SUE MILLS 1946-2024 : A CHRISTIAN LADY OF SUBSTANCE

So I've called this address ‘a Christian lady of substance’ because that's what Sue was in so many, many ways in her lived life and fulfilling all of her different roles. Firstly, as a Christian, she was so faithful, she believed in the Gospel of the Kingdom to the end of her life. She used her time, her talent, and indeed her money with dear Roger, to further it throughout her their life together, and indeed before. Secondly, a Christian lady of substance in being so courageous, never afraid or indeed ashamed to stand up for Jesus in what she believed, and indeed to use that unique and much loved voice to full effect in speaking, and indeed in singing, which she she so loved, and her wonderful infectious laugh. Thirdly, a Christian lady of substance with her wisdom. Sue was so equipped with gifts from God. Qualified and mature in so many areas, and she possessed a deep well of empathy and compassion and was so genuine in what she did with discernment, with insight, foresight, and yet led by example. Inspiring many others over the years. Never a procrastinator, but a doer. And fourthly, and above all of that, as we've been hearing from the family, a Christian lady of some substance as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a sister, a family member, a work colleague, a friend, a neighbour, and so on. Don't we need more Sue Mills’s today in society, and indeed within the church? I mean, how many are out and about so constantly at 77 1/2 on their bike. And yes, skiing even this year; she lived her life to the full. Would be a good epitaph, actually, wouldn't it, on a headstone ‘lived her life to the full’ and all of this was grounded, rooted in her Christian faith, which was certain and sure. You know, when Roger forwarded me her bio, it just filled me with admiration and awe, and indeed thanksgiving for all she did in the Lord's service. So many vital Christian organisations, secretarial posts, lecturing home and abroad, chair of this and that. Don't you hear the Lord Jesus saying loudly: Well done, good and faithful servant: not well said, but well done. Dr Ali Durkin, coordinator for Falmouth and Penryn Churches Together so wanted to pay her own tribute today to Sue, but sadly is not well. So on her behalf, of course we also acknowledge all that Sue and Roger have done for the churches in Falmouth and Penryn Churches Together; we are so very, very grateful. I mean, just two examples. Nine years here as the branch secretary for FPCT, nine years, of the World Day of Prayer. And of course, part of the Care Home Team and here in St Budock Church, of course, regularly leading the prayers with dear Roger, and the occasional pianist. Leader in so many different areas. Another great tribute I read was by the editor of the Baptist Historical Society - never forget that Sue was so ecumenical. And the tribute told of her countless achievements. How academic and well trained and equipped she was, and how many people she helped young and old, clergy and lay; my goodness, a Christian lady, indeed of some substance, but always humble with it, and passing any glory at all unto her Lord, knowing it was his leading and guiding from cradle to grave. And this was seen so clearly in the Bible passages that she chose for her service today. Firstly, Psalm 139. She loved this Psalm because she knew, as we heard, nothing escapes God's attention in our lives. He loves us. And will always love us. You know, in truth, I I don't know where you all are in your walk with God, in your belief in him; but I do know that he loves each and every one of us unconditionally, wholeheartedly and continually. And Sue so knew this, utterly, as that psalm reveals. As we all know, for Sue and Roger, books have been such a huge part of their lives as librarians and those who have visited their home will know books are on every level. Indeed, you think you're in a library and how wonderful that that continues with Rachel as an editor and publisher, and of course with Judith and other members of the family. You know, one book for Sue was above all books. The Book of the Bible. Last Sunday actually was Bible Sunday, remembering how precious and powerful it is, God's love letter to each and every one of us. You know, staying with books and with this Psalm 139, it reminded me actually, of a classic children's book. I'm sure lots of you perhaps have read it yourself to your children or grandchildren. Perhaps Sue did, I don't know, to Rachel and Judith. But in in many ways it's a book that tells so movingly of a

mother's love for her children, just using a little Bunny to illustrate it. It's called the Runaway Bunny and it's a little taster I'll give you here. The book reads: once there was a little Bunny who wanted to run away. So he said to his mother. I'm running away. If you run away, said his mother, I will run after you, for you are my little Bunny. If you run after me, said the little Bunny, I will become a fish in a trout stream and I will swim away from you. If you become a fish in a trout stream, said his mother, I will become a fisherman and I will fish for you. If you become a fisherman, said the little Bunny, I will become a rock on the mountain high above you. If you become a rock on the mountain high above me, said his mother, I will be a mountain climber and I will climb to where you are. And the story continues in that same vein, with the Bunny wanting to run away by various means and his mother saying she would do whatever was necessary to find him. And then at the end the mother speaks of catching him in her arms to hold him fast and to hug him. And this is the kind of metaphor, really, for God's love for us, revealed so clearly in Psalm 139. Sue, of course, unlike so many, she didn't turn away from God. She didn't run away from him. But she runs to him, knows him, loves him, serves him and now sees him. Face to face. Dear Sue, she fell asleep with her beloved by her side and she awoke to see Jesus, her Lord and Saviour, face to face. You know, 2 verses leaped out to me in that Psalm. Verse 18. When I awake, I am still with you. And then in verse 24: lead me in the way everlasting. And this is now the glorious reality for her. And her second reading inked it all in, didn't it? And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purposes. From Romans. We are, she knew, 'more than conquerors, for I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. As St Paul writes in Corinthians: O death, where is thy sting? Where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes, we look back today and we give indeed our thanks for this Christian Lady of substance. And we also look up rejoicing and giving thanks for her new heavenly address, receiving the glorious promise of eternal life. And let me close with this. We began the service singing together at Sue's request that wonderful Holy Week hymn Ride on, Ride on, in Majesty. Jesus rode into the holy City of Jerusalem. So symbolically, of course, on a donkey. Our servant King facing the cross. So he cured and would triumph over sin and death, and meant to burst forth from the grave to open the gate of heaven to all who will but repent and believe. The bells that were rung so clearly today reminded us: yes, of course there's sadness. But also there's glory. There's triumph. There's victory over death for Sue. And during her time in hospital. she had a vivid dream and she saw herself riding on that donkey with her arms around Jesus at his invitation, knowing all would be well and all manner of things would be well. I can hear her saying to us all this day, those divine words of Jesus: Set your troubled hearts at rest, believe in God. Believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. And I go now to prepare a place for you. And after I've gone and prepared a place for you, I will come and I will take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. And Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going; how can we know the way? And Jesus said: I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me. Ride on, ride on, with Your Majesty King Jesus, Sue Mills. Thank you for all that you were and meant to so many: our Christian lady of substance. Amen. Amen.

Revd Geoff Davis

1 November 2024