

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ –

Members of the Mt. Olive Lutheran Church & School Faith Community,

God tells us the following through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20-26:

...Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

According to this Word of God, until the day of Jesus's return, physical death is something that will confront us all. Therefore, I wanted to let you know that a dear brother in Christ Jesus, Douglas Burke, passed into the physical sleep of death yesterday, November 30. Doug had served as the main soccer coach at Mt. Olive Lutheran School for around 25 years. About a year ago Doug was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Though treated with chemo and radiation, the cancer had this year metastasized to his lungs. Then a couple of weeks ago Doug came down with CoViD-19. He entered Methodist Hospital within the last several days with low blood oxygen levels. While under treatment there he suffered a stroke. He was then transferred to Mercy Hospital where, despite best efforts by medical personnel, he succumbed to the combined effects of his medical conditions.

Funeral arrangements are not currently being made. His wife Marla and a number of Doug's other family members are presently in isolation due to CoViD-19. It is my understanding from Marla that when arrangements are able to be made they will be done through the Iles-Westover Funeral Home in Urbandale, Iowa. Until then, cards may be sent to Marla at 1362 NW 92nd Street, Clive, IA, 50325.

St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 acknowledges that everyone, whether a believer in Jesus or not, grieves when a loved one dies. But the grief of a believer is different – *“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.”*

Jesus came into the world as a human being, as one of us, so that He could do what we are unable to do. He kept God's law requiring us to perfectly love God and also all our neighbors. God our Father counts Jesus's perfect obedience to us as though we have done it. Jesus also has overcome our adversaries – Satan, sin, and death. Since Jesus has satisfied God's law, Satan has nothing left with which to accuse us. Though He was sinless, Jesus went to the cross to die, taking the punishment and paying the wages that our sins both deserve and earn – physical and eternal death.

Jesus's victorious resurrection from the dead as the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” is God the Father's loud “Amen!” to Jesus's having done everything necessary for our salvation. Therefore, we know that through Jesus ALL our sins are forgiven. Though we may die physically, nevertheless each of us will be a part of that great resurrection to come when Jesus returns and awakens us, body and soul, from death. It's then that we will get to see Doug again. Until that day, God will keep us!

Pastor Mark Kleckner

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church & School

*Jesus said... “I am the resurrection and the life.
Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live,
and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.
Do you believe this?”*

John 11:25-26