



Rev William R Siktberg of Bennetts Switch passed away in Kokomo, Indiana at age 95 on September 20, 2018 after a brief illness. He was attended in his final days by his two sons and many devoted friends from the Bennetts Switch Community Church. He was a longtime member of that congregation in his retirement, and was their pastor in the late 1940s. He maintained a deep and caring Christian faith throughout his long life. He was beloved by many for his gentle manner, friendliness, curiosity, and creativity.

Four weeks before his death he was still living alone in the house he helped his father build in 1937, supported on a daily basis by loving church friends and family from afar after his wife Laura's death in 2010. He remained physically strong and independent-minded right to the end.

The third of four brothers, Bill was born soon after the first World War in Bennetts Switch, Indiana to Con and Hazel Siktberg. Bill worked in his father's general store, played baseball for Kokomo High School, and decided to attend Taylor University where he charted a course to be a minister. He made many lifelong friends there including Laura Herber of Upland, whom he married after graduation. He went east to New York City to get a bachelors degree from Biblical Seminary. He was ordained in the Methodist Church and served his initial pastorship in Indiana in a joint assignment to the Bennetts Switch, Miami, and Cassville churches. After two years he returned to New York to pursue a masters degree from Union Seminary, serving as pastor at Bethany Methodist Church in Brooklyn. In 1953 he moved with his growing family to Wesley Methodist Church in Franklin Square, Long Island. During his 13 years serving that appreciative congregation, he was a creative promoter of youth ministry, steadfastly supported the Civil Rights movement, and participated in the Billy Graham crusades in New York. He then moved upstate and served as pastor of the Fishkill Methodist Church for 22 years. He was beloved by that congregation, especially for his work with the youth group. He brought his family to Indiana each summer throughout his ministerial career. In 1988, he retired and returned to Bennetts Switch, and served as pastor of the Miami parish for several years in retirement.

Bill was an active and creative person with many interests. He was a biblical scholar, enthusiastically studying Hebrew and Greek bible texts with his brother Carl into their 80s. They traveled together to Israel to explore the many wonders of the Holy Land. He loved nature, relishing trips to national parks, including a long trip in his truck camper to Alaska and other trips out west. He was a devoted photographer, for many years designing and printing his own photographic (and often humorous) Christmas cards that were eagerly awaited by friends and family. From early days on Long Island he was a talented woodworker, making all kinds of things for home and church, culminating in full kitchen cabinets made from wild cherry wood harvested from his place and turned into lumber with Carl's sawmill. He nourished family connections, hosting several large reunions involving cousins from far and wide, including Sweden. He visited Sweden several times with his son David and relished walking the Stockholm streets where his grandparents had lived, and sharing family history with cousins there.

Bill's wife Laura passed away in 2010 and daughter Deborah in 2008. He is survived by brother Carl of West Springfield, MA, also a retired Methodist minister; by son David and wife Jennifer Christian of Wayland, MA and step grandchildren Sam, Peter, and Annie; and by son Stephen and wife Lainey Rudolph of Hyde Park, NY and grandsons Stephen and Michael. He is also honored and mourned by Tuan Ton of California, who Bill and Laura sponsored to come to the US in the 1970s and was considered like a son, and his children DaLam and Katie.

Visiting hours are Monday October 8 from 5:00 to 7:00 at the Murray-Weaver Funeral Home in Galveston. www.murrayweaverfuneralhome.com A memorial service will be held Tuesday at 11:00 at the Bennetts Switch Community Church with lunch to follow. A video of the service will be available on the church's Facebook page. Donations to the Bennetts Switch Community Church building fund are encouraged in lieu of flowers and would please Bill – send to the church at 2261 West State Road 18, Kokomo, IN 46901.