sympathy to your family. I am so sad to hear the news about Pastor Tom's death. He was a kind, friendly man and will be remembered. May he rest in peace. God be with you all!*

*Cindy Novotny - Minneota*

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**Cindy Novotny** - October 29, 2024 at 05:14 PM

“ I am truly blessed to have been a friend of Tom in college and seminary. We were part of a very close-knit bunch of guys who shared so many interests. My first job out of college was as director of a Bible camp in NE Minnesota and when I needed counselors, Tom was eager to help out. He spent a couple of summers up in God’s great Northwoods. One of the things I remember most about Tom is that he always had a song in his heart. He was particularly adept at picking the perfect song for every occasion, whether it be goofy songs around the campfire with our guitars or planning Sunday morning worship, he was always ready with a song. And the songs didn’t stop there, it was almost continuous.

*If you’re happy – sing a song*

*If you’re sad – sing a song*

*If you’re scared – sing a song*

*All good for the soul*

One of my favorite memories of Tom was one summer during our college and camp years we decided to teach Tom how to water-ski. Some of us were from MN lake country and it was kind of second nature to us, but for Tom, not so much, not so many opportunities to learn those skills growing up in western ND.

As we helped him get his skis and life preserver on, I don’t recall exactly what what song Tom was singing but it was something about the dangers of foolish living, with ominous warnings of impending doom. “Oh, I’m gonna die! I’m gonna die!” (Tom occasionally indulged in a bit of theatrics and melodrama)

Nevertheless, he was ready to accept his fate and after a couple false starts, he was actually up and skiing. I couldn’t tell for sure with the roar of the boat, but I think the tune changed to something a bit more upbeat and exhilarating, at least for a couple minutes until we happened to cross the wake of another big boat. He bounced a couple of times, almost recovered, but then lost his balance and down he went. Not to worry though, the life preserver did its job.

Perhaps he was worried that we might abandon him in the middle of the lake, for when we finally circled around and pulled up for the rescue, we found him, skis still on his feet, pointing up into the sky,

*flat on his back, head held safely upright by his life preserver, arms outstretched to the heavens, singing at the top of his lungs, "Nearer My God, to Thee!"*

*Never without a song, I'm glad to hear from his family and parishioners that he enjoyed sing the rest of his earthly life, and now can join some of the heavenly choirs (with his guitar of course.)*

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**Dan Thureen** - October 12, 2024 at 06:17 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.



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October 10, 2024 at 10:33 AM



“ *Legend Oaks Health Care Kyle Family* purchased the *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.



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**Legend Oaks Health Care Kyle Family** - October 09, 2024 at 10:55 AM



“ *Love, Kari and Russell and Family(ies)* purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.



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**Love, Kari and Russell and Family(ies)** - October 09, 2024 at 09:16 AM

LF

“ Love, Kari and Russell and Family(ies) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor Thomas Kolden.

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**Love, Kari and Russell and Family(ies)** - October 09, 2024 at 09:16 AM

DH

“ Tom and I visited about 5 years ago at a NW Synod gathering in Detroit Lakes. Pastor Tom, Barb and I were classmates in the 1974 graduating class at Concordia. Then we reconnected when your family served First Lutheran church in Audubon. Tom was well liked as a Pastor, volunteer fire dept. member and summer softball player. Bless Your Parents' Service and Memories,  
Dr. Paul Hendrickson

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**Dr. Paul Hendrickson** - October 08, 2024 at 08:08 PM

EA

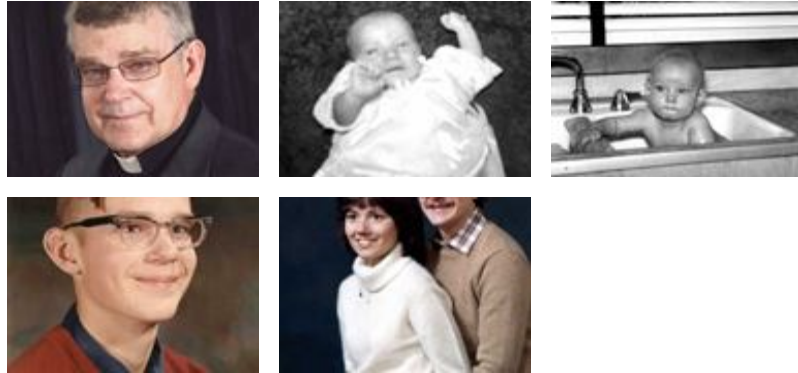
“ Edith A. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor Thomas Kolden.

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**Edith A.** - October 08, 2024 at 07:39 PM



“ 46 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - October 08, 2024 at 04:00 PM

FP

“ *First Lutheran Church - Parkers Prairie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor Thomas Kolden.*

First Lutheran Church - Parkers Prairie - October 08, 2024 at 02:19 PM

FP

“ *First Lutheran Church - Parkers Prairie purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.*



First Lutheran Church - Parkers Prairie - October 08, 2024 at 02:19 PM

SS

“ Sherman & Sandy purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.



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**Sherman & Sandy** - October 08, 2024 at 12:46 PM

KT

“ I HAVE VERY FOND MEMORIES OF TOM WHEN HE WAS A CAMP COUNSELOR AT CAMP HIAWATHA WHEN I WAS A CHILD. KATHY THUREEN

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**KATHY THUREEN** - October 07, 2024 at 11:35 PM



“ . purchased the *Sweet Remembrance Spray* for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.



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. - October 07, 2024 at 04:16 PM



“ . planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor Thomas Kolden.

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. - October 07, 2024 at 04:16 PM

OC

“ *Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Sebeka and Balsamlund Lutheran Church of Aldrich purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden. Our deepest condolences.*  
~Rita, OSLC Admin

Our Saviours Lutheran Church - October 07, 2024 at 03:05 PM

JE

“ *Judy Erdahl lit a candle in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden*



Judy Erdahl - October 07, 2024 at 12:31 PM

JR

“ *Tom was an inspiration to me in my own ministry. His gentle, quirky sense of humor lifted my spirits every time we were together. His love of Christ and the Church, his deep care and compassion for every living soul shown through brightly! Rev. J.M. Riggle*

John M Riggle - October 07, 2024 at 10:58 AM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.*



October 07, 2024 at 10:31 AM

TO

“ *Pastor Kolden was such a kind, sweet man. He truly was a man of faith and even in his retirement he continued to serve. We so enjoyed his his warmth and compassion that he shared at Good Shepherd. We extend our deepest sympathy.*

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**terry Oscarson** - October 06, 2024 at 07:39 PM

DL

“ *I'm so sorry to hear of Pastor Kolden's passing. Condolences to his family. He was always such a kind soul. My grandparents lived next door to the parsonage in LeRoy, and they enjoyed his visits along with Barb's and the girls. The girls brought them cookies all the time.*



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**Darla Leibold** - October 05, 2024 at 05:19 AM

OL

“ *Our Saviours Lutheran purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.*



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**Our Saviours Lutheran** - October 04, 2024 at 06:41 PM

PJ

“ *Pastor Kolton was our sub for our pastor Pastor Johnson at Good Shepherd in Henning. We always looked forward to his visit to our church. He always stayed and had coffee with us during fellowship hour. My sympathy to his family. Pat Juvrud*



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**Pat Juvrud** - October 04, 2024 at 06:09 PM

LN

“ *Pastor Kolden was soft spoken and compassionate. Home visitation was definitely very important in his ministry and he touched so many lives. Our sympathy to friends and family. Fig and Linda Nuytten*

Linda K Nuytten - October 04, 2024 at 04:31 PM

SB

“ *Sharon Boline lit a candle in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden*



Sharon boline - October 03, 2024 at 01:50 PM

RU

“ *My mother absolutely loved him when he was in Minneota. One day he just showed up at her house. She said how down to earth he was. She would tell me farmer Joe was here. She called him that since he wore bibs and a flannel shirt. God bless his soul*

Rose Van Uden - October 02, 2024 at 06:17 PM

JF

“ *Jacob and Amber McCarty family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Pastor Thomas Kolden.*



Jacob and Amber McCarty family - October 02, 2024 at 04:45 PM

JF

“ Jacob and Amber McCarty family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Pastor Thomas Kolden.

Jacob and Amber McCarty family - October 02, 2024 at 04:45 PM



“ Mandy Dave Arvidson lit a candle in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden



Mandy Dave Arvidson - October 02, 2024 at 02:59 PM

JJ

“ Jon and Patty Johnson lit a candle in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden



Jon and Patty Johnson - October 01, 2024 at 10:48 PM

MO

“ Pastor Tom was such a gentle soul. He was so kind and caring. He visited Greenwood Connections every month, and he always called me the day before to see if I would be available for a visit and communion. I am so glad I could enjoy his visit and receive communion just two weeks ago. Pastor Tom is precious in the sight of the Lord and now rests peacefully in His arms. He has received the ultimate reward.

~ Marci Olson, member of Our Saviour's and resident of Woodside Manor

Marci Olson - October 01, 2024 at 07:15 PM

DT

“ *Pastor Tom provided insightful messages when he was a visiting pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Henning. He was our "go to" person when Pastor Keith was on vacation. Blessed be his memory.*



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**Diane Thorson** - October 01, 2024 at 04:33 PM

JE

“ *Pastor Tom will be missed. He helped and supported my faith in becoming a Synod Approved Minister and was a great partner to share our faith with the congregations at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Sebeka and Balsamlund in Aldrich. I will miss being able to ask for his advice and I will miss his humor. Prayers for his family as they deal with his loss.*

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**Janet Eckman** - October 01, 2024 at 07:41 AM

KW

“ *Pastor Tom became known as Grandpa Tom in our house. He helped us deal with our grief when we lost our dad/grandpa/father-in-law, all while he was healing and working through his own grief. We needed each other. He became a part of our family and we are heartbroken to let him go. We will miss Tom's wit, guidance, sermons, funny spin on things, his hugs and random thoughts. Our prayers are with his girls and their families.*  
*Karin and Bill Wagner and family*



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**Karin Wagner** - September 30, 2024 at 10:40 PM

JT

“ *Pastor Tom was a kind and gentle soul who will be missed by many. Our congregation was blessed for the time that he served us. He always had a great message to share and we loved when he played his guitar for us.*

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**Jewel Townsend** - September 30, 2024 at 05:06 PM

BW

“ *Tom was always positive and a pleasure to be around. We enjoyed his unique sense of humor.*  
*Bob and Karen Wallgren*

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**Bob Wallgren** - September 30, 2024 at 04:53 PM

NB

“ *Our condolences to the family of Pastor Tom. He was a great Pastor with a heart of Gold. Will be missed by many.*



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**Neal & Leona Bowman** - September 30, 2024 at 03:23 PM

JE

“ *Jane Erckenbrack lit a candle in memory of Pastor Thomas Kolden*



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**Jane Erckenbrack** - September 30, 2024 at 01:30 PM

MD

*Pastor Tom was always friendly, kind, and a wonderful example of a servant of Christ. We enjoyed his sermons as "fill in" for Janet, our SAM (Synod Authorized Minister), when she was away. He visited members of our congregation on a monthly basis and gave them Communion. We will miss him.*

*Pastor Tom is beside the Lord now in his eternal resting place. My thoughts and prayers are for his family.*

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**Maureen Dragseth** - October 04, 2024 at 09:27 AM

CM

*Pastor Kolden was quiet yet compassionate and very kind. When he was our Pastor in LeRoy, my mother was pretty much homebound and he would always visit her. He also married my husband and I and I remember well the kindness he showed us during our "premarital" classes. It saddens us so that this tragic accident took his life.....our condolences to the girls. Prayers with you all.*

*Bill and Colette Miles*

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**Colette Miles** - October 04, 2024 at 04:49 PM

GG

*My condolences to the family of Tom Kolden. Tom was a classmate of mine at White Shield. After graduating high school in 1970, Tom and I parted and went our separate ways not reconnecting until running into one another at his Aunt's funeral in Bismarck. I must say how grateful I will always be for that one and only opportunity we had to have a brief get together after so many years. Rest in peace Tom.*

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**Gardell Giffey** - October 07, 2024 at 08:24 PM

SK

*My cousin Tom was one of a kind. But then, aren't we all. Tom's grandfather, Lars and my grandfather, Torger married two sisters making them double cousins. The closeness of their relationship direct from Norway created a family bond of 12 children celebrated for over 90 years. I have often joked that Kolden's were a dime a dozen in Roseglen, North Dakota. I will always treasure our family heritage and what each child has brought to that legacy. Tom was our personal family cousin, friend and pastor - yes, one of a kind - and the very best kind of all!*

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**Stan Kolden** - October 09, 2024 at 11:09 AM



*Blessings to the family of Tom. He was a classmate at Luther Sem. A wonderful person. May God hold him now in his arms.*  
*Mark Gorud*

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**Mark Gorud** - October 10, 2024 at 08:01 PM