**A Good Word for Ted Morris
June 7, 2017**

 He was quiet. He was gentle. He was faithful. What more needs to be said to describe Ted Morris? His jobs around here were many, but four that stand out to me: chief bottle washer at the Child Development Center, putting up the angel wings for Tableau, putting out Sunday School folders and making sure he gave Russ and me the Sunday School count before worship, and opening the north side door entrance to the sanctuary. Jaime told you many stories and put together Ted’s life for you in a beautiful way, so I thought I would focus on just these three things as symbols of Ted’s life among us.

 First, Ted was Harriet’s sidekick in the kitchen of the Child Development Center after his retirement from Eastern Airlines. Now this predates us, but I’ve heard the stories. Not only did he wash the dishes for her, but I think his main job was tending to Albert. He kept him safe. And loved. And that was the beginning of a 40 year relationship between Albert and our CDC. Special needs are not even noticeable when one is well cared for and loved. And that was Ted’s way – making sure that folks were loved.

Second, the angel wings: neither rain, sleet nor snow would keep Ted off of that carport roof to secure the wings of the angels on the first Saturday of every December. He knew the head angel would need to proclaim *Fear Not! For behold I bring you Good Tidings of great Joy which shall be to all people.* And he knew the whole host of the heavenly angels would need to belt out their *Glory to God in the highest,* and so Ted saw to it that their wings were in place. Even long after he should not have been climbing up there, he climbed. And then when even he knew that climbing was not in his best interest, he supervised from below. That was Ted’s way – seeing to it that even the angels of heaven had a proper place to stand and do their job.

 Third, Sunday School: He had his path, his routine, for distributing and collecting the Sunday School attendance folders. To my knowledge he never attended any class because he was too busy making sure everyone was in their place and accounted for. And he would get a bit testy if he came by to collect the folder and the names in attendance had not been checked off. If he had to wait too long it messed up his system and his routine. But by about 10:30 every Sunday morning, Ted knew how many people were on campus and he would come walking down this aisle to find me or Russ – whoever was preaching that day was usually standing in the pulpit at that time practicing the delivery of the sermon. Ted would stop us from our rehearsal and tell us how many were in Sunday School that day. If the number was low he would be so disappointed. But if it was a big number his smile said it all. That was Ted’s way - keeping up with folks and celebrating their attendance here.

 And finally, fourth, the north entrance to the sanctuary: It’s still surprising to me that anyone else can do it – open that door, that is. For so long I just imagined that that was Ted’s door and Ted’s door only. Oh, there are deacons that try to do it themselves now, but no offense, it’s not the same. One thing he did not like – if you were coming into the Narthex from the sanctuary and pushed on the left door – well, he just couldn’t understand why anyone would do that. Though I often did. He would just shake his head and love me anyway. But that door does stand as a symbol of Ted’s life, I think. With a warm greeting, and yes, that kiss on the cheek for the ladies, he held the door of welcome open into not just a sanctuary, but into a life of faith for one and all. Paul, in his letter to church in Rome, sent his many greetings to the people in that church and he gave instructions for how they were to greet his cohorts and one another. And in those instructions he ends with *greet one another with a holy kiss.* In this case it would seem that Ted read the Bible pretty literally! But that was Ted’s way – welcoming folks into this family of faith, faithfully and consistently, week in and week out. And as someone put it on Facebook this week, I’m sure he is “kissing and greeting at the gate!” I’m sure he is.

 Oh, and there’s one more thing we will miss about Ted around here – his Christmas gift new year calendars that he handed out during the month of December to every household in the church. It was classic Ted – quietly and faithfully handing over a pristine calendar full of beautiful pictures. I do love a new calendar – no appointments yet cluttering the days, no meetings to attend, no obligations marked down yet. Just a gift of time and grace – from Ted. With much love. And so that is our Blessed Hope for Ted this day – endless time in the very Presence of God and a Grace which will be more than sufficient forever. For the good life of Ted Morris – thanks be to God. May it be so. Amen.