



Karen Marie Nelson

May 21, 1975 - June 27, 2025

Karen Marie Nelson, 50, of Manteno was brought home to her Lord in the early morning hours of June 27, 2025, from the ICU at Riverside Medical Center after waging a multi-year battle against cancers and health issues. She was surrounded in her final two days by so many of those closest to her. Terry and Jeanne Schnell welcomed Karen to the world on May 21, 1975, in Kankakee. She was then hand-picked by God to be the big sister to her brother Brian.

Following her 1993 graduation from Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School, Karen graduated Magna Cum Laude from Olivet Nazarene University in 1997 and began her multi-decade career in human resources with multiple companies, most recently with Middle River Marine.

She married Shane Nelson on May 1, 1999, at the Manteno Church of the Nazarene. Karen and Shane were blessed with two children, Bryce and Christina. Bryce and Christina have shown strength and resilience beyond their years. Their family added a couple of wildly loving dogs over time (Zia and Lucy), which helped their home feel full of energy and love.

Karen chose to be baptized at age 10, and she has been steadfast in her faith ever since. She has engaged in church in every community in which she has lived (including Illinois, New Mexico, and Michigan), and the Gathering Point congregation is her home in faith in Kankakee County. A member of the Guest Experience Team, Karen contributed to the welcoming culture that is a hallmark of Gathering Point.

Those who knew Karen well knew that, in addition to her faithfulness and love of her family (and the Chicago Cubs), Karen could prep a tasty peanut butter pie, an always-sought-after strawberry pretzel salad, and chicken cheese enchiladas and vegetable pizza that always kept people coming back for seconds. The waistlines of her loved ones also showed signs of her love of holiday cookie baking. She enjoyed nature's beauty with her family (including travel to National Parks and on time on cruises), as well as enjoying it on her own, as she invested in gardening and plant care.

Those left to mourn her loss include her parents, Terry and Jeanne Schnell, and her brother Brian, all of Bradley; her children Bryce Nelson and Christina Nelson, both of Manteno; Shane Nelson of Dumas, Texas; many aunts, uncles, and cousins; and many people related to her by marriage.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents Melvin and Betty Schnell, by special Nelson family friend "Grandma" Ceil, and by the baby she and Shane lost via miscarriage. Her family knows that she was welcomed by those who passed away before her, including her grandma (with whom she was very close).

Visitation will be held 4:00pm. – 7:00pm on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00am on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, at First Baptist Church in Manteno. Rev. Dane Matthews will officiate the service.

Internment will be at Elmwood Cemetery in Manteno following the service.

In lieu of flowers, an account has been set up in the children's names at National Bank of Manteno to help with their futures.

Cemetery Details

Elmwood Cemetery

9000 E. Road
Manteno, IL 60950
(815) 468-7891

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 1. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Funeral Service

JUL 2. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church
300 E. 3rd St.
Manteno, IL 60950

Tribute Wall

BJ

“ Terry, Ruth, so very sorry for your loss.
Thoughts and prayers.
Barb Jackson



Barbara B Jackson - June 29, 2025 at 10:29 AM

MS

“ So sorry for your loss. God Bless her family &
friends as they go through this most difficult
time.



Marita Stokes - June 28, 2025 at 11:18 PM

AW

“ Karen was a beautiful person to be around. She was a shining
example of what it means to be a devoted mother. We were blessed
to have had the chance to get to know her...
May God give her family that peace that passes all understanding.
Kevin and Amy

Amy Wancho - June 28, 2025 at 02:53 PM