

24 January 2011

Dearest Friends and Family,

“I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year;
Give me a light
That I may tread safely into the unknown,
And he replied, “Go out into the darkness
And put your hand in the hand of God.
That will be to you better than light
And safer than a known way.” Louise Haskins (One of my mom’s favorite poems!)

I had planned to write you this past Saturday from Maua. I had so much to share about the hospital and what has been happening, the alternative rite of passage and our wonderful time at home. However, Bill and I are not in Maua but in Santa Fe, NM. We left Maua on Wednesday night to fly to Albuquerque, NM as my mom was in critical condition and we were praying we would have an opportunity to say good-bye. As we left Maua in December, returned to Maua in January and left Maua again on 19 January, we were homeward bound. My mom was also, but the difference was she was bound for her final home.

My mother fell on ice while rolling her garbage can up her steep drive way a few days after we left her to stay with our daughter and family. In that fall she broke a rib and was in extreme pain. She saw the doctor two days later and was given pain medication and an antibiotic to prevent pneumonia since she could not cough due to the pain of her rib. Day by day she seemed to become sicker and was unable to eat. On the evening of the day we left the US to fly to Kenya, mother was admitted to the hospital for a bowel obstruction. She had emergency surgery on Sunday. Monday she was doing quite well, sitting up and talking. Tuesday when we called her condition had changed and we were advised to come home immediately. We made numerous calls and were able to leave Maua on Wednesday morning for Nairobi and left that night for Albuquerque. We arrived in Dallas and learned our flight from Dallas to Albuquerque was delayed for about 1 ½ hours which was a great blessing. I was able to call my sister at the hospital. Mother had worked hard all day to wait for me but her condition was deteriorating quickly and they felt she could not wait until we arrived. They put the phone to mom’s ear and I was able to talk to her for about 15 – 20 minutes. When our plane began to load, I told mom that I had to go and I released her from waiting for me to arrive as I knew she was so tired. Before I hung up the phone my mom died.

Corrie, our daughter, had driven to Albuquerque from McKinney to pick us up at the airport in Albuquerque to drive us to Santa Fe. We arrived at the hospital around 9:45pm. The hospital had not moved mother from her ICU room and graciously allowed me time with mom. That helped me to realize that mom was gone. As I held mom’s hand I could hear a great and joyous celebration happening in heaven. There would be so many people to welcome mom home as in her 92 years she has touched the lives of so many people with her love, kindness, caring and hospitality.

I am indeed one of the most blessed and thankful persons on earth. God gave me the gift of an incredible mother who was not only my mother but my mentor and teacher; cheerleader, supporter and encourager; inspiration and model and my friend. My mother deeply loved God, her family and her friends. She was always working to bring people into the Kingdom of God. She loved and cared for her family and would literally do anything for us; make any sacrifice though she would never consider it a sacrifice but an opportunity. I have never seen anyone who would do as much for a friend as mom. Last night as I was going through her favorite hymnal, I came upon the hymn, “Others”. Mother’s life was dedicated to God and others. Definitely her motto would have been, “Help me to live for others, That I may live like Thee.” Mother was the most selfless, generous person I have ever known. She was also passionate about mission and has literally touched lives around the world.

She was a worker who never knew how to relax or sit down. She was always doing and is world famous for her cooking, baking (especially her cinnamon rolls) and her hospitality. She was a phenomenal communicator. She communicated daily with me since I went off to university by letter, phone or email, learning how to use a computer at the age of 80 so she could send me daily emails when we went to Kenya. I will miss our daily communication to each other more than I can ever express.

Mother didn't possess many of those things that are valued highly in our society today but her heavenly bank account is overflowing; her inner beauty could be seen by all who knew her, and she could walk in a room of strangers and touch their lives with her goodness and willingness to help anybody and everybody.

My mom had so wanted to live, really live, until she died and she did. For Christmas she had bought all the food for our family meals together and baked cookies, cakes, rolls, sweet breads and her unbeatable candy. She was active until she was admitted to the hospital and was thinking of others until the minute she took her last breath.

I am so grateful to God for 64 years with my beautiful, amazing mom. I am so proud of my mom and so thankful for all she did for me and mine and for all our family, her friends and all those lives she touched with the grace, mercy and love of God. I look forward to meeting her in the Kingdom of Eternal Love.

The Celebration of Her Life will be this coming Saturday, 29 January at 3pm at St. John's UMC in Santa Fe, NM, where mother has been a member for over 80 years. Mom requested memorials be given to Maua Methodist Hospital through St. John's UMC, Santa Fe for Brock Memorial.

Bill and I are staying in Mom's home. This past Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Corrie, Jeannie, my sister, and Ronda and Bob, Jeannie's daughter and son-in-law, were with us beginning the work that needs to be done. They all left yesterday so this is the first day alone in the house but there is much to do and so many wonderful memories to relive and new memories to create.

We will need to find a place to send and receive our emails. We are staying in Santa Fe for a few weeks. My sister and brother have done so much for Mom and I felt we needed to stay and help with the clearing of the house. We will probably check emails every few days but I will not be answering too many. Our telephone number here is 505-983-8993 if you need to contact us.

We are grateful for your prayers, your continued support and love. I had so hoped that Mom would live until we retired and could spend more time with her but I am so thankful that we had come home this Christmas and grateful for each moment we had together. She is home, really home, and I can only praise God for her long life filled with the love of God, family, friends and others and for the privilege of being her daughter.

“And when my task on earth is done, When, by Thy grace, the vic-t'ry's won, E'en death's cold wave I will not flee, Since God thro' Jordan leadeth me. He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me: His faithful follower I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.” Joseph H. Gilmore Hymn, He Leadeth Me



Mom, Christmas 2010



Mom and the family at her 90th Birthday celebration

In His grip,

Jerri and Bill