

Helen M. Merkey, age 97 of Free Soil, Michigan died Friday, December 6, 2019 at Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital surrounded by her family.

She was born on January 10, 1922 in Free Soil, Michigan, daughter of the late Albert G. and Anna (Trem) Fend. Having been born on the family farm, Helen was always a "Farm Girl" at heart. She was a graduate of Free Soil High School. Helen married Carl R. Merkey Sr. on September 27, 1947 at Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Manistee. He preceded her in death on August 19, 1996. She spent most of her life taking care of their home and raising their family. She loved spending time with her brother and sister. Having been raised on a farm, she loved growing vegetables in her garden and then enjoyed cooking and canning them for her family and friends. Helen also enjoyed reading, going to yard and garage sales, playing bingo at the Free Soil Community Senior Center, crocheting and playing pinochle, and lastly, taking the "occasional" trip to the casino. She served as the Grant Township Clerk for many years. Helen was a member of Divine Mercy Parish of Manistee.

She is survived by three daughters and two son's in-law: Dorothy and David Barker of Ludington, Mary Jo and Alan Janowiak of Free Soil and Diane Pickard of Free Soil, her son and daughter-in-law Carl and Wendy Merkey, Jr. of Free Soil; nine grandchildren: Tristin Pickard, Corey Pickard, Rusty (Amanda) Merkey, Andy (Elise) Merkey, Kim Merkey (Aric Maser), Rexx (Maria) Janowiak, Nicole (Curtis) Smith, Heidi (Adam) Knudsen and Casey Janowiak, nine great grandchildren, and her brother Albert "Sonny" Fend Jr. of Free Soil. Numerous nieces and nephews also survive her.

Helen was also preceded in death by her infant sister Irene Fend, her sister and brother-in-law Doris and Joseph Papes, and her sister-in-law Bernadine Fend.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Thursday, December 12, 2019 at 11:30 AM at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Manistee with Reverend Zeljko Guberovic celebrant. Burial will follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery also in Manistee.

Relatives and friends will pray the Rosary Wednesday evening at 8:00 PM at the Herbert Funeral Home in Manistee, where the family will receive friends on Wednesday evening, from 6:00 PM until 9:00 PM. and on Thursday morning from 10:30 AM until leaving for the church at 11:10 AM.

The Herbert Funeral Home of Manistee is in charge of funeral arrangements.