

## **Sammie Pollard Memorial Service – June 29, 2011**

**Prelude music -- Margie**

**Welcome, opening remarks, prayer -- Jerry**

**We're here to celebrate and remember Sammie Pollard's full and gracious life.**

**Minta Sam "Sammie" Pollard was born on August 22, 1930. She died last Sunday. In the meantime, she played the violin. Was likely teased, and loved, by Murray, MP and Steen. She married Jimmie. Kept books. She gave birth and life to Jim, Jay, and Greg. She welcomed Pam, Sherry, and Kathy into the family. She loved Nikk and Nathan, Natalie and Zach, Jace, Jason and Sara, Parker, and Peyton. She was lucky enough to meet Hayden, Alex, Drew, and Phoebe. She also deeply loved, and mourned the loss, of Jimmie, Brooks, Lowell, Jamie, and Autumn.**

**I've known Sammie for almost seventeen years. I met her, and Jimmie, at what I believe was my first house-call as pastor of this church. And celebrating his life in this way was how I first got to know Sammie and the family.**

**Sammie was a regular in Sunday School. She and Boo Olson and Minnie Williams always sat in the same place each week, just off to my left. People in Lubbock would often ask me, early on, about this church – what was it like, the people. There are many answers to that, but my favorite early on was that I served probably the only church in the country where the Sunday School had a smoking section. I don't know how they feel about that in heaven, but I'm sure Boo and Minnie were glad to see her again.**

**We begin by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and in Communion with the Holy Spirit. Let us pray:**

**Prayer: Our God of grace and glory, we remember and honor Sammie today and we thank you for giving her to us to know and to love. By your compassionate presence, console us in our mourning. Inspire in us the confidence of a certain faith, the comfort of holy hope, and the peace which passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

**Scripture readings – Elizabeth**

**Psalm 121**

**I lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help?  
My help cometh from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.  
He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.  
Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.  
The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.**

**The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore.**

### **Psalm 23**

**The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.**

**He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.**

**He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake**

**Ye though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,**

**I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**

**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.**

**Thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.**

**And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

### **John 14:1-3.**

**Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so would I have told you that I go and prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.**

### **About Sammie – Elizabeth**

Sammie was born on August 22, 1930 in Eastland, Texas to Milton and Ari Anna Herring.

Sammie grew up with five brothers and then had three sons who were the light of her life.

Her hospice nurse, Gwen, said Sammie was very attached to “her boys” as she so fondly called Jamsey, Jay, and Greg when she was speaking proudly of their accomplishments, families and personalities as well as when she acknowledged their loving and watchful care of her in the last days of her life in Lubbock.

About a month ago, I went to visit Sammie and she was alert, oriented, and grateful for the package of homemade cookies one of our Hospice volunteers made that day! We talked for almost an hour about her life in Post, her years of marriage to Jimmie, her sons and their families and the fun times they had with their neighbors and friends. She was receiving Hospice care for Alzheimer's Disease and yet she remembered most clearly the time Bryan J. shot Jo Cash's beloved cat and the years of teaching school that Jimmie and Minnie Williams shared!

Louise McCrary told me that Sammie was a good friend and neighbor and they often visited with each other across the street. Louise said Sammie was a very good bookkeeper and worked for Giles at McCrary and Franklin for several years and also worked for Earl Chapman at Rocker A for almost 40 years. Sammie was very proud of the beautiful gold, opal ring that Earl made for her in gratitude for her years of service to him and his company.

In many of Sammie's recent conversations with me, Gwen and Belinda, the hospice aid who helped her with her baths, Sammie talked often about wanting to go home. Sometimes she was very clear about going home to her home in Post such as when she recently told me, “I really would like to move back to Post but it probably is not the best thing because Jay and Sherry

would not approve of some things I did and I certainly would not approve of everything they did!”

At other times when Sammie said she was ready to go home, we all sensed she was speaking of her eternal home. Belinda told me that when she bathed Sammie last Friday, Sammie told her she was very tired and ready to go home. An excerpt from the book, *“You Can’t Go Home Again,”* by Thomas Wolfe speaks beautifully of the home we are promised in death by our loving and gracious God. I believe that Sammie would wholeheartedly affirm what it says, “Dear Fox, old friend, thus we have come to the end of the road that we were to go together. My tale is finished and so farewell. But before I go, I have just one more thing to tell you. Someone has spoken to me in the night and told me I shall die, saying, “to lose the earth you know, for greater knowing; to lose the life you have, for greater life; to leave the ones you loved, for greater loving; and so to find a land more kind than home, more large than earth.” In the end, Sammie had made her peace with God and was truly ready to go home!

### **Prayer – Elizabeth**

**God of all grace, you sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to bring life and immortality to light. We give you thanks because by his death Jesus destroyed the power of death and by his resurrection has opened the kingdom of heaven to all. We pray that we might be ever more certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come shall be able to separate us from your love which comes to us in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

### **Musical interlude: “The Lord’s Prayer” -- Margie**

### **Scripture and Sermon -- Jerry**

**A rather fascinating and illustrative story of family life and love, from Luke’s Gospel, chapter 10. “Now as they went on their way, he entered a village, and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving.” And this version of the story goes on to suggest that Mary chose a wiser use of her time than did the eminently practical Martha. It’s rather the same sort of message we find in the Prodigal Son. Jesus using irony, and unconventional images to make a larger point. But it’s not the only one.**

**I think Martha (and the elder brother for that matter) get kind of a bad rap with this rather simple way of looking at the story. Martha does, in fact, have a very important job, and tends to the details in such a way so as to institute a sacred office that carries forward to this day in the Church. Martha does, the text says, “much serving.” The English word serve, or to serve, is translated from the Greek “diakonia.” From which we now derive the calling of “deacon – deaconess.” Martha is the first, and then becomes the model, for what we are most, above all, to be about. To be of use. To serve. Martha served.**

**Sammie served. A “Martha” type if there ever was one. Sammie served her community. She kept records; she kept the books -- at McCrary and Franklin, and at the family’s Handy Hardware business, now Handy Oilfield Supply. This type of work is sacred stewardship. Those businesses were, and still are, the backbone of commerce and philanthropy in Post Texas. And on her watch, she served to keep the books in balance. And she apparently did not suffer fools lightly in that regard. One time I was visiting her at the office above Handy Hardware. What I remember most about that isn’t the content of the conversation. Rather, someone poked his head through the doorway and asked her what was obviously something of a dumb question. I don’t think she said a word, but I’ll never forget the withering look. And he got the message. Sammie served. Served her community well.**

**Sammie also served her family. She was the matriarch. And family holidays were her court. I know, from many conversations, how much she cared for, and appreciated her boys. They are all quite uniquely gifted. Something of a hybrid mix of leadership, laughter, which suggests that apples fell pretty close to the tree of Jimmie and Sammie’s partnership.**

**Jim can sell ice to Eskimos. Jay keeps the wheels on the business, and moves it forward. For Greg, the world is a place of adventure. Something Parker seems to take seriously on his way, today, to a Mission in Ghana. Sammie’s matriarchy served all of you very well. And it will continue to be part of your lives – all of all her children, grandchildren great-grandchildren, and beyond. Sammie’s legacy includes great inner strength, a rather absolute sense of right and wrong, and a witness to the power of love, even over-powering the pain of loss and grief, Sammie serves. Still. And always will.**

**In Sammie’s honor, I want you all to know that, in the Bible, Martha gets even with Jesus in the end. Mary and Martha had a brother named Lazarus. The one who Jesus raised from the dead, as it’s recorded in John’s Gospel, chapter 11. It seems Jesus was on the road at the time, and word was sent that his friend Lazarus had fallen deathly ill. His very dear and close friend. And at that news, Jesus seems to take his good sweet time about getting to Bethany, where the family lived. Four days, it says in the Bible. In the meantime, Lazarus died, of course. Upon hearing Jesus was finally nearby, Martha goes out and essentially lets him have a piece of her mind. “If you had gotten here sooner ... you could have prevented this. Where in the world have you been?”**

**Sound like anyone you know?**

**The Bible doesn’t say this, but there are lots of things Jesus said and did that aren’t recorded in the New Testament. So I’m taking something of reasoned liberty with what I imagine might have happened next. I think that after getting the “Where in the world have you been” speech, and just before setting off to Lazarus’ tomb to raise him up, Jesus looked down at his sandals, then upward and met Martha eye to eye and said, “Yes Ma’am.”**

**I want Jim, Jay, and Greg to meet me eye-to-eye for a second. I want you to think of the**

**conversations you had with your mother that were of some meaning and consequence. How many of those ended with you looking down at your shoes, and then eye to eye with her, and you said, (say it) “Yes Ma’am.”**

**Just wait until she meets Jesus. Amen.**

**Benediction and Prayer – Jerry**

**To Honor Sammie - Go into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold onto what is good. Return to no-one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor all people. Speak and act with love on your lips and in your heart.**

**For it is into your hands O merciful savior that we commend your servant Minta Sam. Acknowledge Sammie, we pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock. Receive her into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of all the saints in light. Amen.**

**Let us go in Peace. The service continues at the grave-site.**

**Postlude music -- Margie**