

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Dear beloved by God, sheep of Christ's fold, especially you, Barbara,
This life does not always go the way that we would plan it to go.

Glenn had been talking about his upcoming retirement.

He was just about there, things were winding down at work.

A while ago, I had asked him what he planned to do in retirement,

one plan was to come over to church and just to spend more time working on things around here.

He had just joined a Cigar Club about a year ago.

He wanted to continue listening to vinyl records with his Vinyl Night group,

He would keep walking with friends from the YMCA... camping at Pot Holes State Park...

traveling with Barbara around the states and Europe... and just sit at home watching car shows.

At least, those were some of his plans.

But in that first week of April, issues that had been causing him pain and discomfort got diagnosed.

All those plans immediately got put on hold.

It's easy to get lost in all the doctors' visits and blood draws and other appointments,

easy to become anxious about what the future will be...the various treatment options...

... weighing the risks and benefits, desiring to make the wisest decisions – the right decisions.

Decisions that will give the most options in the future...

that will help in the case of remission and that will benefit the survivors...

But in all this hustle and bustle, there is also time to reflect...

You consider what decisions could have been made before... better decisions... wiser decisions...

more meaningful decisions... and what decisions you were happy that were made.

You consider what are the most important things... and you prioritize those.

And as in Glenn and Barbara's case, that means there is more time to talk to each other...

more time talking to the Lord in prayer...

more time to meditate on the Word of Life,

And that is what we have the opportunity to do now.

Let us consider these few verses from our Good Shepherd recorded in John 10, selected verses.

As follows in Jesus' name:

I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ... I am the good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one Shepherd....

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.^(ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

Glenn heard his Shepherd's voice in infancy.

Within a month after he first took a breath in this world,

the Holy Spirit breathed into him the breath of eternal life in holy Baptism.

Jesus knew His little lamb.

There at the baptismal font, the Good Shepherd called him by name, Glenn Alexander,

and made him a member of his flock...

He made him a child in His heavenly Father's family... & an heir with Jesus in His eternal kingdom.

Jesus would continue this relationship with Glenn,

speaking to him each week in the Divine Service through His pastors, 2nd Comm. Expl.

and listening to Glenn as he called upon Him in *every trouble, prayed, praised, and gave thanks*.

Each week Glenn recognized his faults and sins, and he confessed them to be true.

He couldn't... he wouldn't deny them.

And each week he also heard those sins and faults declared forgiven,

washed away in the blood of the **Shepherd to laid down His life for the sheep**.

And by God's grace, Glenn continued to follow Jesus.

Around age 14, Glenn was confirmed in the faith of his baptism,

meaning that he affirmed the faith he was baptized into and confessed that Jesus was his Savior.

He was then admitted to the Lord's Supper

and fed the true body and blood of His crucified and risen Lord.

Glenn continued to receive the Lord's Supper through the weeks, months, years, and decades,
all the way up to the day before he died.

It gave him great relief, especially in the last few months of this earthly life

as he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, knowing that his Lord was with him.

Through that meal – what we also call Holy Communion – he knew that God was at peace with him

as he drank the blood that atoned for his sins and cleansed his soul from all its guilt.

Through that meal he was nourished and given strength for the troublesome days that lay ahead.

...

The last few months of pastoral visits were very important and encouraging for Glenn.

All the things that he had heard through all those years of attending the Divine Service,

all the Christmases – hearing of his Savior being born to him... and for him... –

all the Good Fridays – hearing Jesus cry "**It is finished**", declaring his salvation accomplished –

all the Easters – singing perpetual "Alleluia"s in celebration of the resurrection of his Lord & God –

and all the Sundays in between – hearing his Good Shepherd preach to him

and declare him forgiven and holy –

took on much deeper meaning as the **wages of sin** (that is, **death** ^{Romans 6:23}) ebbed ever closer.

What comfort he had, hearing the same voice of his Shepherd as he had heard from his youth.

He never regretted all that time spent with God's people, at His Savior's feet.

...

I would venture that this wouldn't really be a surprise to most of you.

Glenn wasn't afraid to talk about his Christian faith.

He enjoyed finding that common-bond with fellow Christians,

whether they were sales associates, friends through various social groups,

or complete strangers met during his travels.

...

Just like his good Shepherd, Glenn liked to gather things.

He loved to collect things: neon signs, license plates, traffic signs, pictures, vinyl records,

cars, Hawaiian shirts, and odd and ends.

And he loved to display these collections in various artistic ways.

If you see a picture of his garage over at the reception afterward, you will see what I mean.

But Glenn also loved to collect people... to gather them together.

He could get along with most people pretty easily.

No doubt, it's what made him a good salesman – whether it was selling furniture, chemicals, paint supplies, or absorbent materials for cleaning.

He loved people. He loved being w/ you, learning from you, sharing the same experiences w/you... whether music, a fine cigar, a camping trip, or the Divine Service.

Here at Parkland, it was his idea to get the voters together for a social gathering, a BBQ, before getting to the business of the July voters meeting.

How similar that is to our good Shepherd.

Remember how Jesus told His disciples: **"I have other sheep that are not of this fold,** (speaking of the Jews)

I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice.

So there will be one flock, one Shepherd."?

Jesus did not come to save only one nationality, or one heritage, or one sector of society.

He came to suffer and die for all people, all men and women; young, middle aged, and elder, rich, middle class, and poor.

He came to take on the world's sins, to pay the wages of our sin by His perfect and sacrificial death.

He came to take on your sins, and to gather you into His flock so that you will never perish, but have eternal life.

...

This is what gave Glenn the comfort that he so needed, not only at the end of his life, but throughout it.

He had the promise from his good Shepherd that he would never perish for his sins, because they had been fully paid for by the precious blood of Jesus.

Today, though it is a hard day, we rejoice with Glenn that our Lord never failed to keep His promises.

Nothing – not cancer or even death – could snatch Glenn out of Jesus' hands.

Glenn lives...

His eternal and living soul has been brought by His Savior to his eternal rest.

Glenn now enjoys the company of the heavenly hosts along with all the other sheep who have died in Christ.

True, Glenn's body has died, but it now lays securely in Parkland's cemetery... resting... awaiting the resurrection of the dead on the last day.

& true, it is decaying now, but it will never perish.

On that last day, it will be reunited with Glenn's soul and will rise a glorified and eternal body.

And on that day, he will be joined with all God's sheep: one flock under one Shepherd, not only listening to but even singing the most beautiful music he has ever heard for all eternity.

Thanks be to God.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria