Robert “Bob” Arnold Isdahl
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Robert “Bob” Arnold Isdahl, age 90 of Mankato, passed away peacefully Thursday, October 29, 2015, surrounded by family and friends.

Funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, November 5, 2015 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Mankato with Rev. Jay Dahlvang officiating. Burial will be at Solomon Lake Lutheran Church Cemetery near Willmar, Minnesota. Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m., Wednesday at Mankato Mortuary and one hour before the service at the church on Thursday.

Robert is survived by his three children, Connie Jo (Melvin) King of Clark, Wyoming, Robert John Isdahl of Bozeman, Montana, and Barbara Ann (Roger) Martens of Missoula, Montana; four grandchildren, Hilary and Emily Martens, Anneke and Peter Isdahl; step-granddaughter, Erin King; honorary daughter, Cheryl Eigen; many nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends. Robert was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Dorothy Irene Isdahl; his parents, Ludvig and Cora; brother, Otto; sisters, Clara, Lenore, and Margaret; and daughter-in-law, Lore (Dybvik) Isdahl.

Robert was born in 1925 to Ludvig and Cora (Nissen) Isdahl in Willmar, Minnesota. He grew up on the family farm and fondly remembered riding to Long Lake Church every Sunday in a horse and buggy. Driven by a strong work ethic, he went to work for the Great Northern Railroad at age 17. Shortly thereafter, Robert served in the US Navy for three years during World War II, stationed in the Marshall Islands, Hawaii, San Diego, and Japan. The experience carried great meaning for both him and his family.

On September 30, 1950, Robert united in marriage with the love of his life, Dorothy Solmonson. They soon moved to Mankato, where they raised their family. Robert worked as the Physical Plant Director at Mankato State University for many years. A longstanding member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Robert profoundly enjoyed the company of Pastor Jay and the congregation. He devoted much of his time to church activities and particularly enjoyed volunteering for building projects and vacation bible school. He was also an avid gardener, woodworker, and craftsman, creating intricate projects that included model Norwegian stave churches, which his family will treasure forever.

A true citizen of the world, Robert loved to travel, explore diverse cultures, and develop connections with people around the globe. He spoke admirably of the kindness and hospitality shown to him during his journeys, and especially appreciated an invitation to tea from a Japanese family while stationed there in the Navy.

Robert epitomized humility, grace, generosity, and compassion. He worked to provide opportunities and hope to those less fortunate through projects such as providing clean water to villages in Africa and building homes with Habitat for Humanity. Robert deeply cherished his wonderful friendships, and very much looked forward to weekly gatherings at the Wagon Wheel Cafe.

Roberts children and grandchildren hold dear their fond memories of playing in the gardens he so beautifully tended, discovering their family history together in Norway, camping trips, watching his favorite western movies, celebrating his 90th birthday this past spring, and simply having fun as a family. He loved riding horses with Connie in Wyoming, woodworking with his son, Bob, and listening to Barbara play on the harp they built together.

Robert benefited from exceptional care and friendship provided by the staff and residents at Oak Terrace and, in his final days, at Pathstone Living, for which his family is grateful.

Robert holds a special place in the hearts of many and words cannot express the deep admiration and love his family and friends will always have for him. His enduring optimism, adventurous spirit, and gratitude for lifes simple blessings inspired everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

Memorials may be given to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Hospice or donor’s choice.