

Burial of Gordon Jernigan

There is a rubric, a stage direction, in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer concerning the burial rite....the service we are participating in this morning... It tells us that the liturgy of burial is an Easter liturgy, a service that is characterized by joy, our grief notwithstanding, that joy and grief can live together....I think that is an apt metaphor for life itself....that we sojourn in this oh so brief moment in time.... We sojourn, we journey amid the shards of hearts broken, none of us escape a broken heart....but hearts brimful with love and hope and life....we stand on ambiguous sacred ground....ground that our God in the beginning calls good....we stand in our grief, but with thankful hearts for a good life gracefully lived....we stand here together on sacred ground.

In the gospel of John Jesus instructs us how to live in this ambiguous life....He tells us in short that we are to live as he lives....that we, like he, are to make dwelling places for each other in our father's house...often this passage we just heard read, we interpret as it speaking only about life after death...but Jesus never separates the two, the life of heaven and the life in earth...so this passage is just as much about how we live now as it is about how we will live in the hereafter....we are to make a place for each other in which we flourish despite the slings and arrows of life...In my father's house there are many dwelling places....a place prepared for each of us.

Our sister Gordon gone before us lived such a life.....a life of making for those she knew and loved a dwelling place, a place of honor, a place to stand loved....that is our vocation too....to love one another as God loves us.

The word for resurrection in the Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament literature....the root word for resurrection literally means to stand with dignity, that the broken heart of the world notwithstanding....we enable those given to us to stand raised as worthy...raised to dwell, to flourish in the house of God, which simply means to live as beloved....Gordon loved well....and so must we....We must stand in the light of the resurrection making sacred space, sacred place for the ones given us....and know this dear people of God...our sister this day stands with us, stands made whole....stands in the light of God's love, a graceful life still....and so shall we...and so shall we.