

Gilbert Nijay Sprague of Owendale, age 69, entered his heavenly home on Monday, July 20, 2026 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born on May 20, 1957 in Pigeon, the son of the late Gilbert G. and Florence M. (Groh) Sprague. Gil graduated from Owendale Gagetown High School with the class of 1976. It was in high school he met the love of his life, the former Joy Engelhardt. They were united in marriage on December 18, 1976. Together they shared nearly fifty years, two children, and countless memories.

Gil first worked at the Thumb Cooperative Terminal before spending 40 years at the Co-op Elevator in Elkton, where he retired. He was a former member of the Owendale Lions Club and enjoyed attending church and practicing his faith. Gil was an avid hunter and fisherman. He loved hunting deer and turkeys and fishing until the sun went down. He especially enjoyed his fishing walleye tournaments with his teacher, Manuel Thies, and later with his brother, Brad. He was always willing to teach others to hunt and fish, especially children, helping pass those traditions on to the next generation.

Gil loved spending time with his grandchildren and was proud of them, often sharing stories about them. Although he was quiet and reserved, he could strike up a conversation with anyone and was remembered for the stories he shared. He also loved his dogs and treated them like members of the family. Gil's hard work, quiet strength, occasional stubbornness, and, above all, his love for his family will be deeply missed.

Gil leaves to cherish his memory, his wife, Joy Sprague of Owendale; children, Heather Sprague of Sebewaing and Jeremy Sprague of Owendale; grandchildren, Stephen, Khaliyah, Elena, and Rowen Sprague; siblings, Kevin (Claudia) Sprague, Brian (Lupe Zaragoza) Sprague, Brad (Chona) Sprague, Jody (Craig Ozbat) Sprague, Tonya (Arnie) Gaeth; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Ken Engelhardt, Dave (Pat) Engelhardt, and Jeanette Bach; many nieces and nephews; and beloved dogs, Kody and Hope. In addition to his parents, Gil was preceded in death by his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Carl and Lorene Engelhardt; sister-in-law, Connie Engelhardt; and brother-in-law, Mike Bach.

Gil's funeral service will be on Saturday, July 25, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sebewaing. Rev. Michael Boyer will officiate with the burial following at Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery in Sebewaing. The family will be present to receive visitors on Friday, July 24, 2026 from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Ransford Funeral Home in Sebewaing, and again on Saturday at church from 10:00 a.m. until the time of his service. Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider memorial contributions to Immanuel Lutheran Church or a charity of the donor's choice.