

Heaven's Welcome

Mildred Dowell used to be the pianist here. I can remember seeing Midred and her mother Lena Tinsman walking to church as I rode in our car. Mildred started being the pianist here as a young woman. When the church decided to honor her for all the years serving our church. No one could remember when she started. Mildred couldn't either, so we honored her for all the years of serving as the pianist at Smithshire Methodist – 40 – 50 or 60 years no one knew for sure.

I have had the experience of coming back to the Smithshire church after being away at school. People would greet me so warmly after church. It was always like a reunion. Orilla Anderson was blind when she was older, but she always greeted me by my name. She would say I always know your voice, you sound so much like your grandfather.

As you get older you go to so many funerals, more people you knew really well -- die. Some at younger ages than you are. At these services I reflect on the person, my memories, it's not all sad. The memory of some people just makes you feel good. At some funerals an image has come into my mind. It will be what heaven's introduction to this person would be.

At Mildred Dowell's funeral the image that to mind was here in Smithshire. I imagined it would be just like when Mildred walked down this aisle after playing at a church service. I imagined Mildred being greeted by all her old friends who were so glad to see her again. What a warm welcome, what a joyous reunion. When we sing these songs together; it easy is to imagine they are still here with us.