

To John, Catrina, Kennedy, Trevor, Izaak, and Levi, to other family members, friends and other loved ones, grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

First off, I want to be clear that nothing will remove the temporal pain and suffering experienced by this loss. Not any words, not any amount of well wishes, and not any amount of time on this earth. To pretend that this will happen in one sermon or in one service is simply to ignore the basics of human emotions. Even as St. Paul writes to those in Thessalonica, he does not tell them there is to be no grief as if it were not a part of human emotions, nor does he tell them to simply get past it and move on with their life. He simply reminds them not to grieve as those who have no hope.

Death certainly brings about grief, an immeasurable amount at that especially at this time. For we were not created for death, it certainly is not natural. Here in our midst we see nothing other than the realities of sin. In sin was Lucas conceived (Psalm 51:5), in sin you were too. The notion of innocence is but a dream, you see it in Izaak and Levi at their young age too. This is the answer to why. And while we will never know this side of eternity all the other "why's" of Lucas' death, and certainly there is grief, we do not grieve as those who have no hope.

And this hope is much more than when we say we hope to receive something as a gift or we hope to get to some activity. This is a certain hope, hope that is not in the sense of wishing but an eager expectation of certain realities. We do not grieve as those who have no hope for Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

This is the very reason our Lord became flesh, the very reason he took death upon the cross. And he rose from death. And the resurrection is promised to you as it was to Lucas. It is the certain hope. And though the pain and struggle of the death of your child will never go away, you can be confident Lucas received this promise. Each time for the last nine months Lucas was in the Divine Service, he heard and received the Word of God. As you read the Word and meditated on it in your home, in your prayers, Lucas received the Word.

Some may discount this hearing and discount faith and hold to some age or reasoning capacity. But the Scriptural witness is clear, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17). We trust God's Word to do as he says it will do. Lucas heard for nine months in the womb. He heard, as did Levi, John, and Catrina, the Word in the hospital the day after his birth. As he was in the ER in Gardnerville he heard the Word and received the pouring of this Word in Holy Baptism. He heard and received our Lord's holy washing, being buried with Christ and if we are buried with Christ we are also raised with him (Romans 6) we have the certain hope God will bring us with him, for he has promised it.

And Lucas continued to receive our Lord's Word. John as you read your grandson Psalms (in addition to Dr. Suess), JK as you read him the promise of the Messiah from Isaiah and then the account of our Lord's birth. Lucas heard the full account of our Lord's passion and resurrection. He had heard the Word, and was made Holy in Baptism.

And finally, the last text Lucas heard as we read and meditated on it is the same Word to receive today, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. This account is recorded by other evangelists as well. Our Lord proclaiming that the littlest of children are given saving faith and inherit the kingdom of God.

For Lucas, for you, it is essential to hear this Word. As we proclaimed to him, these words are for the littlest of children. So often we see depictions and think of cute little 5-8 year olds. But our Lord uses a word that is very clear that he is speaking of the littlest of children, infants. Our Lord receives these infants, indeed he has received Lucas. Lucas heard the Word and the Lord's hand was placed on him in Holy Baptism.

This is the culmination of faith. This is the realities of sin and there is nowhere left to turn. You can try and look within yourselves and your own reason and strength, but there will always be a void this side of heaven. The only assurances, the only comfort come from him who received the little children and blessed them. Thanks be to God that in his mercy he does not leave our salvation to some sort of reasoning or personal stamina. But gives his gifts in his Word and Sacraments, given so simple and pure that even the littlest of children receive it. It is he who took on death and is risen from the grave. He whose death gives the forgiveness of sins, he who gives life for he himself is the life. For Christ is risen, so we do not grieve as those who have no hope.

Lucas will rise again, for his sin has been forgiven. You will see him again in eternal glory. After their deaths as they had entered heaven the Scriptures bear witness to the likes of Moses, Elijah, and Lazarus being recognized in their glory. John and Catrina, Kennedy, Trevor, Izaak, Levi, and all the saints gathered here today, you will be reunited with Lucas in eternity. For the same Word made flesh gives himself for you, has poured himself over you, and forgives your sins and gives you life.

Our Lord has swallowed up death, life and salvation is given to Lucas, life and salvation are yours. Nothing will ever remove the pain and suffering, may our Lord keep you in true faith, the same faith given to Lucas, clinging to Word of Christ and the gifts given from his death and resurrection. May he cling us and keep us in Christ, that we not grieve as those who have no hope but trusting our Lord will come and we will be united in the day of resurrection.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.