



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON
11-1-15

Garrison Keillor – Prairie Home Companion and Episcopalian. He says you know you're an Episcopalian if:

You will serve jell-o in the proper liturgical color of the season.

If you watch a Star Wars movie and they say, May the Force be with you, you respond – and also with you.

When you hear something really funny during the sermon you smile as loudly as you can.

It takes you ten minutes to say good-bye after any church activity.

If people are dying you'll comfort them, if lonely, you'll talk to them and if hungry you will give them tuna salad.

And finally, you hear people saying, as they leave the service – “That was a great funeral.”

Because that one is true – the Episcopal Church has great funerals. And you know why?

Because our funerals are called and truly are – A Celebration of a Life. And our OT and NT readings today are from our burial services and reflect the hope and joy and love with which we tell our loved ones good-bye.

We printed the readings today so you could look at them again and again. Listen once more to the reading from Revelation. List to pick out a sentence or word or phrase that catches your attention.

Aren't those words an amazing and comforting witness to us? You might have picked the image of a new heaven and new earth – because all things are made new – over and over forever. “See I am making all things new.” Or maybe you picked that God's home is among mortals – among us – we are God's peoples. And God dwells with us and wipes away our tears. Or how about “these words are trustworthy and true.” I like that. And finally – It is done – I am the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end. Start to finish – God is with us. Greek alphabet

“It is done – I am the beginning and the end – forever.

Sabbatical in Durham – the class on forgiveness. Priest telling of the mentor – “There are three things a priest must do with faith – absolve, preach, and die.

I spent a month in Durham deciding that I could die with faith. And after that all was gravy – I had it. A life lived with faith is a life that goes on and on and on and it's all about God there

every step of the way – forever. It is all GOOD. All good. And because of that realization I realized I could now live – I could live every day without fear, without doubt or worry about the unknown, or the when and how of my upcoming death. Because God is before, in, and after everything on this earth and everything I can possibly experience. I have learned that in the waiting for the future – there is life. I have learned that in the regrets of the past – there was life. I have learned that in this moment – there is life. Life is there for all of us all along.

So on this day we take time to remember that our lives are held together with the promises of being connected in this eternal chain of witnesses, in being a part of the enduring chain of life that started long before us and will continue on before us through eternity. And that is good.

That is a foundation of our faith. In all that happens – there is God. And we – not only do we have God always with us – we are always part of the unfolding of new creation. We who live with hope are in the process of being and becoming saints. We are saints because of God's continuing presence within us, because this God dwells in the midst of us, because God's presence transforms us – making us new day after day, moment after moment – for eternity!

We live in the midst of eternal life.

Thanks be to God.