

A Service Remembering the Life of  
Kathryn Mikel Jenkins Bedingfield  
Tuesday, January 28, 2014  
Sanctuary  
First Baptist Church  
Columbus, Georgia  
Dr. Jimmy Elder, Pastor



## Opening Words

### **The Magic of a Mother's Touch**

There's magic in a Mother's touch,  
and sunshine in her smile.  
There's love in everything she does  
to make our lives worthwhile.  
We can find both hope and courage  
Just by looking in her eyes.  
Her laughter is a source of joy,  
her words are warm and wise.  
There is a kindness and compassion  
to be found in her embrace,  
and we see the light of heaven  
shining from a Mother's face.

Today we gather in this place remembering the amazing life of Mike Bedingfield. She is one of those ladies whom we thought would be here forever. I know that you still feel numb with grief. As we gather, we remember her life and pray for God's comfort for you. The Lord, in **Isaiah 66:13** seems to take a page out of Mike's playbook when the prophet writes, *As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.* Indeed as you remember this mother who has spent so much time making your lives special, bandaging your wounds, showing you how to enjoy life, modeling faith, and touching your heart; we call upon the Spirit of God to bring peace and the memories of Mike Bedingfield to bring you comfort.

Music

Family Memories

Hymn

Solo

Message

Carol said that Mike went to the dentist to have some major dental work done. She was famous for not using Novocain. Carol called her and asked her if she used the Novocain this time. She said, “No.” Carol said that either she did not have major dental work or she was lying. Her reply was, “We did not get together to discuss my character.” Ah, but we did gather today to discuss her character—the character of Mike Bedingfield as a quality person of honesty, integrity, love, intelligence, and organization; the Mike Bedingfield who was a character full of fun, mischief, daring, interest, creativity, and love; the Mike Bedingfield whose character was contagious, spilling over to her children; and the Mike Bedingfield who filled the character roles as wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend.

Tenneva Jordan wrote *a mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.*

Such is the life and character of Mike Bedingfield. Her family was always first. She could adapt to anything in life as long as her family was happy, safe, cared for, at peace, and close by! Her joy was not in what she did, but what she helped others to enjoy in life. Her peace was in knowing that her family was cared for no matter what. I thought of the words of Proverbs 31:10-31 as interpreted by Eugene Peterson in his paraphrase, *The Message*.

*<sup>10-31</sup> A good woman is hard to find,  
and worth far more than diamonds.  
Her husband trusts her without reserve,  
and never has reason to regret it.  
Never spiteful, she treats him generously  
all her life long.  
She shops around for the best yarns and cottons,  
and enjoys knitting and sewing.  
She's like a trading ship that sails to faraway places*

*and brings back exotic surprises.  
She's up before dawn, preparing breakfast  
for her family and organizing her day.  
She looks over a field and buys it,  
then, with money she's put aside, plants a garden.  
First thing in the morning, she dresses for work,  
rolls up her sleeves, eager to get started.  
She senses the worth of her work,  
is in no hurry to call it quits for the day.  
She's skilled in the crafts of home and hearth,  
diligent in homemaking.  
She's quick to assist anyone in need,  
reaches out to help the poor.  
She doesn't worry about her family when it snows;  
their winter clothes are all mended and ready to wear.  
She makes her own clothing,  
and dresses in colorful linens and silks.  
Her husband is greatly respected  
when he deliberates with the city fathers.  
She designs gowns and sells them,  
brings the sweaters she knits to the dress shops.  
Her clothes are well-made and elegant,  
and she always faces tomorrow with a smile.  
When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say,  
and she always says it kindly.  
She keeps an eye on everyone in her household,  
and keeps them all busy and productive.  
Her children respect and bless her;  
her husband joins in with words of praise:  
"Many women have done wonderful things,  
but you've outclassed them all!"  
Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades.  
The woman to be admired and praised  
is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-GOD.*

*Give her everything she deserves!  
Festoon her life with praises!*

To hear it from the pen of one of her grandchildren, Brad Tate.

### **Graceful Years**

Your age isn't measured by how many birthdays  
worth praise for all you've done  
one can't bring to a count  
amount of time spent sharing  
caring for so many  
any of us can attest  
a test of time with it's unknowing length  
strength of an elephant  
elegant with so much poise  
toys you had when being bored came  
board games along with crafts of art  
start to finish you measured us  
treasured us and all we do  
you played a part  
a heart that never hardens  
gardens of vegetables and fruit bearing trees  
please and thanks you taught us to say  
may we forever remember the knowledge you spread  
read to us 'til eyelids weakened  
weekend get to gathers and trips to the farms  
arms so welcoming  
seldom bring to a close unless they're enfolding  
in holding that tether  
whether it's by phone, email, letter or text  
next comes satisfying meals or simple sandwiches  
hand which is proactive  
so active and still graceful

face full of years spent smiling  
piling memories in notebooks and hallways  
always running on a full tank  
thank you enough, we'll never be able  
table that we've all helped set  
let your abilities determine your age  
page turned but you're still no where near the end.

Like the writer of Proverbs intimates, there is no way to give a woman like Mike enough praise, though she would shun it. The blessing we pronounce upon her life is that her works will be remembered and her praise comes out of the good that she has accomplished and the good that she has begun in this life.

I knew Mike from a number of directions. I knew her through her children and grandchildren. I knew her through her care for Jim Bedingfield. I knew her through the memories of others who would tell me things about her that she would never tell me about herself. I knew her through the scrapbooks that she put together. When I visited, she would bring one to me, put it in my lap, and offer for me to enjoy it. I would think, *who keeps stuff like this—so detailed, so coherent, so much a part of her life and the lives of those whom she loved?* So many times, the things that she collected would have been lost in most of our lives. She knew how to collect, organize, and create treasure troves of memories that chronicle the lives of those who are precious to her.

Talking to her revealed the depth of love for her family and others as she unfolded her own memories scrapbooked in her mind. It was clear that Mike paid attention to those in her life. She always wanted to do good for all of them.

Mike loved her husband – a love story for the ages. She and Jim dated for 3 months, were engaged for 3 months, and married for 63 years. She loved her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Each of

you fulfilled her joy with your attention and love. The family would sometimes sit at the table for a meal. Jim would put his finger on the table, and each child would do it with him. As he did, he would say, “love.” They would chime in and it made beautiful music as a family joined its voices together.

Mike was incredibly adaptable. She learned to love and do whatever Jim loved and did. She became a Baptist to be with him (and made a very fine one indeed!), and she ceased her direction of studying aviation when he objected wanting her better and more safely grounded. She loved to travel and he loved to be at home. She gave up her wanderlust, for the great joy of making the most interesting home that anyone could have. It was at their house and at the farm. Wherever she was, she could create an environment of home. She was truly content with whatever and wherever love directed. Like Paul wrote in Philippians 4:10-13, <sup>10</sup> *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.* <sup>11</sup> *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.* <sup>12</sup> *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* <sup>13</sup> *I can do all this through Christ who gives me strength.* That was truly the root of her life—contentment in Christ. This did not, however, dampen her curiosity or her willingness to embrace whatever came along.

She could rise to most occasions. Jim stood next to George Denham in the Morningside choir. They were working on Peterson’s Cantata, “Night of Miracles.” The accompanist was taken ill. Jim volunteered Mike, and she stepped in, worked hard, and got through it.

She was no stranger to this, for when she was a student at Young Harris College; her math professor was taken ill. She went to his house, picked up his notes daily, and taught the class.



She was a school psychologist and earned her master's after the kids were all in school. She invested her life at home as her first place of care and priority.

She had a wedding in the family where she was the mother of the bride, made all the dresses, and still worked. She was adaptable and did it with a certain joy! That is why the passage from Proverbs comes true—*Her children rise up and call her blessed!*

As a family you were so good to your mother. Carl, Carol, Cheryl, and Charisse, you have blessed her by who you are and those whom you have brought into this family. She set the example by taking care of you and being so wonderfully patient as she took care of your Dad. I know you did what you could for her. Carol mentioned that she was having a hard time running her mother's life from a distance. Charles Tate complained that their children were trying to run their lives. Mike said, "Well, it doesn't get any better." I think she might have meant, "It doesn't get any better than this!" She was in her greatest zone of joy when she was with you. You made her life complete.

She was always reaching out with affirming words. On the Monday after her stroke during the weekend, I went to my office and found in that day's mail, a note from her. In the note she included a check for the television ministry at the church, and a sweet note to me telling how much the ministry meant to her. Again, she was thinking of others. She was also not giving up on life. No wonder when the doctor in the emergency room cautioned the family to go very slow thinking about doing surgery on an 85 year old woman, that Carson Tate said of his grandmother when the doctors were saying that they needed to consider that she was 85 and that surgery probably should not be considered, "They don't understand that she was an 85 year old who drove her Tahoe last weekend and has a twitter account."

Her life continues to be a journey. The psalmist captures this in beautiful form in a psalm we all almost could recite by heart, Psalm 23.

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever (Psalm 23).*

Jesus brought to pass the promise and assurance of Psalm 23 when He said,

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).*

Mike found that for which she lived. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us, *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Like Jim, she came to the end of her life with dignity and peace. She left this world in a gentle transition where God called her home. She was active all the way to the last couple of weeks of her life. She also proved her own stubborn defiance as she waited for Carl to get home and for her heart to know that her family would be at peace. She then went home to the Lord. In one of our old hymns, we sing the words, *When holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.* That is exactly the way that she went home.

The children tried to get Mike to make a scrapbook about her life. The truth is that they are the living scrapbooks that she assembled with

every loving act, every prayer, and every blessing she gave them. Brad wrote one more poem.

### **Her Curtsey**

To see this final act, it hurts me  
curtsey as the curtain closes  
roses piled at her feet  
seat now taken beside The King  
wings of an angel she will spread  
led a life like no other  
mother so great and grand  
hands raised so many  
any can tell of things we'll miss  
this one's for the Book  
took with her, a love  
above all the rest  
best of memories remain.

### **Philippians 1:2-3**

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you.*

## **At the Cemetery**

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 121,

*1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*

I want to share with you my favorite poem. It was read by Clark Clifford at the funeral of Averill Harriman. These are words of inescapable love that express better than any I can imagine what Mike would want said at this moment to you, whom he loved.

*If I should ever leave you whom I love  
To go along the Silent Way, grieve not,  
Nor speak of me with tears, but laugh and talk  
Of me as if I were beside you there.  
(I'd come, I'd come, could I but find a way! But would not tears and grief  
be barriers?)  
And when you hear a song or see a bird  
I loved, please do not let the thought of me  
Be sad . . . for I am loving you just as I always have . . .  
You were so good to me!  
There are so many things I wanted still  
To do, so many things to say to you . . .  
Remember that I did not fear . . . It was  
Just leaving you that was so hard to face . . .  
We cannot see Beyond . . .  
But this I know:  
I loved you so, t'was heaven here with you.*

Isla Paschal Richardson

The one thing that we need to remember about this moment is that it is a handing off of life. Mike has been there, and there is much to learn from her life. She has offered so much in the way of strength, influence, and definition to this family. Your memories are legion. Today, you take on a new role, one that Mike has prepared you for for a lifetime. This is where life is handed from one generation to another. Who will make the scrapbooks for tomorrow?

For the interment, I use the words of Sandra McBride with a few of my own. Her poem is entitled, *Letting Go*.

*I've brought you to the mountain . . . the climb is yours*  
*I've brought you to the shore . . . the sea is yours.*  
*I've brought you to the sky . . . the wings are yours.*  
*I've brought you through the shadows . . . the light is yours.*  
*I've brought you to this day . . . tomorrow is yours.*

**She brought you to the Lord . . . your faith is yours.**

We have brought Mike Bedingfield to this place. Her destiny is in the hands of God. We lay her body to rest, her resurrection is in Christ. We step forth from this place having remembered the example of her life . . . the decision of the kind of example we will be is up to us!

Philippians 4:8-9 *8Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*  
AMEN.

# # #

Kathryn Mikel Jenkins Bedingfield August 23, 1928- January 26, 2014 Columbus, GA- Kathryn Mikel Jenkins Bedingfield (August 23, 1928 - January 26, 2014) passed away on Sunday morning following a sudden illness. Mrs. Bedingfield was known as "Mike" to her family and friends. She served as a school teacher, psychometrist, and psychologist for Muscogee County School District, but first and foremost she was a wife and mother, and an all-around vivacious person. Mike's parents, H. Winton and Mattie Kate Jenkins, served as Methodist missionaries to Manchuria before her birth, returning to raise their family in Mississippi and Georgia. As a young teenager, she spent six weeks in New York City as secretary to her deaconess aunt, and she kept a detailed scrapbook of the entire adventure. Both the adventure and the scrapbook exemplify her love for life, for adventure, and for making memories. She attended Young Harris College in North Georgia, the University of Georgia, Columbus College, and Georgia State University, earning advanced degrees in education, psychometry, and psychology. On the campus of the University of Georgia, she met - and fell deeply in love with - a Marine Corps veteran of World War II named Jim Bedingfield. After a six-month courtship, the two were married in 1949, and they moved to Columbus in 1952, where they built the house that would be their life-long home. In addition to her educational skills, Mike was an avid do-it-yourselfer, building cabinets, laying brick, sawing, and otherwise helping Jim feather their nest. She cooked, canned, gardened, sewed, and kept house. When they grew out of room, she helped Jim build an addition on to their house. And later, when they needed even more space, they bought the house next door, giving her more places to cook, build, decorate, garden, maintain, and host guests. After her retirement, Mike didn't slow down, but stayed busy and vivacious ferrying grandchildren between their activities, attending athletic events, creating detailed memory books, and visiting with her many friends. In recent years, when Jim began to have short-term memory problems, Mike became his primary care-giver, insisting that he stay home and enjoy the view of his beloved birds, and his backyard. During this time, she enriched his life with notes, written stories, and scrapbooks that he loved to look at for hours on end. Above all, though, Mike's greatest joy was her family, and she loved big events that brought her entire clan to her home, especially Christmas, and the annual cane-grinding, syrup-making weekend that Jim started as an offshoot of his gardening hobby. She embraced any new technology that allowed her to keep up with her family and friends, not only e-mail, but also texting and the latest in social media, using the appropriate handle, "kmjbusyb." She often encouraged her children with messages like, "Carpe Diem," and "So much love." She was active and energetic, exercising at home, walking around the neighborhood, still driving, not even close to "acting her age," until the

stroke that resulted in her passing. Mike Bedingfield was an exemplary person. As one of her daughters said, "Anyone who had the good fortune to know my Mom knew that they were loved unconditionally." And a grandson said of her, "I swear I have more down to earth, perspective altering, conversations with my grandma than anyone else. Lady gets it! #mamab" Mike was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. James W. Bedingfield, sisters Theo Horton and Mary Higgins, and brothers Hubert and John Jenkins. All of her family already misses her dearly, including her son, Carl Bedingfield (and his wife Jayne), three daughters, Carol (and Matt) Stevens, Cheryl (and Charles) Tate, and Charisse (and Bob) Hill, grandchildren Rebecca, James Jr., Elisabeth, Benjamin, Cathy, Rob, Shannon, Brad, Carson, McKenzie, Mikel Anna, and McLendon, and eight great-grandchildren, Wyatt, Jace, Anders, Halle, Parker, Tate, Sarah, and Lily. The funeral service will be held at First Baptist Church, 212 Twelfth St., Columbus GA, 31901. Visitors will be received at 1:00, and the funeral will start at 2:00. Interment will follow the service at Parkhill Cemetery, 4061 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31907. To honor Mike's life, the family suggests memorial donations to two of Mike's many favorite ministries: -

- Television Ministry, First Baptist Church, 212 Twelfth St., Columbus GA, 31901, and - "Go Fish" Outdoor Ministries, 4803 Sedgfield Ave., Columbus, GA 31904