**A Good Word for Mozelle Smith
June 17, 2011**

I simply love someone that always greets me with a smile. That was Mozelle. At the door after worship, she was always just fine and with a smile on her face. At Wednesday night supper she carried her smile – even when frustrated with Hubert, she had a way of smiling her way through her aggravation and rolling her eyes at him and then making all of us smile as well. Mozelle was somewhat of a woman before her time with a career. She was a graduate of Watts Hospital Nursing School, Durham, NC and always loved being a nurse and taking care of people. Early in her career, she was appointed as the first Public Health Nurse for the Bluefield West Virginia Health Department working with new mothers and babies. Working in Obstetrics was always her favorite area of nursing. Yes, Mozelle loved taking care of babies, and Hubert loved children as they got a little older and could banter with him. This kind of love and this kind of way is what made the Smith household a home.

Mozelle loved to hug and was always a welcoming spirit. Even as a 7th grader, Nikki understood this. She wrote a short essay about Christmas and her grandparents. Mozelle kept this writing for all these years. From a 13 year old’s perspective, this is what Christmas was like in the Smith household:

 *It was cold and quiet this Christmas morning. This morning known as the day we get presents or the day Jesus was born. It was a cold rush of chill bumps of excitement. I can’t get out of bed until I hear the voice of Granddaddy slowly tromping up the stairs cheerfully saying “Ho-Ho-Ho,” as if to be Santa Claus. As soon as he comes into my room, I jump out of bed, scurry past him, and tear down the stairs three steps at a time at about sixty miles per hour. I run into the living room where my family is sitting calmly on the floor sipping steaming coffee or cider. I’m the only child in the house and I think, “gosh, am I lucky, or what?!” I pause for a moment and look at everyone, glancing from one face to another as my face brightens from a small smile to a wide grin and flashing eyes. All of a sudden someone says “So, ya gonna open your gifts or what?” I open one gift at a time, tearing and ripping the paper as if I can’t contain myself. I give everyone their presents, and they all talk for a long time eating cinnamon rolls with icing on top. I just listen for a while, crouching beside Grandmama’s lap and arms. She’s so warm and big and her body just hugs me so tightly, and I love it. We eat and drink and talk and laugh that morning, that morning known as Christmas, my favorite day of the year.*
 Nikki Smith-Morgan - 7th Grade

Mozelle always loved this written reflection from Nikki, though she was always annoyed by the reference to her being “big.” I can picture what Mozelle’s annoyed face looks like now, Nikki. It has that smile written all over it. Even with a faded memory – some days when she didn’t even quite know her own children, she always knew her grandchildren Nikki and Colin. There is something grand about the love of grand-parents. It never forgets.

Mozelle was an avid golfer and gardener. She was always proud of her hole-in-one and she could put just about anything in the earth and it would grow. Her children said that she had the ability to take what most would consider a dead plant and place it in the ground and get it to grow and bloom. This was often to the chagrin of Hubert, Marc, or the condo’s lawn service, who were the ones that had to cut the grass around where she had placed these plants randomly throughout the middle of the lawn. Even when she had gone to Massachusetts to visit her son, she added plants to the yard while he was at work. One time, she transplanted a protected and endangered species (Lady Slippers) from its original habitat to the middle of his lawn.

Mozelle’s love of family extended beyond the bounds of blood and kin. Linda and Deborah came into her life to be her daily caretakers. But it didn’t take long for Linda and Deborah to be much much more than the employed caregivers. They became family and they got new names. For some reason unknown to everyone, Mozelle called Linda, “Rosie,” and she called Deborah, “Bushels.” And that’s who they were to Mozelle – Rosie and Bushels. I’ve tried to imagine why those names. Rosie has a cheery sound to me and reminds me of the flower that symbolizes love. And Bushels makes me think of the little song – I love you a bushel and a peck, a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck. I have no idea why Mozelle renamed these two women that came into her life and offered her care and love, except maybe Mozelle knew something about importance of a name. For Mozelle was not her real name either. Her real name was Beloved Child of God. And that name is an embodiment of Love. *Well done, good and faithful servants,* all of you – family by blood and family by Rosie and Bushels - for all the ways you have loved and all the ways you have taken care of and all the ways you have given your lives to Mozelle. She received back what she had spent a lifetime giving. Her children said of her that she loved her family above all. Her most favorite thing was to have the family come to visit where she could pamper and fuss over them. The busier the house the better and when everyone was home, including the grandkids, she was in seventh heaven. When people would leave, she’d always say “Can’t you stay a little longer?”

Mozelle loved her church, and she loved her Sunday School class. And you can’t imagine how it makes a Pastor’s heart sing to hear that she would spend hours reading her church newsletter. Oh that everyone would do that! When I think of Mozelle and the church, she was faithful as the day is long . . . in her attendance, in her support, in her love for the church and the God whom she served.

I know this is a Memorial Service for Mozelle, and Hubert has already had his time about a year ago, but it is simply impossible to speak of one without the other. Thank you to Nikki for her lovely analogy of Love Birds. Hubert had a way of pretending to be a grumpy old man. (I guess some in the family might say he wasn’t always pretending!), but they had a way about them that lasted for 62 years together on this earth. But in some ways, the gift of Mozelle’s mind these days has allowed them to continue to be married on this earth for 63 years. In their wedding vows they promised *till death do us part* and yet even death did not separate them. Marc and Angie and Bryn said that Hubert often said that Mozelle took care of him for so long, the least he could do was take care of her the last few years. And he did. He really did. He allowed her to keep her dignity and he allowed her to be safely independent. They lived out those vows *for better or for worse/in sickness and in health.* He would say she was a great comfort to him and as he was getting sicker, you would see his head on her shoulder or lap. Even after Hubert’s death, Mozelle continued to take care of him by setting a plate for him for dinner. She would then get frustrated because he would always be late for dinner. During the day, she’d often talk about having had breakfast with him. The children have decided that sometimes a faulty memory can be comforting. When we learned of Mozelle’s death day before yesterday, Russ mentioned to me that every Sunday his conversation with her went something like this: “Hey Mozelle, how are you doing?” “I’m doing fine. I can’t find Hubert, but he’s around here somewhere.”

And he was. He was all around in her heart and in her every memory. She didn’t stop looking for him and today, she may have finally found him. But the truth is he was never lost and neither was she. They carried one another and their God has always and continues to forever envelope them both. Familiar words of scripture come to my mind - *for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.* This familiar phrase comes at the end of one of the more well-known passages about Love. *Love is patient and kind, and is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude . . .* This section of I Corinthians 13 about Love ends with *for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.* Mozelle has been seeing in a mirror dimly for some time now. While Hubert was alive he helped to continually clear the fog and keep things at least a little more clear. While her days were dimming even more, deep down in the places that really matter – she knew who she was and who all of you were. In her clearer days, Mozelle knew that one day . . . one day, there would be an experience of *face to face* that we have been promised. I believe today is that day. No more dimness. No more confusion. No more missing Hubert or being frustrated when he wouldn’t come home and share the table with her and no more looking for him. Today we celebrate a Blessed Hope that Mozelle Smith enjoys the face to face company of the God she has served her whole life long. And we trust that that will be more than enough. *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.* May it be so.