



**Funeral Vigil for  
Rev Dr. Gwen Sayler**

Loehe Chapel  
Wartburg Theological Seminary  
Friday, November 15, 2019

*The Funeral Vigil is a gathering of the Christian community in the presence of the bodily remains of the deceased and in the company of the bereaved family and friends.*

*With the memory of the one who has died and with hearts full with the many sorrows of the world, we wait for the Lord. With word and prayer and song we wait in hope and expectation for the new thing, the new life, the new heaven and earth that God promises in Jesus' death and his risen life.*

## **Gathering**

*The ministers meet Gwen's bodily remains and the bereaved at the entrance to the Seminary. The assembly gathers around the font in the entryway and faces the doors.*

We are gathered in the name in which we are baptized,  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the + Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

My sisters, brothers, siblings,  
we have come together to renew our trust in Christ,  
who, by dying, has freed us from eternal death  
and, by rising, has opened for us the gates of heaven.  
Let us now receive our sister Gwen back to this holy place.

*The presiding minister receives Gwen's bodily remains and leads the bereaved to join the assembly around the font 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.

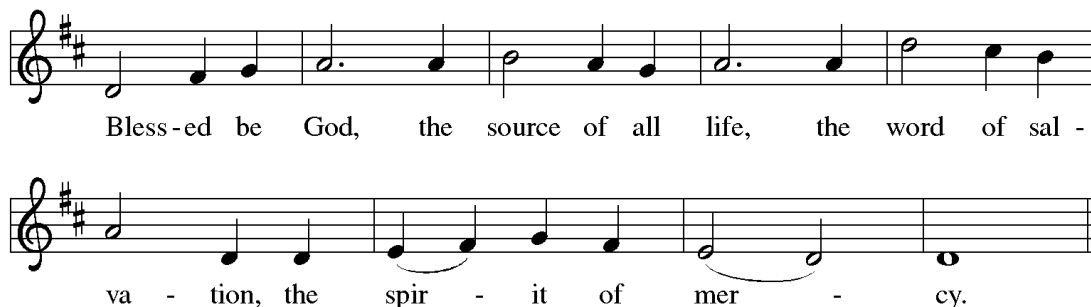
**We worship you.**

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

**Amen.**

*We sing.*

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.

**Litany**

Let us turn to Christ Jesus with confidence and faith in the power of his cross and resurrection:

Risen Lord, pattern of our life forever: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Promise and image of what we shall be: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Son of God who came to destroy sin and death: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Word of God who delivered us from the fear of death: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Crucified Lord, forsaken in death, raised in glory: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Eternal God, you gave Gwen a new birth in baptism  
and entrusted her to us to know and to love.

As we thank you for the life we shared,  
help us now to release her to your mighty keeping.

Bring us all to that day  
when we shall stand in your presence with all your saints in light eternal;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Merciful Creator, your Holy Spirit intercedes for us  
even when we do not know how to pray.

Send your Spirit now to comfort us in these days of need and loss,  
and help us to commend Gwen to your merciful care;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*Led by the cross, ministers and assembly enter the chapel with song accompanying Gwen's  
bodily remains.*

Blessed Be God (see above)

## Word

*We sing a psalm.*

Out | of the depths

I cry to | you, O LORD;

O LORD, | hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my | supplication.

If you were to keep watch | over sins,

O LORD, | who could stand?

Yet with you | is forgiveness,

in order that you | may be feared.

I wait for you, O LORD; | my soul waits;

in your word | is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning,

more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is | steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plen- | teous redemption.

For the LORD shall | redeem Israel

from | all their sins. (*Psalms 130*)

*We hear the words of scripture.*

*A reading from Isaiah:* For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (*Isaiah 54:10*)

*A reading from Isaiah:* The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. (*Isaiah 61:1-3*)

*A reading from Romans:* Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. (*Romans 6:3-5, 9*)

*A reading from John:* Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. (*John 11:25-26*)

*A reading from John:* Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (*John 14:27*)

**Hymn** Christ, Mighty Savior ELW 560

**Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving**

Matthew Agee, Pastor, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Dubuque, Iowa

Judy Hoshek, Deaconess, Lutheran Diaconal Association, Valparaiso, Indiana

Louise N. Johnson, President, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

**Prayer**

*The ministers continue with prayer. These prayers of intercession, one of the brief prayers that follow, or other appropriate prayers may be used.*

Let us pray to the Lord, who is merciful and full of compassion

Most gracious God,  
our sister Gwen was given the promise of eternal life in baptism.  
Give her communion with your saints forever.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, your Son wept at the death of Lazarus;  
look with compassion on Gwen's dearest loved ones,  
now experiencing sorrow and pain at her death.  
Grant the tender healing of your love.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Living God, source of compassion,  
our hearts are filled with grief at the death of Gwen.  
Draw us near to you in faith and to one another in love.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of salvation, we remember with thanksgiving  
all who have died in the hope of the resurrection.  
Surround them with the light of your presence.  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all.*

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.**

**Hymn** Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds ELW 367

*The presiding minister concludes with a blessing.*

Almighty God bless us,  
defend us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

*We accompany Gwen's bodily remains and return to the font with song.*

All of Us Go Down to the Dust ELW 223

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are: "All of us go down to the dust, yet e-ven at the grave we make our song: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final double bar line at the end of the third staff.

*You are invited to sit in vigil together from Friday evening till the Saturday Eucharist. **There is be a table in the narthex to sign up for a time**, individually or in pairs (you may sign up for a many slot as you wish. Please feel free to participate as you are able.*

***Funeral Eucharist will begin at 2:00 pm on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>** in Loehe Chapel. Light refreshments will be served in the refectory following the service for a time of consolation and conversation.*

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Ministers**

**Thomas Schattauer** Professor of Liturgics and Dean of Chapel

**Matthew Agee**, Pastor, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Dubuque, Iowa

### **Assisting Minister**

**Matthew D. O'Rear**, Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives and Executive Director, ELCA Seminaries inFaith Grant

### **Musician**

**Jan Janzow**, Deaconess, Lutheran Diaconal Association

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Founded in the year of our Lord 1854

A seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Wartburg Theological Seminary serves Christ's church through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by being a worship-centered community of critical theological reflection where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning. The community embodies God's mission by stewarding resources for engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing.

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