



Elma C. Kepner "Dolly"

March 12, 2025

ELMA C. KEPNER ("Dolly") passed away peacefully on March 12, 2025, at the age of 94.

Born in Lancaster in 1930 to the late Christian Herr Harnish and Elma Landis, Dolly spent her entire life in the community she loved. She was born at her family home on New Danville Pike and remained there for 75 years, deeply rooted in the place that shaped her.

Dolly was the heart of her family. At just 15 years old, she lost her mother, stepping into the role of caretaker with strength and grace. She took on household duties, helped with the family's dairy business, and was an active member of Farm Women #22. Through these experiences, she became an exceptional cook and baker, known especially for her out-of-this-world pies.

Her musical talents were another of her God-given gifts. She began piano lessons as a young girl, studying under many teachers, and her love of music flourished. She devoted her talents to the Lord, serving as the children's choir director and later as the organist at Covenant United Methodist Church for 70 years—a role she shared for decades with her son Bill, who was the church's music director for 35 years.

Dolly was known for many things—her deep faith, her world-famous apple

pies, and her musical talents—but above all, she was known for her fierce love and unwavering dedication to her family. She would celebrate that love each summer and build fond memories in Ocean City, NJ.

She was the beloved wife of the late Donald E. Kepner, for 54 years until his passing in 2004; devoted mother of Cynthia A. Dale (Donald), Patricia L. Willard (Roger J.), and William H. Kepner (Phyllis); loving grandmother of Kristen (William) Stemmer, Ryan Dale (Catherine), Kelly Mantoan (Tony), Katherine Willard (Trishstin Hall), Allison Gregory (Gary), Rebecca Combs (Troy), and Kim McKinney (Jerry); adoring great-grandmother of 15; and dear sister of the late Evelyn E. Ameer (the late George). She was also a cherished aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend her viewing at 10:00 AM, followed by a Funeral Service at 11:00 AM, on Saturday, March 15, 2025, at Covenant United Methodist Church, 110 N. Mulberry Street, Lancaster, PA. Interment will follow at New Danville Mennonite Cemetery, Lancaster, PA.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: Spinal Muscular Atrophy: www.curesma.org or United Disabilities Services: www.udservices.org

g

Cemetery Details

New Danville Mennonite Cemetery

103 Marticville Road
Lancaster, PA 17603

Previous Events

Viewing

MAR 15. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Covenant United Methodist Church
110 N. Mulberry Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

Funeral Service

MAR 15. 11:00 AM (ET)

Covenant United Methodist Church
110 N. Mulberry Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

Tribute Wall



“ *The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc. created a Tribute Video in memory of Elma C. Kepner "Dolly"*



The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc - March 14, 2025 at 03:26 PM

DC

“ *I share condolences for your family Denise Copeland HCBS*

Denise Copeland - March 17, 2025 at 08:31 AM

CS

“ *Cindy & family, Sadly, I learned of the passing of your dear, sweet mom, grandmother, & great grandmother. Cindy, brought back memories of our time as “sisters”, our mom’s common threads, music, cherub choirs, & hairstyles. Love the video tribute, filled with loving memories for all of you. Offering prayers for peace & understanding as you journey through the time ahead. Remember you are blessed in so many ways. Love, Connie Sheaffer*

Connie Sheaffer - March 16, 2025 at 03:52 PM

VI

“ *I have fond memories of Cherub Choir with Mrs. Kepner in the late 60’s. Virginia Yoder McAdoo*

Virginia - March 15, 2025 at 10:47 AM



“ 230 files added to the album *LifeTributes*



The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc - March 14, 2025 at 02:17 PM

JS

“ *What a long life and legacy of faith, living and serving JESUS! For many years, we looked forward to attending the Christmas Eve services at Covenant UM Church. The most beautiful, inspiring organ playing by Dolly, the most inspiring voices of Bill and Cindy singing "Mary Did You Know" and the beautiful sounds of the Handbell Choir were so meaningful. What a blessing to meet Cindy as we both worked together as nurses at St. Joes Hospital in Lancaster! Our condolences to you entire family... Love & Prayers, Dennis & Janet(Kunkel) Shirk. Gordonville, Pa.*

Janet M Shirk - March 14, 2025 at 12:52 PM

KK

“ I will always remember Dolly fondly. She was a force of nature for music in the church. When she would light up that pipe organ it was always an experience. It was an honor to be a part of the music ministry of the church with her, influenced by her unmatched dedication to the church. A true inspiration.

There are too many great memories to share, and without question she will be missed.

Kevin Kresge - March 14, 2025 at 10:18 AM

HH

“ While I did not have the honor of knowing Dolly, I have had the honor of working under the leadership of her son, Bill. It is apparent from her obituary that Bill's great sacrificial love for people and his genuine concern for the well-being of others over himself was instilled in him throughout his life by Dolly. Dolly's legacy and passion will continue to live on vibrantly through Bill, all of her extended family, and through the lives her kindness touched. Dolly has finished her race and has returned home to the Father. We can celebrate her life and rejoice because we know there is no death in Christ, just a momentary lapse in time between the physical world and eternity, and there we know Dolly will be fully alive and we will all be united again never to part thereafter.

*With great love to Dolly and all of her family & friends,
Heather Hayes - UDSF CRC*

Heather Hayes - March 13, 2025 at 04:28 PM