

A Good Word for Kathy Gordemer
January 10, 2009

Kathy and David Gordemer were among the first folks we met in this church. You see, David, Kathy's husband, was on our search committee. Russ and I are forever indebted to these folks who had courage to do something different – were risk takers into the uncharted waters of co-pastors. And of course, being good southern folks, the committee knew how to do. After they called us to be their pastors – we arrived and moved into a temporary home until we could sell one house and buy another. With a 2 year old and a 4 year old in tow, the committee and committee spouses knew what we needed most – FOOD. And Kathy Gordemer supplied the most delicious chicken divan you have ever tasted. She even graciously shared her recipe with me. And so began our relationship together – with chicken divan!

Kathy had many loves: she loved her animals, she loved to travel, she loved to laugh, she loved shoes, and she loved her family. She talked about her animals and if you weren't paying attention you would have thought she was talking about people. These animals brought her much joy always – especially in these last couple of years they brought her comfort in her loneliness.

Kathy worked for Eastern Airlines. I don't know if she worked for Eastern because she loved to travel or if because of working for an airline she got bit by the travel bug. Whichever came first – the travel bug she (and David) did have. They have seen just about every part of the world. From Japan to the Holy Land and to Ireland – where Kathy loved to tell that David did indeed kiss the Blarney Stone. Now this is something that Kathy and I have in common. I too love to travel – but one of her favorite places to go happens to be one of my least favorite places – Las Vegas. She did have some good times there – with family in tow. The family was telling

me about one trip to Vegas where they went to a Wayne Newton show and Kathy was so excited because she actually got to kiss Wayne Newton – on the lips even!

Kathy did love to laugh. She had a quick and dry wit that lasted until the very end. Yes, she could be stubborn. Yes, she could be hard-headed. Yes, she could be opinionated. And yes, she was very independent. But yes, she had a great sense of humor and was quick to put it to good use. When her son Mike visited just last week he asked, “Do you know who I am?” “Santa Claus” was her response with a weak twinkle in her eye.

Kathy didn’t want anyone to know her age and she did not want her roots to show. She loved the QVC network and ordered way too much from those TV ads. But one thing I didn’t know about Kathy until the family told me – her love for shoes. Shopping was often her therapy and because when she was little she could only have one pair of shoes at a time, she made up for that in adulthood. They tell me that literally she had 100s of pairs of shoes. If she found a shoe she liked she bought one in every color. She loved her game shows – especially The Price is Right. She thought that Bob Barker was the best-looking and best-dressed man on TV. So many of these little things bring a smile to my face even now – so I guess she is still doing what she did best – making folks laugh – only today the twinkle in her eye is far from weak. That twinkle in her eye today is strong and sure.

I think one of the reasons the last two years have been so hard for Kathy is that the love of her life – her David – was gone from her earthly life. On the day that David died, Kathy and I went to visit him. He asked Kathy to tell him a story. And so Kathy told him the story of how they had met and built a life together. She told him about how they loved each other more than most folks love each other. I remember that he smiled and nodded his head yes. I believe Kathy

was simply lost without him. And when you go through life lost, everything becomes blurred. Sometimes you say things you don't mean and respond in ways that you wish you hadn't. But being lost doesn't mean that you no longer love. Kathy loved her family – all of you. High on that list was great-grandson Justin – a genius I believe she called you. She was so proud of you and always told me all about what you were doing. She dreamed big dreams for you, and I have a feeling you will live into those dreams just fine. And Kim – you were a granddaughter extraordinaire! You truly took care of her – she could not have made it without you. Kim – *well done good and faithful servant* – from cleaning her house to buying her groceries to keeping her schedule with doctors to keeping her roots from showing – you tended to her. And she was grateful.

Kathy lived her life to the fullest until these last couple of years. And when she could no longer live that kind of abundant life – she lived off her memories. The Good News for today is that Kathy doesn't have to live off of any more memories – for today she lives full and free in the very presence of God. My best hope and my fervent prayer is that the Forever Presence of God is more than Kathy could have ever dreamed.

I want to end this good word for Kathy Gordemer the same way I ended David's eulogy. The very first time that David and Kathy talked on the phone, when they got ready to hang up, Kathy said, "Well, Toodeloo." David couldn't believe his ears! This was an English expression (and David was an Englishman). When Kathy said "Toodeloo" – this was a reminder that with Kathy he had found his home again, and that became their word. It was the last word he spoke of her on the day of his death. So this day to Kathy – and to David – I simply say "Toodeloo." And our Blessed Hope is that forever and ever – Kathy will never have to say "Toodeloo" – for from now on she is only saying hello to the very presence of God. May it be so.