**Psalm 23:6 April 17, 2021 (Funeral for Pat Schoedel)**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ but especially to you the family and friends of Pat Schoedel,

 Hear again these words of comfort and peace from a beloved Psalm, the Psalm that we hear read at times like these because it speaks so clearly of the love and care that God gives to His children, his beloved flock, these words from Psalm chapter 23 focusing on verse 6, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Goodness and mercy. These are words that would define the things that are given daily by any mother and teacher wouldn’t they? Goodness. Love. Care. Someone who teaches sets out to train and instruct. A mother loves her children, that’s why she teaches them, trains them, and helps them. A teacher loves their students which is why they show them goodness and mercy both in how they go about helping them and teaching them what they need to know. Pat taught and gave goodness in the form of knowledge to those that were put under her care. Goodness, anyone who is blessed to be born in Arcadia and grow up in this area knows goodness in the beauty of God’s creation. In the times spent outside of the classroom or the home where you can connect with God in nature and see the goodness of his providing hand and all that He made. She knew goodness from God in that way. I won’t admit to know her for many of the 89 years that she was blessed with in this life, but you, the family and friends of Pat can remember the goodness she experienced from God, and remember the good times that you shared with her. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” What blessings are there in being the owner and operator of peaceful view pet memorial service? You probably know better than I do, but there was goodness in helping give mercy and peace to others, just as you, the family and friends of Pat, need the same in this time of grief. Goodness. Mercy. Comfort. Peace. She got to work with people, she got to teach people, she got to raise and instruct. She was blessed with goodness.

 But if someone only knew goodness, and was only good, they would have no need for mercy. After all, mercy is undeserved kindness or forgiveness given to someone who has done something wrong, and these words convict us all. Goodness and mercy are given to us in this life. Mercy that we don’t deserve based on anything we have done. Before God, we are children, his erring, sinful, children, and Pat was no different. We can’t ignore that fact. We can’t only look at the goodness, even if she is no longer with us. If anything it’s a time for us to reflect upon ourselves and the wrong that we do, our identity as sinners, and recognize the wages or payment of sin that stares you right in the face on a day like today. The wagers of sin is death. The result of sin is death, we all living in this beautiful and blessed creation also see the effects of sin upon it. And we all will die. We can’t avoid death, we can’t fight it, and it comes unexpectedly.

 And yet, though we live in a sinful world of disease, destruction, and death, we have received mercy. God’s unexpected love for us, shown in many and various ways. Mercy shown in forgiveness. Mercy shown in provision. Mercy shown in love. The love that sent God’s own Son into this world to die in our place. To suffer our fate. To be punished with what we deserve so that we, as this Psalm clearly states, will receive goodness and mercy all the days of our life. And on account of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, the one whose victory over death we emphasize in this Easter season, with the flowers, the white paraments, and the banners, the time of year when we sing emphatic and joyful hymns as we will at the end of our service this morning like “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” on account of his resurrection from the dead, we know, even though Pat is no longer with us, she lives. Because He died, Pat died to sin with Him. Because He lives, Pat lives with Him. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever.” You will sing that truth, the same words that Pat sang so many times in her life, the words that she sang and learned and taught to others and now knows and sees realized in the eternal life she has with Christ, “He lives and grants me daily breath, He lives and I shall conquer death.”

 Pat knew goodness in her life. Pat knew mercy. Pat knew the goodness that the world can give, in the many celebrations, meals, feasts, the good memories that you have of the times she got to spend with you. But now Pat knows a greater joy, one that we can’t possibly imagine. A joy, as we hear described in the words of Isaiah 25, of “a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever.” A feast of joy and celebration and triumph and victory. A goodness we can’t imagine, no matter how rich or well-aged the wine here on Earth may be. No matter how rich the food is that we can prepare, she knows better, and she receives it in joy with her Savior Jesus Christ.

 She is one of the multitudes in front of God’s throne, as we heard about in Revelation chapter 7, “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Mercy. Mercy shown in God’s presence. Mercy shown in the compassion and comfort of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world and provides comfort and peace. The goodness is all she knows now, not the pain of hunger, thirst, disease, affliction, chronic problems that come with growing older that we all must still experience and bear until we are blessed to go where Pat has gone.

 Finally, I bring to you the words of Jesus Christ himself, in comforting his own loved ones, Mary and Martha, at the loss of their brother Lazarus. Words, that we hear repeated often, around Easter, and in our lives as Christians, but words that although repeated, we can’t forget, especially on a day like today. Because it speaks of the reality of what Pat now experiences and the hope we all have, that our sins are forgiven and that our lives are lived in service to the Lord no matter how or where he calls us. “Jesus said to her, 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.” On a day like today, as you share fond memories of Pat, a teacher, a business owner, a mother, a grandmother, a friend. I pray for God’s mercy in your time of grief and mourning. We share tears and feel pain because she is no longer with us, and the time of mourning is unique to each person. We must not discount the time it takes to grieve the loss of this beloved woman. But I bring you this message and these words, so that you do not grieve without hope. But instead to hear the truth, the concrete, sure, and true words of Jesus Christ to bring you goodness and mercy from God all the days of your life, and to remind you that Pat now dwells in the house of the Lord forever. “everyone who lives and believes in Jesus, shall never die.” Her life goes on, on account of Christ. May that bring you peace in the days, the weeks, the months, and years to come as you remember her fondly, and think of the joy she is experiencing in the presence of the God who loves her and still gives her goodness and mercy.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.