

## ***“Depart in Peace”***

Grace, mercy, and PEACE to you, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To the family of Diane Bolin, to all our brothers and sisters in Christ – may Christ’s peace be yours today, and in all the days to come. Amen.

Holding a baby is such a joy – just ask Simeon. Diane Bolin knows this joy as well. She held her beloved children in her arms – basking in this gift of life the Lord had given.

We didn’t think she’d get the opportunity to hold grandchildren in her arms – but the Lord is good. He blessed her and Kevin with a couple of daughters-in-law, a son-in-law, and THREE grandchildren (one who is on the way).

And that’s where a sense of sadness creeps in – as we think about the opportunities that she didn’t have. For Kevin – celebrating anniversaries – and just the day to day life with his wife. The Lord has truly blessed you Kevin – and yet – your whole world has changed. It’s hard. There’s sadness. Things seem out-of-sorts without Diane to love, to live for, to sacrifice for.

Her children experience the same loss, and sadness – the world has changed for you as well. There is that grand-baby that Diane will not see or hold (at least, not now). Possibly some weddings – and more grandchildren.

But even just the day to day with Mom. The Lord has truly blessed you – with a Mom to be the Lord’s servant for you – His mouth to speak His words, His hands to care for your needs, and so much more. The Lord has blessed you with someone to love – to thank God for – and to see God’s love for you, day to day.

All of us gathered here today – who knew Diane in one way or another – can fill in the blank – telling how the Lord has blessed you through Diane. I hope you take some time to treasure and ponder those memories – to share them with one another – and to thank the Lord for all His blessings to you.

Death has a way of crashing into and interrupting our lives like nothing else. This is not the “very good” life that God has created us to live. He created us to live, not die. Life – that is His desire for you – one and all.

And yet, even in the midst of our sadness in the face of death – God is not hampered or debilitated by death. Jesus’ resurrection on the third day from death to life is God’s epiphany – the manifestation of His victory over sin and its death. There is great comfort for you in Christ’s resurrection – even in the face of Diane’s death ----- which leads us to Simeon.

Simeon was “righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” Simeon was a believer – one who trusted in the Lord, and expected to receive the consolation and comfort that the Lord would provide in the promised Messiah.

Simeon was also blessed – blessed with a promise from the Lord – that he would “not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” Simeon would not die before he had seen with his own eyes the promised Savior – the Anointed One – the One chosen by God to be sacrificed to atone for the sin of the whole world (including each and everyone of us sitting here today).

The Lord fulfilled that promise when His very own Son was sacrificed on the cross of Calvary – and with Jesus, God’s own Son, being raised from death to life on the third day – the Lord has provided comfort for us who walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

We don’t know how old Simeon was here in this reading from St. Luke 2 – but it is often assumed that he is an old man – one who is close to death. But the Scriptures don’t tell us that. He could have been a young man. He could have been 56-years-old. Neither do we know the number of years of our lives here on earth – but the Lord does – the Lord who blesses us.

Into the darkness of the unknown and the darkness of sin and death – shines the light of the Gospel – the good news from our Lord who promises a Savior. For Simeon, the promise included seeing the Savior with his very own eyes.

When Joseph and Mary enter the Temple with Jesus – God the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that this Child is the One – this 40-day-old baby is the Savior of the world. Simeon didn't figure this out on his own – God reveals this good news to him.

Simeon therefore takes the Christ Child in his arms and blesses God. "I can die in peace now," he says. You've kept your word to me. Your promise has been fulfilled. The salvation that you have prepared- my salvation – is right here in my arms!

The Lord has blessed me with the forgiveness of all my sin – and even if, or when, I die – yet shall I live – because Christ the Savior has conquered death for me.

The promise of the Savior is not just for Simeon. God has fulfilled His promise for you as well. No, you do not see Jesus the Savior with your eyes like Simeon did – but God the Holy Spirit is revealing this truth to you today – so that you may believe in Jesus – so that you may live, and die, in peace.

Diane was blessed to hold many babies in her life. She was blessed to hold her Savior in her hands and mouth as the Lord blessed her with His very own Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. Like Simeon, she was blessed to see her salvation with the eyes of faith. The promise of salvation fulfilled at Calvary – revealed on the third day – and delivered to her in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Diane was, and IS blessed. Her sin forgiven. Her death defeated. Her resurrection secured. And her eternal life received – already now.

Dearly beloved, with Simeon and Diane, let us depart in peace. Amen.

The peace of God which surpassed all human understanding, guards your hearts and your minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.