

Shirley Mills was a child of God – She was unique, special, important to the life of Park Road Baptist Church. She had a child’s heart – which is made of gold, and formed in the shape of a servant. Since Allen Laymon persuaded her to join us over twenty years ago, she has given as faithfully of her time and talents as anyone who has ever darkened our doors. She served for years as an office volunteer, and her beloved VSP luncheons gave her the chance to employ her creativity, one table decoration at a time, and to celebrate her love of a good church function. Every Sunday, without fail, Shirley came out our door, and with her high, shrill voice said with more kindness and sincerity than many people could even hope to fake, “Well, hello, Love!”

I’ve missed that greeting on the Lord’s Day. I always will.

She worked like a servant.

Loved like a child.

Believed simply, and completely.

So this day, even as she is gone from us,

We celebrate her beautiful life.

We recall her genuine commitments.

We praise the God *in whom she still lives and moves and has her being.*

Let us worship God together.

#### SCRIPTURE READING

Shirley was attentive to the seasons of the year, the seasons of culture, the seasons of life – which anyone who had witnessed her passion for setting the perfect table decoration would know full well. So we read now this ancient text

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*

*a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;  
a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

And think of Shirley as you hear these words: *What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.*

And these words of comfort and hope from the Gospel of John:

*Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe...'*

*[And Jesus said to his disciples] Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.*