

Jesus said; *Let not your hearts be troubled*. I speak to you in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let not your hearts be troubled - difficult words to say - difficult words to hear. For in truth, in spite of our best efforts to fulfill Chip's wishes that this service be a time of joyful celebration and thanksgiving for the life we shared with him, in spite of the Apostle Paul's admonition that we are to rejoice in the Lord always and everywhere – yes, rejoice even now, and in spite of the fact that we are assured by the psalmist and by Jesus himself that we are always and ever in God's loving care, and that nothing, not even death can separate us from God – yet in truth – in spite of all that - we gather today with hearts that are troubled and heavy with grief. Death has come so very close to us - our hearts are, indeed, troubled.

I have heard it said that the words of the Burial Office are the scaffolding on which Episcopalians bear their grief and sorrow. This is particularly true, at times like these, when we cannot bear them on our own. We gather today to comfort one another, to share our loss and to cast all our cares on God. It is only with confidence in God's never failing care and love that we gather to celebrate and give thanks for the gift of Chip's life, It is only with confidence in God's never failing care and love that we can fulfill Chip's wishes for our time today, It is only with confidence in God's never failing care and love that we speak of this day not as an ending, but as the beginning of new, abundant, and eternal life.

Today we bear witness to the Truth – the truth that God's light, and life, and love are inescapable. Psalm 139 tells us that God searches us out and knows us, traces all our journeys and is acquainted with all our ways. God knows our thoughts before we think them and our words before we speak them – and in all of these things loves us still. God goes ahead of us and behind us, above us and beneath us, and most importantly God goes with us. God in Jesus Christ prepares a place for us – will come and take us to himself - and promises to take hold of us and never let us go.

Chip Kennett knew these promises, believed these promises, and trusted in these promises. This is plainly evident to anyone who knew him. It is evident in his deep and abiding love for you, Sheila, you have so bravely faced fierce battles together with a faith to move mountains and are an inspiration to us all. It is evident in his deep and abiding love for his children, Joe and Crosby, his greatest treasure – his life's greatest reward. It is evident in his deep and abiding love of family and friends all across the full spectrum of his life and work, from the Men of Patriots Football to the legions of proud members of Team Kennett. It is evident in his deep and abiding love for this community of St. Paul's - his quiet yet-oh-so-powerful witness to us.

Chip never gave up and never gave in. He refused to allow cancer to define his life. Chip did not want die and did everything in his power to stay alive – not necessarily for his own sake, but for the sake of those he loved. He did not want to die – but he was not afraid to die. And even more amazing still, given the prospect of a short and uncertain life – Chip Kennett was not afraid to live. This is perhaps his greatest legacy to us. He was not afraid to live.

Chip lived his life with the full awareness of what could and ultimately did happen to him. Yet in truth – if we are honest with ourselves – we are not all that different. None of us knows the day or the hour of our own death and the same question that faced Chip is ours to face as well. With this knowledge, how then do we choose to live our lives? Do we live every day in the fear and dread of what might be – or do we, like Chip, live everyday with the determination to be filled with faith and hope – possibility and purpose - embracing each day as the gift that it is. Do we shrink back? Or do we press on? The choice is ours.

Chip has pressed on and he has won the victory. Pain and suffering do not survive death, cancer does not survive death, death does not even survive death, only light, and life, and love survive – and Chip knew that all along.

Looking through the eyes of faith, we gather today to fulfill Chip's wishes. Today is a joyful celebration of life and a time of thanksgiving for the life we shared with Chip. Today we can rejoice in the Lord – always and everywhere. Today we do take refuge in the inescapable light, life and love of God. *Let not your hearts be troubled.*

We gather today to give thanks for the life of the one among us whose bright light, and life and love, reflected the light, life, and love of heaven – which he so generously shared with all of us.

I conclude with words borrowed from William Shakespeare. I think they are fitting.

“When he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.”

Let not your hearts be troubled. I speak to you in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN