



## Marlene Ann Bockelman

December 19, 1941 - June 3, 2026

Marlene Ann Bockelman, 84, peacefully passed on to her heavenly home on June 3, 2026, at Henry County Hospital in Napoleon. She was born on December 19, 1941, the daughter of Richard and Erna (Nagel) Bockelman.

In the 1940s, a polio epidemic swept through Defiance and Henry counties. Marlene was stricken with the disease at the age of six. This weakened her body and caused her to need a heavy metal brace to walk with for the rest of her life.

Marlene grew up on the family dairy farm near Okolona. Her loving parents helped and motivated her to learn to adapt to her disability. In recalling those years, she would laugh and say, "I never had to work in the fields or the barn, like the boys, but Mom sure found plenty of things for me to take care of in the house! But eventually I came to appreciate that it taught me responsibility, self-reliance, and the satisfaction of a job well done."

After graduation from Jewell High School, Marlene attended business college in Toledo. She held the belief that having a job was a privilege and she was a hardworking, dedicated employee. She held several jobs throughout the years, as an accountant and office assistant, mostly in construction businesses. She retired at the age of 70 from Baker-Shindler Co. in Defiance. There she thoroughly enjoyed learning all about the business and getting to

know her fellow employees.

Marlene was baptized and confirmed at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Okolona. In her younger years she was active in several activities but especially enjoyed working with the youth in their Bible Bowl events. A lifelong and faithful member, she considered the people of Bethlehem Okolona her family – always interested in everyone and their families.

Despite the struggles caused by her disability, she enjoyed life with perseverance, courage, and joy. Problems developed as her life progressed, but she always found ways to adapt and move forward. She traveled extensively with friends and cherished many memories of good times spent together and places visited. Marlene was an avid Detroit Tiger Baseball fan, and each fall enjoyed cheering on the Ohio State Buckeye football team.

As Marlene aged, her body grew weaker and she became nearly homebound. But this did not keep her from enjoying life. She treasured all the phone calls and visits from friends, the weekly visits by Bethlehem members, and a monthly visit by the pastor. Beyond measure was the helpfulness and kindness of her Bavarian Village neighbor.

Marlene is survived by her sister-in-law, Sue Bockelman; niece and nephew-in-law, Andrea and Matthew Van Gilder; great-nephew, Zachary Van Gilder; and cousins and friends. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Delmer and Larry Bockelman.

A funeral service will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Okolona, on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 12:00pm Noon, with viewing from 10am until the time of services at Noon. The service will be officiated by Pastor Alan Fuhrhop. Services will also be livestreamed at [www.youtube.com/@bethlehemlutheranokolona8615](http://www.youtube.com/@bethlehemlutheranokolona8615). A private interment will take place at Bethlehem

Lutheran Church, Okolona Cemetery where Marlene will be laid to rest near her parents, grandparents, and brothers. Memorial contributions are suggested to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Okolona, the Filling Home of Mercy, or a charity of the donor's choice. Online condolences may also be left for the family at [www.rodembergergray.com](http://www.rodembergergray.com). Arrangements have been entrusted to Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home of Napoleon.

# Cemetery Details

## Bethlehem Lutheran Cemetery, Okolona

30997 Gerken Road  
Defiance, OH 43512

# Upcoming Events

## Visitation

JUN **10**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Bethlehem Lutheran Cemetery, Okolona  
30997 Gerken Road  
Defiance, OH 43512

## Funeral Service

JUN **10**. 12:00 PM (ET)

Bethlehem Lutheran Cemetery, Okolona  
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Defiance, OH 43512

# Tribute Wall



“ *Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Marlene Ann Bockelman.* ”



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