



Norma K French

August 2, 1945 - June 30, 2025

In Loving Memory of Norma Kay French

Faithful Servant, Joyful Musician, Cherished Matriarch—with a Spark of Sass Heaven’s music just got a whole lot better—and probably a little more organized—because Norma Kay French (née Clapp) has taken her seat at the eternal organ bench. A lifelong musician, devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Norma’s life was a beautiful harmony of faith, love, laughter, and grit.

Born to Edward and Jane Clapp, Norma began playing the organ at church at the age of 13. From that moment on, worship spaces across the years were filled with her music—bold when it needed to be, gentle when the Spirit called for it, and always played with heart. Whether leading hymns or accompanying choirs, Norma believed in making a joyful noise—and expected you to sing along in the right key.

She married the love of her life, Chuck French, and together they shared 60 years of laughter, partnership, and perfectly pitched duets. They raised two children, Jim French (Stephanie) and Tammy (French) Melvin (Jeff), who inherited both their parents’ deep sense of faith and their slightly mischievous sense of humor.

Norma adored her grandchildren—Tyler (Erica), Matt (Amanda) & Hayley (Melvin) Golightly (Dillon); Torrie, Cameron (Alyssa), Chris & Alli French—and delighted in her great-grandchildren: Kenzie Melvin, Isla and Brooks Golightly, Bexley and Ruelle French. She was a hands-on grandma, the kind who

showed up with cookies, music, and maybe a sly joke or two.

Norma served faithfully as an auditor for Palisades Nuclear Plant for 25 years, bringing diligence, intelligence, and a steady sense of humor to the job.

She also had a gift for friendship, sharing life's sweetest moments with her beloved "gang of eight"—Pat and Ken Ratzlaf, Carol and Roger Courser, and Ben and Thelma Cox—faithful travel companions to Gaither Family Fests in Gatlinburg, sunny Florida winters, and more than a few adventures that included church laughter and buffet lines.

Norma sang with the Simpson Quartet—Roger Valentine, Ann Stickels, Chuck French, and Norma herself—bringing harmony and Gospel joy to congregations and even a minor league baseball crowd when they sang the national anthem together. She continued singing in choirs at Simpson UMC and Coronado UMC during her treasured snowbird seasons.

And of course, who could forget the time the organ she was playing started smoking? Unshaken and unfazed, Norma did what any great church musician would do—she finished the hymn. Because in Norma's world, the music (and the service) must go on.

She is also survived by her sister, Carol Courser, and brother-in-law Roger, who shared in a lifetime of memories and laughter.

Norma's life was one of melody and mission. She was elegant, witty, and grounded in faith. Whether seated at the organ, behind a desk, or around the table with her family, Norma lived with kindness, wisdom, and a twinkle in her eye that said, "We'll get through this—and we might just laugh while we do."

A service to celebrate her life and resurrection will be held at Simpson United Methodist Church on July 7, 2025. The visitation will begin at 11am with the service following at Noon. Immediately following the service, a luncheon will be held in the social hall. In lieu of flowers, the family invites memorial gifts to be made to Simpson United Methodist Church and/or Corewell Health Hospice.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" — and Norma did, beautifully, faithfully, and even when the organ was literally smoking.

Cemetery Details

Cremation

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Simpson United Methodist Church
507 Joy St
Bangor, MI 49013-1123
(269) 427-7725

Service

JUL 7. 12:00 PM (ET)

Simpson United Methodist Church
507 Joy St
Bangor, MI 49013-1123
(269) 427-7725

Tribute Wall

MR

“ Just read the obituary for Norma. She was my cousin and we were close when we were younger. Chuck, I'm sorry for your loss. May the lord bless and keep you and your family.

mike rubick - December 24, 2025 at 04:52 PM

JM

“ So sad to have heard of Norma's passing and not bein.being there for the service. I worked with Norma at Palisades. I will remember her big smile, laughter, and the knowledge of her love of playing despite her painful fingers. She found her passion and carried it with her throughout her life. From the memories shared here she touched life with happy hands and a joyful voice.

Janice Milan - July 11, 2025 at 09:52 AM

LF

“ We have been neighbors with Chuck and Norma for many years. We will greatly miss her in our lives. May God be with your family and give you peace. Dan and Lynne Farmer

Lynne Farmer - July 07, 2025 at 11:55 AM

MM

“ We are saddened by this news, yet smile as we remember her playing the organ for us 60 yrs. ago at the Bangor Free Methodist Church. She will be missed, but we are so happy to know we will meet again. Great French family memories. Mike and Gail McCloughan

Mike and Gail McCloughan - July 04, 2025 at 08:49 AM

RH

“ Our family will be remembering your family with prayers as you bid a loving, see you later, to Norma. She was a blessing to be around at whatever occasion we were at any time. May God comfort and bless you at this time of separation!! Russ & Kathy Hodgman; Bill, Rachel, Hoyt, Drew, Annie & Maggie Edmondson; and David, Rebecca, Sawyer & Everlee Hodgman



Russ Hodgman - July 03, 2025 at 07:44 PM

AB

“ Alyssa, Cameron, Ruelle and Bexley purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Norma K French.



Alyssa, Cameron, Ruelle and Bexley - July 03, 2025 at 03:08 PM

AB

“ Alyssa, Cameron, Ruelle and Bexley planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norma K French.

Alyssa, Cameron, Ruelle and Bexley - July 03, 2025 at 03:08 PM

TF

“ The Cooper Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Norma K French.



The Cooper Family - July 03, 2025 at 11:17 AM

TF

“ The Cooper Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norma K French.

The Cooper Family - July 03, 2025 at 11:17 AM

TF

“ The Cooper Family planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norma K French.

The Cooper Family - July 03, 2025 at 11:10 AM

JR

“ Judy Rainey lit a candle in memory of Norma K French



Judy Rainey - July 03, 2025 at 07:45 AM

DT

“ DIANE WILSON TRIPP lit a candle in memory of Norma K French



DIANE WILSON TRIPP - July 02, 2025 at 03:12 PM

WD

“ Wally and Sarah Danapilis purchased the Forever Our Angel Bouquet for the family of Norma K French.



Wally and Sarah Danapilis - July 02, 2025 at 09:36 AM

WD

“ Wally and Sarah Danapilis planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Norma K French.

Wally and Sarah Danapilis - July 02, 2025 at 09:36 AM

CC

“ Norma and i share 79 years of memories.....we were so much alike but so different.....she got all the musical talent. Mom and Norma both were church piano players for 50 years. Norma sang in the choir and in a group.....I sang in the choir but no one asked me to sing the solo. We both married great men who have been a wonderful support. We both had 2 children and Norma and Chuck's family has really shown how strong and supporting they can beNorma Chuck Roger and I have enjoyed traveling together, game nights.....fishing trips (at least the men) family times togetherso many stories we could share.....but most of all we will miss our times together but know she is smiling in heaven now and her pain is gone.....love you sisrer

Carol A Courser - July 01, 2025 at 02:36 PM

MR

Carol, I just read the obituary and was so sorry to hear of Norma's passing. I wish we would have stayed in touch more. God bless you.

mike rubick - December 24, 2025 at 04:55 PM

BB

“ *Dear Norma, Remembering all the very special times we had over many years with our guys and especially all the wonderful times our red hat group had with our outings. I'm so glad for our memories that will continue on. Love, Bara*

Barb Bury - June 30, 2025 at 07:35 PM