

+In the Name of Jesus+

Mary Jo, Anne & Aaron, Katie & Wade, Kevin & Cheryl, Dearest Family, and all who mourn this day,

“Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel” (2 Sa 3:38). Those words were first spoken at the death of Abner by King David. Those words of David truly capture our thoughts and emotions when we heard of Kent’s death.

The sting of death has stung, and it hurts. We grieve. We weep. As we worship today with our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend on this side of heaven for the last time, our faith hears the words of Scripture,

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them” (Revelation 14:13).

We can rejoice and give thanks that our departed brother in the faith rests from his labors in the bosom of Jesus and his deeds do indeed follow him.

We remember Kent Larson was a **veteran**. Following in his father’s footsteps, he enlisted in the U. S. Army. He was proud to have worn the uniform. In fact, if you heard Kent talk of his military service, he called it an “honor”. Kent served in Vietnam with the historic 101st Airborne Division. He had every right to be proud. For his meritorious service, he was awarded a Bronze Star, which is our nation’s 4th highest award for courage under fire. And those of you gathered this morning know he never talked about it. Maybe in one sense, he didn’t have to. A humble man like Kent let his deeds talk for themselves.

And, we remember Kent Larson was a **veteran of the cross**.

Kent had that firm faith that comforted him that not even death could separate him from the love of God, because he had Jesus. Kent believed the truth of the Bible, *For by the works of the law no human being will be justified in [God's] sight (Ro 3:20)*. Kent knew that he could not earn eternal life in heaven by his good works. Kent knew that he was a sinner and the wages of his sin was death (Ro 6:23).

But, his faith assured him that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, humbled Himself to be born of a virgin so that He could be the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). The sin of all the world -- Kent's sin, your sin, my sin – was placed on the Lamb Jesus. And as the Lamb to the slaughter, Jesus carried those sins to Calvary's cross where He died for those sins, in our place, as our substitute. Because the Lamb Jesus was sacrificed on that cross for us, we are forgiven all of our sins. The blood of the Lamb Christ washes and cleanses us from all sin.

The Lamb Jesus was crucified, died, and buried. But, death and the grave could not hold the Prince of Life. The Lamb Jesus rose on Easter morning, bringing life and immortality to light. St. Paul says it this way, *Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Co 15:54)*.

Kent could rejoice and say with Paul, *O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting (1 Co 15:55)*. Kent had that joy because on **September 11, 1949**, his parents brought him to the font of Holy Baptism. There, in that blessed washing of rebirth and regeneration of the Holy Spirit, God forgave him all his sins and gave him Christ's victory over death and the devil to be his very own. In that new birth of water and Word, God made Kent a new creation in Christ Jesus.

As we remember Kent, we give thanks not only that God did His work

in Kent, but that He did His work through Kent.

While Kent was serving his tour in Vietnam, he named his jeep "Mary Jo," because waiting for him at home was a beautiful young lady named Mary Jo. It is not good that man would be alone, so God created Mary Jo for Kent, and Kent for Mary Jo. On June 9, 1973, God brought you together to be husband and wife, for the mutual companionship, help, and support that only a wife can give her husband, and a husband his wife. In the good days, and challenging days, your love for one another never grew weary, but God strengthened it and caused your love ever to grow.

The Bible teaches us, *A threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ec 4:12)*. If there was one thing that bound Mary Jo and Kent together it was Christ. Together, they were faithful in their attendance here at Concordia, in the worship services of God's House. Here, Kent came, hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of Christ, and the Savior fed him with His life-giving body and blood. Over the years, when Concordia needed people to serve as officers of the congregation -- many times -- there was Kent saying "Here am I, send me, send me!" Maybe that was because Mary Jo told him had to, and he didn't dare tell her no. But make no mistake about it, we were more than grateful for Kent's service.

Their union was blessed with two lovely daughters, Anne and Katie. How your Dad treasured you rightly, as the most precious gifts from God that you are. Your dad made sure that you were brought to the worship services of God's House, that God's Word was placed in your hands, and your house served the Lord.

And then, the Grandkids came. If Kent and Mary Jo were destined for any vocation in earthly life, it was Grandpa and Grandma. Would you agree! They attended swim meets, sporting events, band concerts, dance

performances, and Grandpa followed with joy and delighted in your success in the hunting season.

Kent just had vigor in life; lived life with energy. He spent years on the softball diamond. He loved to ride his Harley, going on trips with friends. He loved to hunt, because it gave him another reason to be with friends, and the grandkids, when they came along. And I suppose I do not dare forget Men's Night at his garage every Tuesday night solving world problems and enjoying an adult beverage ... or two.

Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread". In our *Little Catechism*, Martin Luther teaches us "daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body," including good friends and faithful neighbors. You are here today because you know that God gave us a good friend and faithful neighbor in our departed brother.

The last days – even the last months -- of his earthly life were indeed accompanied by the miseries and infirmities of life lived in a fragile jar of clay, but they were also a witness to his living faith. At his confirmation on June 7, 1964, Kent confessed his faith and hope in Jesus. As his days grew ever darker, ever thornier, he did not cast aside that hope, but clung in faith to the cross of Christ. Like Job of old, he knew the day would come that he would see God with his own eyes, and his spirit rejoiced. With thirsty ear, he heard with gladness God's Words of eternal life. His faith gave him the assurance that He was a conqueror in Christ, even over death and the grave.

Our departed brother lived in the Lord, and on January 29, 2026, he died in the Lord. The Lord says, "*He who endures to the end shall be saved*" (Mt 24:13). Kent endured to the end; he is most certainly in heaven with Jesus. The Lord says, "*Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the*

crown of life" (Re 2:10). Our departed brother was faithful unto death. The crown of life most certainly has been given to him. In life, he fought the good fight of the faith. In death, he triumphed in his Savior Christ Jesus.

Blessed indeed are the dead who die in the Lord. They rest from their earthly struggle, and, yes indeed, their deeds do follow them.

Mary Jo, Family, and Friends, in the hours and days of your tears, the Good Shepherd's rod and staff will comfort. He will hold you in the palm of your hand. And as He did for His child Kent, God will feed the faith He began at your baptism with His Word and the eating and drinking of His life-giving Body and Blood, to keep you strong in your trust in Jesus in this valley of the shadow of death, until He day He comes to take you to be with Him and your husband, dad, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend, and all the saints who have loved His appearing. And there you will dwell – together -- in the House of the Lord forever, and ever, without end.

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