

Alvin Weidner
1/17/25

+In the Name of Jesus+

Donna, Mark & Kelly, Mark & Bridget, Matthew & Chrisma, Family, and all who mourn this day,

I will always remember my first visit to Alvin's farm. With delight and joy, he showed me the bowling alley floor in the house, the immaculate garage, the shop so orderly and clean you could have had a picnic lunch off the floor, and the gun safe. It was beautiful. I could tell Alvin took great pride in his farmstead. He should have. That farmstead was a lot of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Alvin knew it was a gift from God and he was a wise and faithful steward of it.

And, Alvin knew that all the days and years he lived on that farm, he was a stranger. My Friends, as long as we are on this side of heaven, we are strangers here. This earth is not our home.

Today, as we worship with our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, and neighbor for the last time on this side of heaven, we mourn. We grieve. Yet, we do not grieve as those who have no hope, for we hear the words of Jesus,

"Let not your hearts be troubled ... In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

The wages of sin have drawn us together in God's House today.
Because of sin, all human flesh will die.

But, God is love. He did not want us to die. He did not give us the gift of life so that it would end in death. So at Christmas, God gave us the perfect gift in a Savior, Christ Jesus.

God so loved Alvin, and you, and me that He sent His only-begotten Son to save us from sin, death, and hell. And, the Son of God did it by being born of Virgin Mother and taking on human flesh and bone. To pay our wages of death, He took upon Himself the sin of all the world and, like a lamb to the slaughter, was led to the slaughter of the cross where He died as the punishment of our sin. Because the very Son of God did die for us, we are forgiven all of our sin.

He was crucified, died, and was buried. The 3rd day He rose again, bringing life and immortality to light. And the Good News of Christ's resurrection for us – especially this day as we mourn the death of our beloved brother in the faith – is that we rise to eternal life in Christ.

Here and there over the years, Alvin and Donna were away from the home. But, that farm was always calling him home. He was a farmer and a rancher, which means that he knew all about planting and harvesting. He understood what Paul meant when he wrote these words,

But in fact 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 (1 Co 15:20-23).

In the spring, a farmer plants his seed into the North Dakota prairie. Patiently and with prayer, he waits for it to grow. Then, the firstfruits of the crop break through the soil. The firstfruits are a most wonderful sign – it means that the crop is growing and the rest of the crop will rise for harvest.

“Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Because Jesus rose on Easter morning, Alvin trusted, rejoiced, and found comfort that He would rise to eternal life in Christ. Alvin

had that hope and that confidence because of his baptism into Christ. On April 8, 1945, he became one with Christ, in death and in life.

And, in that washing of rebirth and regeneration of the Holy Spirit, he became a new creation in Christ. I call that to your attention because Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Martin Luther teaches us in our *Small Catechism* that daily bread "includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body," including a devout husband or wife, devout children, good friends and faithful neighbors.

Donna, God heard your prayer for daily bread, so he sent Alvin to be your devoted husband. You were by his side in every joy and sorrow of earthly life; comforting and strengthening him as only a wife can to her husband. And, as a husband can his wife. He loved you, cherished you, and treasured you as the good gift he knew you to be from God.

Together, they raised three sons: Mike, Mark, and Matthew, Al's pride and joy. About 10 years or so ago, the city of Beulah celebrated her 100th Anniversary. Like every town for her Centennial celebration, there was a history book published. And there is a picture – I believe it's page 54, in fact – of Al sitting between Mike and Mark on the red stools at Beulah Drug, eating a "Mud" ice-cream treat. If it brought you boys joy, you can be rest assured it brought your dad joy.

If you were a stranger around Al, you didn't stay a stranger long. He loved to have a good conversation and could tell a good story with a twinkle in his eye and happy grin on his face.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also," Jesus promised. This past Saturday, our Savior kept that promise to come and take Alvin to be with Him in heaven. He is before the throne of God. He, with all the

company of heaven, sings the praises of the Lamb who was slain so that He may live. For being faithful unto death, He wears the crown of eternal life. And, God has wiped all the tears from his eyes.

Donna, Family, and all who grieve this day, Jesus was Alvin's comfort and consolation all the days of his earthly life. In the days of your tears, Jesus will comfort you with the same comfort that he gave to your dearest husband, father, grandfather, friend, and neighbor, all the days of his life. Jesus will be your strength for the facing of the days ahead. His rod and His staff will always be with you.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.