**A Good Word for Elva Coote
February 26, 2017**

 When Elva was a neighbor of the church, she could walk to church. She was very much in the hub of everything she needed right within walking distance: the Park Road Shopping Center, plenty of places to eat out, almost everything she could possibly need for shopping, and a place to worship. This was all before our time at Park Road Baptist Church. Injuries and age limited her involvement in the church, but apparently her family and friends kept her surrounded with love and care. Or maybe I should say she kept you all surrounded in goodness with her gracious way of living.

 One friend sent me this message: “Elva was a lady, anyway it can be defined. She was always dressed impeccably, talked elegantly and conducted herself with a high moral standard. She never embarrassed anyone, always gracious and forgiving. Elva loved everyone and loved a party, her own or her friends. Elva made you feel like an important person, no matter who you were. So many years of good times together, but most of all for me, when I went over to Elva's, I went home! She listened and cared and advised and cheered. She leaves a torn spot that will never heal.” (Eileen)

 I love that image of home-going, which is how some folks think of death. I’ve even heard some folks call death a home-going. That image of being wrapped in the Love of God – the very presence of God – brings us great comfort in our grieving. Elva created a sense of home here on earth just as God creates a sense of home for eternity. Another friend sent me this message and asked that I speak this Good Word about Elva today:

 “Elva was such a people person and loved the fact she was a Gemini. She always celebrated her birthday with her Gemini friends which included Jessica Peach, Michael Pirkle, Ann Austin, Susan Wilkinson, and Steve Morton. On one of the Birthdays it was a Kings and Queen's theme and Elva dressed as Queen Victoria and won first prize (and she was certainly not amused as Queen Victoria would say. Actually she laughed and said she probably won the best costume prize as she was the oldest one there! A few days before Elva passed I asked Elva who was going to greet her when she passed over? She immediately told me that it would be her Mother and Father. Particularly her Father as they had such a good relationship and had a lot of fun together. She also mentioned George, her Sister and my Mother, Rosemary. In fact she said I am really looking forward to seeing them again. I knew then she was ready to leave us!” (Jessica Peach)

 When our bodies give out in this life, it is a gift to be given new life again. It sounds as if Elva was already looking ahead to all that is to come. Having lived this life to the fullest – the Gospel of John puts it this way: *I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.”* That’s the way Elva lived her life on this earth – to the full. And now it is our Blessed Hope that Elva is enjoying the Forever Presence of God to the fullest as well.