

## Esther Gearhart, 79

Feb. 11, 1931 - Sept. 11, 2010

**HARLAN** - Esther Gearhart was born on February 11, 1931 to Marius and Johanna Marie (Rasmussen) Christensen in Kimballton. She was baptized and confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kimballton. She attended Kimballton Public School until the eighth grade and graduated from Audubon High School in 1949.

Esther married Charles Gearhart on February 16, 1951 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kimballton. Four children were born to this union: Michael, Kathleen, Denise and Wayne. After marriage, Charles and Esther farmed until moving to Harlan in 1957. Esther was a homemaker, worked part-time at Mickels, then went to work as a cook



at the Harlan Junior High School in 1965 until her retirement in 2002 from the new Harlan Community Middle School. Esther enjoyed entertaining family and friends and always had a pot of coffee ready for any guest. She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother who always taught her children to face life's challenges head on without complaining. Her greatest contributions in life were her talent of giving, her compassion for others and her generous spirit of life. She was a 50 year member of the Harlan American Legion Women's Auxiliary and also a member of the Veteran's of Foreign Wars Auxiliary of Harlan. Esther was also a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan where she was active as a Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School teacher, in various women's circles, secretary of the church council and a member of the bell choir. Esther was also very proud of her Danish ancestry and was a member of the Danish Historical Society as well as the Harlan Historical Society. She also was the Grand Marshal of the 2005 Harlan Community School Homecoming Parade. In November of 2009, Esther became a resident of the Elm Crest Retirement Community in Harlan and this is where she died on September 11, 2010 having attained the age of seventy-nine years and seven months.

In addition to her parents, Esther was preceded in death by her son Wayne A. Gearhart and her grandson Wayne J. Gearhart. She is survived by her husband Charles Gearhart of Harlan; her children: Michael Gearhart and his wife Ruth of Newman Grove, NE, Kathleen and her husband Doug Poehlman of Kansas City, MO, and Denise and her husband Tim Arkfeld of Cincinnati, OH; her brothers Kjer Christensen and his wife Loretta of Kimballton, and Svend Christensen of Mitchellville; her sister Bertha Hansen of Elk Horn; nine grandchildren, five great-grandchildren; and countless other relatives and friends.

Pastor Steven Chellew officiated the 2:00 p.m. funeral service on Tuesday, September

14, 2010, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan. Pastor Donna Ewert was the eulogist. Honorary casket bearers were Nichole Arkfeld, Natalie Arkfeld, Kara Poehlman, Melissa Gearhart Moreno, and Emily Gearhart Ternus. Serving as casket bearers were Andrew Poehlman, Timothy Ternus, Matthew Moreno, Todd Arkfeld, Craig Arkfeld, and Alan Poehlman. Interment was held at the Harlan Cemetery.

*Pauley Jones*

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