



**Funeral Eucharist for
Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Beth Sayler
1948-2019**

Saturday, November 16, 2019

Loehe Chapel
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation, and the hope of healing.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit, the comforter, gathers us in worship.

The ministers and the bereaved gather at the font of baptism, where the community as kept vigil with the Gwen's bodily remains through the night. The assembly stands and faces them.

We sing.

Blessed Be God ELW 210

Bless-ed be God, the source of all life, the word of sal -
va - tion, the spir - it of mer - cy.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly

Welcome in the name of Jesus, the Savior of the world.
We are gathered to worship,
to proclaim Christ crucified and risen,
to remember before God our sister Gwen
to give thanks for her life,
to commend her to our merciful redeemer,
and to comfort one another in our grief.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

As a sign of being clothed with Christ in baptism, a pall is be placed on the container of Gwen's bodily remains by members of her family. The minister says:

All who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

In her baptism, Gwen was clothed with Christ.

In the day of Christ's coming, she shall be clothed with glory.

The presiding minister leads acclamation and sprinkles the container of Gwen's bodily remains with water from the font as a sign of baptism.

Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life, we glorify you.

We glorify you.

Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life, we praise you.

We praise you.

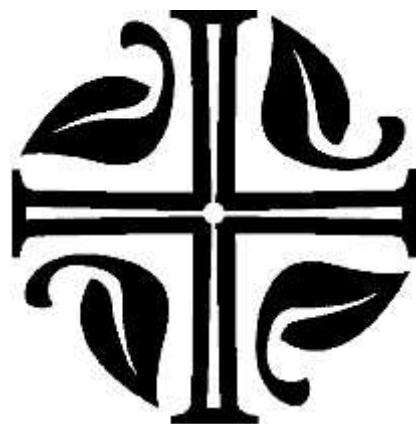
Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope, we worship you.

We worship you.

To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever.

Amen.

We sing the chant as Gwen's bodily remains are placed at her spot on the organ platform, from where she always participated in worship.



Processional Hymn My Hope is Built on Nothing Less ELW 596

1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je-sus' blood and righ-teous-ness;
 2 When dark-ness veils his love-ly face, I rest on his un - chang-ing grace;
 3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sus-tain me in the rag - ing flood;
 4 When he shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,

no mer-it of my own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 in ev - 'ry high and storm - y gale my an - chor holds with-in the veil.
 when all sup-ports are washed a-way, he then is all my hope and stay.
 clothed in his righ-teous-ness a - lone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain

On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; all oth - er ground is

sink - ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

Greeting

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

The presiding minister prays the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory,
we remember before you today our sister Gwen.
We thank you for giving her to us to know and to love
as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth.
In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn.
Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up
in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ,
so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call,
we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

Valerie Sayler, sister-in-law - Underwood, North Dakota

Lisa Polito, Deaconess, Executive Director - Lutheran Diaconal Association, Valparaiso, Indiana

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading Micah 6:6-8

The reading concludes:
Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 146, Refrain 2

The assembly sings the refrain at the direction of the cantor.

The LORD gives jus - tice to those who are op - pressed, and
food to those who hun - ger. The LORD sets the cap - tive
free, the LORD sets the cap - tive free.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 Romans 8:35-39

The reading concludes:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

The assembly stand to welcome the gospel.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel Luke 1:46-55

The gospel is announced.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The assembly is seated.

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day Precious Lord, Take My Hand ELW 773

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
2 When my way grows . . . drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger near,
3 When the dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws . . . near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
when my life is . . . al - most . . . gone,
and the day is . . . past and . . . gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.
hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.
at the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Creed

The Apostles' Creed is spoken.

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers of intercession, prepared or adapted for the occasion, may include the following or similar petitions. An assisting minister may lead the prayers.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, in holy baptism you have knit your chosen people together
into one communion of saints in the body of Christ.

Give to your whole church in heaven and on earth your light and your peace.

God of mercy,

hear our prayer.

Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection
may die to sin and rise to share the new life in Christ.

God of mercy,

hear our prayer.

Give courage and faith to all who mourn,
and a sure and certain hope in your loving care,
that, casting all their sorrow on you, they may have strength for the days ahead.
God of mercy,

hear our prayer.

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith,
that, where this world groans in grief and pain,

your Holy Spirit may lead us to bear witness to your light and life.

God of mercy,

hear our prayer.

Help us, in the midst of things we cannot understand,
to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
and the resurrection to life everlasting.
God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers.

God of all grace, we give you thanks because by his death our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death and by his resurrection, he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Make us certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Peace

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

Meal

God gives us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Gifts given in memory of Gwen have been designated for Wartburg Theological Seminary and Lutheran Diaconal Association. Envelopes for your memorial gifts are available in the narthex.

During this time, the table is set.

When the table is prepared, the assembly stands. The gifts of bread and wine are brought forward, together with Gwen's bodily remains, which are placed near the table.

We sing.

Hymn

Seed That in Earth is Dying

ELW 330

1 Seed that in earth is dy - ing grows in - to ears of
2 We were bap - tized in Je - sus, in - to his death and
3 Seed that in earth is dy - ing ris - es to bear much

grain. Grapes that are crushed in the ves - sel
grave, to res - ur - rec - tion's prom - ise:
fruit. Christ, as we meet at your ta - ble,

turn in - to gold - en wine. God, through this mys - ter - y grant us
praise and e - ter - nal life. Heav-en's own prais - es be - gin here
give us the bread of life. Lord, we do thank and a - dore you!

faith in our deep - est dark - ness, life in our night and death.
where you your - self are near us, deep in our night and death.
Un - ceas - ing praise of the a - ges ris - es from night and death.

The assisting minister leads the offering prayer.

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
who rose from the dead, and in whom our hope of resurrection dawns.
The sting of death has been removed by the glorious promise of his risen life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
you have brought us this far along the way.
In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,
but guided us into the path of love and light.
In every age you sent prophets
to make known your loving will for all humanity.
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant
to preach good news to the afflicted,
to break bread with the outcast and despised,
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,
we await the day when Jesus shall return
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.

Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen

Amen.

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen

Amen.

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.



The great thanksgiving concludes with the Lord's Prayer.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Communion

*The bread is broken for the communion. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

The assembly is seated.

Lutheran Christians believe and teach that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, is truly present at the Lord's Supper, and that in this meal of the baptized children of God, our Lord gives forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.

You are invited to receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ by eating the bread and drinking from either cup of wine at one of two stations to the left and to the right of the table. You may also choose to dip the bread into the cup of wine.

Gluten-free wafers are offered from the table at both stations, and a gluten-free cup of wine is provided at the center station.

Grape juice is offered in an earthenware cup at the center station.

Children are communed or blessed, according to the practice of one's church or home congregation.

If you are physically unable to come forward, you may notify one of the ushers of your desire to receive.

If you desire to participate but cannot receive one or both of the elements, you are invited to come forward with arms folded to hear Jesus' words of promise.

We celebrate this holy communion in the confidence that Christ is here, truly present for all.

We sing.

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Hymn

Here Is Bread

ELW 483

1 Here is bread, here is wine, Christ is with us, he is with us.
2 Here is grace, here is peace, Christ is with us, he is with us.
3 Here we are, joined in one, Christ is with us, he is with us.

Break the bread, taste the wine, Christ is with us here.
Know his grace, find his peace, feast on Je-sus here.
We'll pro-claim till he comes Je-sus cru-ci-fied.

Refrain

In this bread there is heal-ing, in this cup is life for-ev-er.

In this mo-ment, by the Spir-it, Christ is with us here.



Hymn

We Are Called

ELW720



1 Come! Live in the light!
2 Come! O-pen your heart!
3 Sing! Sing a new song!

Shine with the joy and the love of the
Show your... mer - cy to all those in
Sing of that great day when all will be



Lord! We are called to be light for the king - dom, to
fear! We are called to be hope for the hope - less so
one! God will reign, and we'll walk with each oth - er as



live in the free - dom of the cit - y of God.
ha - tred and blind-ness . . . will be . . . no more.
sis - ters and broth-ers . . . u - nit-ed in love.



Refrain
We are called to act with jus - tice, we are called to



love ten - der - ly; we are called to serve one an -



oth - er, to walk hum - bly with God.

5

Hymn**When We Are Living**

ELW 639

1 Pues si vi - vi - mos, pa - ra él vi - vi - mos,
1 When we are liv - ing, it is in Christ Je - sus,
2 'Mid times of sor - row and in times of pain,
3 A - cross this wide world, we shall al - ways find

y si mo - ri - mos pa - ra él mo - ri - mos.
and when we're dy - ing, it is in the Lord. . . .
when sens - ing beau - ty or in love's em - brace. . . .
those who are cry - ing with no peace of mind; . . .

Sea que vi - va - mos o que mu - ra - mos,
Both in our liv - ing and in our dy - ing,
wheth - er we suf - fer, or sing re - joic - ing,
and when we help them, or when we feed them,

so - mos del Se - ñor, so - mos del Se - ñor.
we be - long to God, we be - long to God.
we be - long to God, we be - long to God.
we be - long to God, we be - long to God.

The assisting minister leads one of the following or a similar prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us out in peace

Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

May Burt Persaud, Instructor in Biblical Languages, Wartburg Theological Seminary

Commendation

The ministers take their places at the place of Gwen's bodily remains. The minister leads the commendation.

Let us commend Gwendolyn Beth to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer.

Silence is kept.

The minister places a hand on the container of Gwen's bodily remains during this prayer.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Gwen.

Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming.

Receive her into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

Amen.

A cantor sings this farewell song: Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace.

Blessing

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and  give you peace.

Amen.

Dismissal

The assisting minister sends the assembly into mission.

Let us go forth in peace,
in the name of Christ. Amen.

A procession forms and leave the chapel, the ministers leading.

Sending Song Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer ELW 618

1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es

feed me now and ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.
shield me with your might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.
I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.



Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Beth Sayler, PhD, the William A. & John E. Wagner Professor of Biblical Theology and Distinguished Professor of Bible at Wartburg Theological Seminary, died unexpectedly Monday November 11, 2019.

Gwen was born on October 27, 1948 in Bismarck North Dakota the daughter of Quentin and Elizabeth (Tucker) Sayler. She grew up in Underwood ND and graduated from Underwood High School in 1966. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Valparaiso University and was extremely proud of her association with the deaconess class of 1971. She served at Immanuel Lutheran Church as a Parish Deaconess in Alliance, Nebraska.

Gwen graduated from Concordia Seminary in Exile in May of 1974 and received her PhD in Jewish and Christian Literature and History from the Exile to the Mishnah in 1982. She was certified for ordination in the American Lutheran Church in 1981. She was called as a pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Watertown, Wisconsin in October of 1982 and served until joining the Wartburg staff in 1991.

As a member of the Wartburg faculty, Gwen had a significant impact on shaping leaders for the church for generations. She taught the Scriptures with insight and passion. She cared deeply for her students. She was a caring and dedicated colleague, loyal friend, and a mentor to many.

Besides teaching, Gwen served as the Director for Lifelong Learning for several years along with the Internship Committee at Wartburg. She has authored numerous articles, book chapters, Bible studies and one book. In 2016 she celebrated the 45th anniversary of her consecration as Deaconess in the Valparaiso Lutheran Diaconal Association (LDA) community. She served on the Candidacy Committee for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin for more than 20 years. Her plans were to retire after the 2019-2020 academic year. Gwen was an avid bicyclist, walker, Pilates enthusiast and Green Bay Packer fan. She was a volunteer at the Dream Center, the Presentation Lantern, and was an active member of Saint Peter Lutheran Church, all in Dubuque.

Gwen lived a full and joyful life, serving as a Deaconess, Pastor, Professor, kind and loving friend, sister, sister-in-law, aunt and great aunt to her family in North Dakota. Gwen loved her family and spent almost every Christmas in ND. She never forgot about a birthday or holiday, especially for her great nephews and nieces.

She is survived by her brother Tom (Valerie) Sayler of Stanton, ND: her nephews Michael (Emilie) Sayler and John (Esther) Sayler of Mandan, ND; and great nephews and nieces Isaac, Jack, Ben, Adam, Lyla, and Kate.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be given to Wartburg Seminary or the Lutheran Diaconal Association (LDA).

Acknowledgements

Presiding Minister: Thomas Schattauer, Professor of Liturgics and Dean of Chapel

Pastor: Matthew Agee

Preachers: Karen Melang and Anita Mohr

Assisting Ministers: Sean Avery and Matthew O'Rear

Lectors: Judy Hoshek and Vanette Kashmer

Communion Assistants: Ann Fritschel, Matthew Agee, DeWayne Teig, Heidi Youngquist, Jan Janzow, Louise Williams, and Steve Kottke

Musicians: Roy Carrol, Lillian Brondyke, and Blake Shipman

Crucifer: Jacob Krueger

Torchbearers: Kathryn Kieckhafer and Cynthia Ryder

Bible Bearer: Charlotte Eversoll

Sacristans: Laura Anderson and Jeanette Perrault

Sexton: Matthew Engum

Chapel Assistant/Digital Sacristan: Sara Funkhouser and Leah Holloway

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