

Order of Worship honoring the life and memory of Edna Mae Owen. February 24, 2015

Prelude music

Welcome, opening remarks:

I want to thank everyone for being here and welcome you on behalf of First Christian Church and all the people who knew and loved Edna. This is usually the part of a memorial service where we read or summarize a few pieces of a loved one's life. Details as to birth, marriage, kids, career. I've got some of that later. But just now I have a story of friendship. Because I miss my friend.

The zipper story. 50 shades of red. That's what friends do.

Everyone here as a friendship story about Edna. Cherish those moments and memories. And when we go from here, start living again tomorrow in her honor. Let us pray:

Prayer: Our God of grace and glory, we remember and honor Edna 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.**

Remarks From Rodney.

Recorded music: The Lords Prayer.

Scripture readings

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.

Congregational hymn: Silent Night.

Scripture and Sermon

"And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not...' For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

An angel, or an angel in disguise, said unto Edna some 37 times: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto YOU is born this day ... a child. Benny. Pam. Kim. Tim. Rodney. A grandchild. 14 of them. Jennifer. Gentry. Marc. Lynlee. Ashley. Keith. Whitney. Adam. Cade.

Todd. Dana. Amy. Pierce. Piper. ... A great-grandchild. Keaton. Evan. Sailor. Geneva. Cagen. Bailey. Blake. Elizabeth. Ben. Becca. Grayson. Dalton. Riley. Trusslyn. Gracie. Brentley. Trinity. And Owen Wyatt, awaiting an angel in disguise.

In light of that great and grand legacy, I think of Edna – and will remember her so – as the matriarch of her family. For 62 years, she and Ben created and nurtured a tribe, really, and rooted them in her home. A home to which as many as possible always made a yearly Christmas pilgrimage. Hence our singing of “Silent Night” just now. Although its hard for me to imagine much silence through all those nights of families gathering, celebrating, loving. And I also imagine the last couple of nights have been filled with the laughter and relief and joy in reunion. With Ben. With Todd. And all the rest.

I’m told that making the best pies was among her many elegant home-making skills. A baking pie is, to me, both a single reality and a metaphor for home and hearth. The tasty result, the aroma of the process, and the time and care in the making – using the best ingredients at hand or that could be found – that’s how you raise up a family. Edna, the matriarch. Forever “Mimi” in the hearts of those who love her.

I think also of Edna – and will remember her so – as the teacher. I tell my students that if there’s not an elementary school teacher on your list of heroes, re-define “Hero.” Who has done more for you than the one who opened your eyes and mind to the wondrous reality that combining letters made words, and combining words made ideas. Hopes. Dreams. And the ability to share them. Debate them. Use them to bind up the broken-hearted.

There are countless scores of former kindergartners – I’m told also most of them some of the toughest little kids in the district - who will always remember her voice. Her smile. Her love. Her love for them and for the words she taught them to use. Another great-grand legacy.

And finally, I also think of Edna – and will remember her most – as my faithful friend. And I recall now the essence of scripture that seals her memory for me. Just before the angel announced the birth – and perhaps just before an angel in disguise announced 37 births to her, came the words, “Fear not.” Hear those words again in light these words from the savior – her Savior - which IS Christ the Lord. “Fear not ... For in my Father’s house are many mansions. ... I go now to prepare a place for you. That where I am, you may be also.”

Fear not. I learned from her over the years that part of faith was frightening. As are many parts of scripture. Floods. Plagues. Sheep. Goats. “Is it I, Lord?” But as I learned how close she had become with all of her friends here at First Christian, she began more and more to “Fear not.” Because the Gospel of friendship and love is shared with kindness and laughter. Good tidings of great joy. Great joy even amid sorrow. Losing Todd. For awhile. Losing Ben. For awhile. 7 years, one month, and one day, to be exact. And she missed him every one. But only until her place was prepared.

Last week, Edna wanted only to go home. To the home, she said, “That my husband built.” She told me last Wednesday that “I’m going home this afternoon.” And then later the next afternoon, she went home to the place that had been prepared. Prepared by her Savior, with a little help on the back side addition. A modest and comfortable little mansion filled with noise and laughter, and the aroma of a fresh pie in the oven. Forever arm in arm with Ben, and the Lord who loves us all.

Faithful friend. Faithful friends. A great and grand legacy for us all. Amen.

Let us Pray:

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.

Commendation:

For it is into your hands O merciful Savior that we commend Edna, your servant. Acknowledge her 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.

Benediction:

To Honor Edna, - 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 the truth and act with love on your lips and in your heart.

Let us go in Peace. Service continues at gravesite.

Postlude.