



Verlys Dilley

August 7, 1929 - May 13, 2026

The funeral service celebrating the life of Verlys Dilley of Finley, ND, formerly of Wadena, MN, will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 21, at Bethany Lutheran Free Church in Bluegrass, MN, with Pastor Mark Flaten presiding. Visitation will be at the church on Thursday from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service. Burial will follow at Leaf River Cemetery in rural Wadena, MN.

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You are invited to watch the service online by going to Schuller Family Funeral Homes' Facebook Page or YouTube Page. Due to limited service availability, a recording will be uploaded after the funeral. Please check for the service upload after 4 pm. We apologize for the inconvenience.

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Verlys, age 96, passed away peacefully at home in Finley, ND, on May 13, 2026, surrounded by the love of family and the faith that carried her throughout her life.

Born to Herbert and Hilda (Kirkeeng) Johnson in a farmhouse near Bluegrass, MN, Verlys was the youngest of three children. From an early age, she possessed a gentle spirit, a strong work ethic, and a caring heart that would shape the way she lived her life.

Verlys began her education at Wadena County Rural School District #14 and graduated in the Class of 1947 from Wadena High School. She discovered

early on her love for children and learning, which made teaching a natural calling. After completing teacher training in Staples, she began teaching in rural schools, including Districts #12 and #8.

In 1949, Verlys married her handsome Navy sailor, Lyle Dilley, at Bethany Lutheran Free Church in Bluegrass. Early in their marriage, they made their home in a small house in Verndale, where they began building their life together and growing their family. Along the way, they experienced the heartbreaking unexpected loss of their first son Maurice at just 1½ years old, a sorrow they carried with deep faith and quiet strength throughout their lives. Together they built a life centered on faith, family, and service while raising their younger children Lynette, Carol, Marilyn, and Thomas in Verndale, Blaine, and Brainerd, MN. Even while caring for her family, Verlys continued pursuing her education, earning a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from St. Cloud State University in 1969 and a master's degree from Bemidji State University in 1975.

Teaching was more than a profession to Verlys—it was a gift she shared generously. Over her 30-year career with the Anoka-Hennepin District #11 and Brainerd District #181, she touched the lives of countless children with patience, kindness, and encouragement. She also faithfully served through Sunday School, Bible School, and church choir, quietly investing in generations of young people and her church community. After retiring in 1989, Verlys moved with Lyle to his family's farm near Leaf River to help care for Lyle's aging parents.

Verlys had a special way of making people feel welcome and cared for. She treasured friendships, stayed active in her community, and found joy in simple things. She was a member of Bethany Lutheran Free Church in Bluegrass, the Busy Homemakers Group, the VFW Auxiliary and American Legion in Sebeka, and a retired teachers association that helped preserve the memory

of one-room country schools through exhibits at the county fair.

She especially loved singing and gardening, spending time outdoors among her flowers. Her gardens were a reflection of her nurturing spirit—beautiful, carefully tended, and shared with others. She delighted in teaching her children and grandchildren how to grow flowers and vegetables, passing along both knowledge and joy. In honor of her love for gardening, her children named a “Verlys Lily” after her. She also loved watching hummingbirds gather at her feeders, creating moments that her loved ones will continue to cherish and remember whenever hummingbirds appear.

Through every season of life, Verlys carried herself with grace, resilience, and quiet faith. She adapted to life’s changes with strength and gentleness, offering a calm and steady presence to those around her. Her faith in God was the foundation of her life and a source of comfort through both joys and hardships.

Verlys was preceded in death by her husband, Lyle; her son, Maurice; her parents, Herbert and Hilda; her sister, Charlotte Folkestad; her brother, Gail Johnson; her son-in-law, Steve Bailey; her grandson, Nathan; and her granddaughter, Elisabeth.

She will be lovingly remembered by her children: Lynette (Thomas) Ward of Champlin, MN; Carol (Mark) Flaten of Finley, ND; Marilyn Bailey of Huntington Beach, CA; and Thomas (Laura) Dilley of Brainerd, MN; along with 9 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild on the way, extended family, dear friends, and the many students whose lives she influenced over the years.

Serving as pallbearers are Joseph Ward, Fergus Oulman, Gunnar Oulman,

Isaac Solano, Aziel Solano, Elijah Solano, and Caleb McKay.

Cemetery Details

Leaf River Cemetery

12195 170th Street
Wadena, MN 56482

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 21. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Bethany Free Lutheran Church (Bluegrass)
21987 County Road 23
Sebeka, MN 56477

Service

MAY 21. 11:00 AM (CT)

Bethany Free Lutheran Church (Bluegrass)
21987 County Road 23
Sebeka, MN 56477

Tribute Wall



“ Schuller Family Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Verlys Dilley



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - May 18 at 09:56 PM

SA

“ Verlys was such a wonderful friend. She was such a giving and loving person. I will always remember the time we spent together when I lived in Minnesota.

Shirley Eichten Albrecht- May 31, 2026



Shirley Eichen Albrecht - May 31 at 05:42 PM

SP

“ Sandi Pratt lit a candle in memory of Verlys Dilley



Sandi Pratt - May 26 at 03:18 PM

JA

“ Verlys was a wonderful role model and Sunday school teacher. She loved the Lord and His light shined through her.



Jamie Adams - May 21 at 05:05 AM

GC

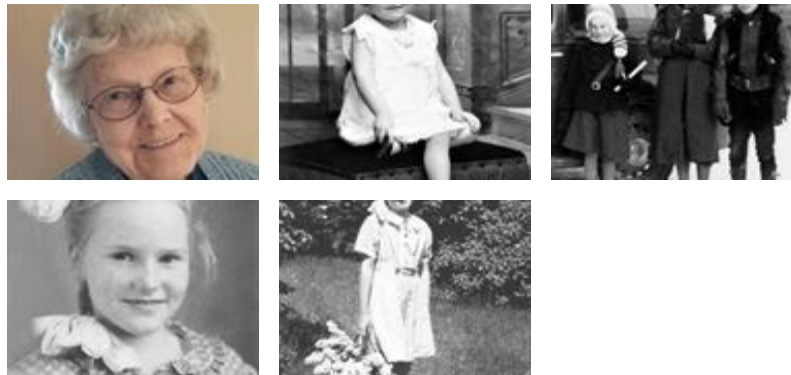
“ My visits with Verlys were great. I followed her on the cemetery board. She was a great inspiration and role model. I will miss her.



Gladys Chase - May 18 at 09:58 PM



“ 43 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Schuller Family Funeral Homes - May 18 at 09:54 PM



“ *Love's Journey was purchased for the family of Verlys Dilley.*



May 18 at 08:34 PM



“ *Gail Johnson Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Verlys Dilley.*



Gail Johnson Family - May 17 at 07:37 AM



“ *Bruce and Trish Steinkopf lit a candle in memory of Verlys Dilley*



Bruce and Trish Steinkopf - May 16 at 04:08 PM



“ *Wow, what can I say? Been friends with Verlys since I was a teenager; she was such a wonderful friend to my mother - think they were confidants.*
In the later years, it was fun to stop & visit with Verlys & remember the "old neighborhood". She will be truly missed. The Dilley family - please know that if I was living closer, I would definitely be there with you!

John Vinje - May 16 at 02:19 PM

BB

“ *Sending prayers to the family!! Such a sweet lady!! from a Bethany Free Lutheran member--*



Barb Brown - May 15 at 11:11 PM