



## James F. Helmke

January 31, 1944 - September 18, 2023

James Frederick Helmke, 79, of Defiance, Ohio passed away on Monday, September 18, 2023, at Vancrest of Holgate. He was born in Defiance, on January 31, 1944, to the late Henry and Anna (Leaders) Helmke. Jim was baptized at St. Peter Lutheran Church on February 14, 1944, by Rev. FWG Mueller and on March 30, 1958, he was confirmed also at St. Peter by the Rev. L J Rausch. He was a 1962 graduate of North Richland-Adams High School. On February 4, 1967, Jim married Norma Jean Degler at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Napoleon, Ohio.

Jim was a member of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Florida, Ohio and proudly served his country in the US Army. He was a lifelong farmer, working alongside his son-in-law, Mark and grandson, Everett. Jim also worked for S&K Tools for over 40 years. He enjoyed being with his family and they loved his homemade ice cream.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Norma; children, Todd Helmke, and Lori (Mark) Wilkerson; grandchildren, Cody (Nicole) Helmke, Austin Helmke, Everett (Mackenzie) Wilkerson, and Kacey Wilkerson; four great grandchildren; sister, Bette Weddelman; and brothers, Don (Janice) Helmke, and Marv (Vickie) Helmke. In addition to his parents, Jim was preceded in death by an infant son, Timothy; and brother-in-law, Bert Weddelman.

Friends and family will be received at the Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home, Napoleon on Friday, September 22, 2023, from 2:00 PM until 7:00 PM. Funeral Services will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Napoleon, on Saturday, September 23, 2023, at 10:30 AM with an hour of visitation prior to services. Funeral services will be livestreamed from the church website [stpaulnapoleon.org](http://stpaulnapoleon.org). Interment will immediately follow at Riverview Memory Gardens, Defiance, with military honors presented by the Napoleon American Legion. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Peter Lutheran Church, Florida, Ohio, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Napoleon, Ohio, or the James Cancer Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. A special thank you to Jim's infusion team, Jamie, Julie and Chad, for their care and compassion. Online condolences and messages may be shared with the family at [rodenbergergray.com](http://rodenbergergray.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Riverview Memory Gardens

29321 County Rd 424  
Defiance, OH 43512

# Previous Events

## Public Viewing

SEP **22**. 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Rodenberger Funeral Home - Napoleon  
1010 Westmoreland Avenue  
Napoleon, OH 43545

## Public Viewing

SEP **23**. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
1075 Glenwood Ave.  
Napoleon, OH 43545

## Funeral Service

SEP **23**. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
1075 Glenwood Ave.  
Napoleon, OH 43545

*Military honors will be presented at Riverview Memory Gardens following the funeral service by the Napoleon American Legion Post 300*



# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Rodenberger Funeral Home** - November 09, 2023 at 03:36 PM



“ *I am so sorry for your loss. May the lord hold you tight.*  
*Peggy Oyer*

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**Peggy Oyer** - September 29, 2023 at 09:14 AM

LB

“ To Norma, Lori, Todd and the entire Helmke family I send you all lots of love and feel much gratitude for having known Jim. How I enjoyed talking with Jim and his down-home, no-nonsense way of viewing life and the challenges that we all face in life. His sense of humour was priceless. Jay, my Father, loved visiting with Jim and those two could talk for hours about all kinds of things, including farming, politics and other things. My family enjoyed time with Jim and Norma at their Coldwater Lake home. Mom, Dad and I played cards at their Jewel home. I well remember Everett's high school graduation party on Lori and Mark's farm and the yummy ice cream. We had a number of meals together various places including in Jewell and the Barn Restaurant in Archbold. I can easily imagine how much all of you are missing Jim and that he and Jay will soon have a good yarn to spin once they meet up in the world of Spirit. Blessings to each one of you during this sad time of loss and grieving. Sending you all much love from Larry Beck in New Zealand

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**Larry Beck** - September 26, 2023 at 04:45 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.



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September 21, 2023 at 12:26 PM

“ From the frozen tundra of Korea to fields and forests of war-torn Europe to the jungles of Southeast Asia, from the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq to the mountains of Afghanistan, brave patriots have protected our nation’s ideals, rescued millions from tyranny, and helped spread freedom around the globe. America’s veterans answered the call when asked to protect our nation from some of the most brutal oppression the world has ever known. Military service demands a special kind of sacrifice. The places where you are sent to live and serve bring risk every day. From the time you put on that uniform for the first time, the interests of the nation move to the forefront and define your life. Those duties are shared by family members who make many sacrifices of their own, sometimes bearing the burden of losing a loved one. Service brings rewards as well. There is the pride in developing one’s own character, serving a cause far greater than self-interest. Every person who wears America’s uniform is part of a long, unbroken line of achievement and honor. No single military power in history has done greater good, shown greater courage, liberated more people or upheld higher standards of decency and valor than the Armed Forces of the United States of America. That is a legacy to be proud of and those who contributed to it must never be taken for granted. To honor our veterans, we must keep the promises we have made to them. We must care for those who have been injured in the service of our country. We must honor and remember those who have died. And we must remember those whose fate is still undetermined. We fly the Prisoner of War flag on Veterans Day for a reason, to show that this nation will not relent until we have accounted for every one of our missing Americans. Thank you for your service. Thank you for all that you have sacrificed for this great nation. Thank you for being the backbone of America.

*Brigadier General (Retired) Mark W. Lee, United States Army*

RM

“ Rob & Lisa (Helmke) McGee planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James F. Helmke.

Rob & Lisa (Helmke) McGee - September 20, 2023 at 08:19 PM

RM

“ Rob & Lisa (Helmke) McGee purchased the Large Basket Garden for the family of James F. Helmke.



Rob & Lisa (Helmke) McGee - September 20, 2023 at 08:19 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.



September 20, 2023 at 12:12 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James F. Helmke.

September 20, 2023 at 12:12 PM

JT

“ *My thoughts and prayers to the family.*



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**Julie (Ward) Tijerina** - September 20, 2023 at 10:47 AM

N(

“ *Our warmest thoughts and prayers to you  
Norma and all the family!  
James, Nancy (Meyer), Kimberly and Alyssa  
Duke*



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**Nancy Duke (Meyer)** - September 20, 2023 at 07:48 AM

KL

“ *So sorry for your loss. Sending hugs and  
prayers for the whole family.*



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**Kathleen L Lieb** - September 19, 2023 at 08:51 PM



“ *Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the  
family of James F. Helmke.*



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September 19, 2023 at 07:29 PM

MH

“ Memories are God’s gift to our souls. We have so many good ones. Prayers and love are with you Norma. God has this. Find comfort in his light. Blessings.

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**mike & cindy howard** - September 19, 2023 at 03:50 PM

MF

“ Mike, Cindy, Shirley and family. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of James F. Helmke.

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**Mike, Cindy, Shirley and family.** - September 19, 2023 at 03:39 PM

MF

“ Mike, Cindy, Shirley and family. purchased the I Have You In My Heart Plush Blanket for the family of James F. Helmke.



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**Mike, Cindy, Shirley and family.** - September 19, 2023 at 03:39 PM

MH

“ Mike Howard lit a candle in memory of James Helmke



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**Mike & Cindy Howard** - September 19, 2023 at 03:36 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.*



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September 19, 2023 at 12:12 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.*



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September 19, 2023 at 11:57 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.*



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September 19, 2023 at 08:58 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James F. Helmke.*

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September 19, 2023 at 08:53 AM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of James F. Helmke.* ”



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September 19, 2023 at 08:53 AM