



Helen Mae Riley

July 14, 1923 - June 22, 2015

FAITHORN- Helen Mae Riley age 91 of Faithorn, passed away Monday, June 22, 2015 at Cedar Hill Assisted Living in Bark River, MI. with her family at her side.

She was born on July 14, 1923 in Faithorn, the daughter of the late Theron and Alma (Zerrener) Knapp. They lived about 4 miles south of Faithorn and after she was married she lived 1 mile north of Faithorn. Her whole life was in that little town.

Helen married her high school sweetheart and neighbor, Lynn Riley on August 17, 1940 in Hermansville, MI. Together they worked hand in hand farming and milking cows.

Lynn drove school bus for 41 years, so Helen had to finish up all the barn chores and get the children up, fed and ready for school.

Helen went to Faithorn School and then graduated from Hermansville in 1940. Helen loved her little Methodist Church and she played the piano there for 33 years. When Helen was younger she also taught 4-H classes and was a member of the Faithorn Rescue Squad.

She worked for years on the town elections and was always there to help for all the church and community doings. She was famous for her baked beans, if you went to a doing in Faithorn and ate baked beans, it was surely hers. Helen loved to be with people to talk and laugh.

Helen was known by many and loved by all. Her family was very important to her. She would make a big meal every Sunday, just in case someone would drop in, you could never get out of her house without having something to eat.

She loved reading her favorite books and watching her game shows. She was a cat lover and always had one by her side. Helen also loved going to Faithorn on Friday nights for her fish fry.

Helen was known by many as the “Queen of Faithorn”, she was the oldest woman in her little town (which she loved very much), but she never looked it. She has her Angel wings now.

Helen traveled with her daughters on many trips across the United States, she had her first airplane ride when she was 85 years old, she was a little afraid to fly, she would say “if God wanted me to fly, he would have given me wings”, but she loved every minute of it.

Helen is survived by her daughters Marjorie (William) Schmitt of Wilson and Karen (Walter) Welch of Bark River; sons David (Mary Lou) Riley of Faithorn and Larry Riley of Hermansville; 14 grandchildren Robert (Lisa), Jody, Jason (Vicky) Welch from Perronville, Kristee (Robert) Arndt and Kammi (Eric) Poehlman of Bark River, Lynn (Dan) Bradfish of Appleton, WI., Angela (Rick) Blumenschein of Wilson, William (Colleen) Schmitt of Wilson, Rebecca Dessellier of Iron Mountain, Laurie (Tom) Britton of Powers, Joel (Jimmie) Riley of Kingsford, Brenda (Joe) Sullivan of Kingsford, Jamie (Jamie) Riley of Hermansville and Jeremey (Leticia) Riley of Vulcan; 34 great grandchildren; and 1 great great grandchild.

She was very blessed to have all but one of her extended family live within 30 miles of her, which includes a very special niece Pat Meiner from Powers.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband Lynn in 1992, and her only sister Lois Curran in 1991.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, June 25 from 5-8 p.m. at the Ortman Funeral Home in Norway.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, June 26 at 11 a.m. at the Faithorn United Methodist Church with Pastor Irene White officiating.

Interment will follow at Riverside Cemetery in Faithorn.

Her family would like a special thank you to O.S.F. Hospice and Cedar Hill Assisted Living in Bark River for all the wonderful care that was provided for our mother the last days of her life. Thank you, God for the wonderful 91 years she had in life and in death.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

Faithorn, MI 49892

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **25**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Ortman Funeral Home
618 Norway Street
P.O. Box 155
Norway, MI 49870
(906) 563-5700
ortmanfuneralhome@norwaymi.com
<https://www.ortmanfuneralhome.com/>

Service

JUN **26**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Faithorn United Methodist Church
Faithorn, MI 49892

Tribute Wall

JC

“ *What a loss to all of us! Helen was a great example of how to live joyfully and die in faith. Always compassionate, patient, and sunny, she touched the lives of my family just through her kindness to us all and especially for her loving friendship to our mother for many long years. The Riley family moved from Sullivan, Illinois with the McClure family back in the depression years and lived neighbors both there and here in the U.P. Now Helen is the last of that generation in Faithorn, and she will be sorely missed. I'm glad we had a chance to pray together at the last, dear friend. Say Hi to Mother!*

Judy McClure Carlsen - June 25, 2015 at 04:38 PM

KB

“ *What a beautiful soul Helen had. I loved her for loving my family, Jeremy, Leticia and Helaina. Always bringing great stories, a warm heart and security for each of them. I was blessed to have shared a few dinners and exchange stories with her. She will be missed. Blessings to the family. We loved her! Kathy and Toby Bresnahan*

Kathy Bresnahan - June 25, 2015 at 02:35 PM

JK

“ *John Kries purchased the Love's Journey for the family of Helen Mae Riley.*



John Kries - June 24, 2015 at 11:35 AM



“ *Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Helen Mae Riley.*



June 23, 2015 at 06:06 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Helen Mae Riley.*



June 23, 2015 at 03:27 PM

ER

“ *My very first memory of Helen was at approximately six or seven years of age when she shared her skis with me since I couldn't afford my own. That generosity carried through her whole life. We graduated from high school together and I witnessed her marriage to my brother. I will always remember my trips to their home, the three of us hitting the bars on Saturday night, stealing hub caps and having a great time together. We have been too many miles apart recently but you have always remained in my heart.*

Love,

Edna

Edna C. Riley - June 23, 2015 at 02:40 PM

CW

“ *Aunt Helen had the patience of a saint. Every year when we made the trip to see my Grandma Riley (her mother-in-law) who lived just down the road, it was time for all of us cousins to get together and hang out all day long and far into the night usually. I can still hear her back screen door slamming every time we came in and out of the house which was often. She never said a word about the chaos. We always had pancakes for breakfast too. She made dozens of them each morning. As soon as breakfast was cleared up, she would start asking what we wanted for lunch! My brother and sisters and I have so many fond memories of being "up north" each year with Aunt Helen and Uncle Bud and our cousins. I loved sitting around and listening to the "adults" talking and laughing. So much laughter!! Good times and wonderful memories. Thanks Aunt Helen. You will be missed. You have probably already given the Lord something to chuckle about.*

*Love,
Claire*

Claire Weimer - June 23, 2015 at 02:18 PM