

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Word of Witness Video?</b>	No
<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There are several scripture verses near the end of the sermon.
<b>Other Notes</b>	

### Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

#### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about how to be with someone who is preparing for death, when death is near and after death.

#### ***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because our faith teaches us important ways to encourage and care for people close to and after death.

#### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This is the third sermon in the *Good Grief* series. It has been developed using the sermon series by the same name which was preached at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in 2012.

#### ***What are the next action steps?***

Be present with those near the end of their life.  
Trust God when death is near.  
Comfort those who mourn.

#### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news is that Jesus has prepared a place for us and walks with us on the journey from this life to the next.

#### ***Metadata***

1. Topic(s)
  1. Changing Lives
  2. Sharing Christ
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
  1. 1 Corinthians



6th Sunday of Easter  
Good Grief - Comforting Those Who Mourn  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1DGmgSX>

May 10, 2015  
John 14:1-4, 25-29  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,975  
Video is not available online

2. John
3. Psalms
4. Romans
3. Series
  1. Good Grief - Facing Death with Hope
4. Speaker
  1. Andrew Conard
5. Tags
  1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, United Methodist, United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, El Dorado, Kansas, Great Plains Annual Conference, grief, death, dying, care, comfort

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## John 14:1-4, 25-29, CEB

1 “Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. 2 My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? 3 When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. 4 You know the way to the place I’m going.”

25 “I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. 26 The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you. 27 “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don’t be troubled or afraid. 28 You have heard me tell you, ‘I’m going away and returning to you.’ If you loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than me. 29 I have told you before it happens so that when it happens you will believe.

### Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

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## Moments at the End of Life

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

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\*\*\* Start Sermon Timer \*\*\*  
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### Grandma Alice and Grandma Fieser

My Grandma Alice and Grandma Fieser died several years ago, a few years apart. They were from my dad and mom’s side of the family respectively. I was in seminary and then living in Kansas City when they died. For each one, I can clearly picture one of the last conversations that I had with them.

My Grandma Alice was living in a care home in Ellinwood, Kansas. I was back home on break from seminary and we knew that she was not doing very well. I knew that I would be flying back to Washington, DC in a few days and would not be able to return at a moment’s notice if death became imminent. I remember the quiet of the room, holding hands, conversation - mostly one way, and the opportunity to pray together.

I remember visiting my Grandma Fieser in the hospital in Liberal, KS near the end of her life. My brother, sister and a few other family members were there at the same time. She was getting help breathing. I remember the faces of my family around the bed and the opportunity to pray together as well.

## Your Story

What do you remember about the final weeks, days or moments that you have had with a loved one before they died?

Do you remember a conversation? A place? An expression?

It may be for you, that you did not know that it was going to be the last conversation. Death can come suddenly and unexpectedly at times. However, there are times when we know that death is approaching and you might know that this will be the last time you will share a conversation.

What do you say?

How do you care for people with a terminal illness?

What is helpful for someone facing their own death?

How do we comfort our friends who have just lost a loved one?

## Sermon Outline

There will be a time in each of our lives when we will face the death of a loved one. Today, we will consider what our faith has to offer at particular times connected with death and how we might be helpful to family members and friends.

First, we will consider preparing for the death of those that we love. Many times, we can anticipate when death might occur because of a diagnosis or the observations and expertise of a medical team. What is helpful during this time? What do you say to someone that knows they only have a few months to live?

Next we will consider the moment of death. There may be a time when it is certain that death is imminent. What is helpful in the final days or hours of a loved one's life on this earth?

Finally, what about after death? How do we connect with family and friends who have experienced the death of a loved one days, months, even years after that death has occurred?

## Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

## **Prayer**

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

## **Transition**

Let's begin with preparation for death.

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## **Preparing for Death**

### **Be Present**

When someone has received a terminal diagnosis or you know that the end of their life is approaching, one of the most important things to do is commit to be present with them.

Do not stop connecting with people or assume that they don't want to carry on as close to normal activity as they are able. When nearing the end of life, many people want to keep connections with friends and family. However, depending on the situation and what type of medical care they are receiving, it may mean that your connection will look different.

For example, if you have been used to sharing a two or three hour conversations with someone once a week or every other day. This may not be possible. You can still stop by to share a conversation or prayer.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### ***You***

Pay attention to any unfinished business which may be helpful for the person who is dying. Consider your own connection with them.

What do you want to make sure that they know?

Is there a conflict that you need to resolve?

Do you offer or ask for forgiveness?

This is the time to do it.

#### ***Dying Person***

Ask the person who is dying if they are aware of any unfinished business which they may have. You might consider asking these same questions

Is there someone that you want to hear from?

Is there a situation which needs resolution?

This is the time to do it. You may be able to help facilitate the conversation or get them connected with the person to whom they need to talk.

***Example: Share with Children***

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to walk with someone through the last months of their life. Her medical condition was such that death was very certain with the next few months. However, she was able to continue her life in much the same way.

In one of the conversations which I shared with her, she expressed regret about a series of events that had happened with her children many years ago. She indicated a desire to clear the air and have a conversation with them about it.

I encouraged her to say something.

Now was the time to do it.

Clear the air and know that you have told the truth.

Yet, she was not certain that she wanted to say something after the years that had passed. You can't have a conversation for someone.

Some weeks later, she died. I don't know if she shared with her children.

***Summary***

When someone is dying, be present with them. Keep connected. Know that the way that interactions occur may need to change.

Complete any unfinished business.

***Transition***

Next, let's consider what is helpful when death is near.

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**When Death is Near**

There are two key themes to share with someone who is nearing death:

God is With Us to the End

God Promises Us Eternal Life

We see each of these in the scripture passage for today from John 14.

**John 14 - Jesus with his Disciples**

The words of Jesus from the scripture passage which was read a few moments ago are shared at the last supper. This is the night before Jesus will be crucified. The disciples don't really get it, yet Jesus knows. There are some key areas of this scripture, which may be helpful for us when sharing a conversation with someone who is nearing death.

***"Trust in God. Trust also in me."***

Trust in God. Trust in Jesus.

This is important for every time in our life and can be particularly meaningful when death is near. It may be helpful for you. It is certainly meaningful for the person who is nearing the end of their life. You might share this verse as an encouragement and reminder for yourself.



***“I’m going to prepare a place for you”***

Jesus has prepared a place for us. We have the opportunity to live as a disciple of Jesus on this earth and when our life on this earth is complete we may live with Jesus forever. These are connected. When we trust in Jesus, we know that Jesus tells us that he has prepared a place for us.

***“I will return and take you to be with me...”***

Jesus promises to return and take us with him. Sometimes when people are nearing the end of their life, they will talk about getting ready for a journey. They need to pack their bags or are getting ready to go. It may not make sense on this world – they may not have been able to get out of bed for days or weeks. Yet, it makes sense in a spiritual sense, they are preparing to go from this life to the next. This is the journey that Jesus promises to take with those who trust in him.

***“Don’t be troubled or afraid”***

Again, this is true for you and the person that is nearing death. You don’t have to be afraid of being with someone in their final days or moments. Jesus’ goes with you.

**God is With Us to the End**

***Psalm 23, NIV***

Another scripture passage which is helpful to remind people that God is with us to the end is Psalm 23:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”<sup>1</sup>

**God Promises Us Eternal Life**

The scripture from John 14 is helpful to remind people that God promises us eternal life. You might also consider sharing the words from 1 Corinthians 15:

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 23, NIV.

### **1 Corinthians 15:51-57, NIV**

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Romans 8:35, 37-39, NIV**

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>3</sup>

### **Transition**

Remember and remind your loved one:

God is With Us to the End

God Promises Us Eternal Life

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## **After Death**

After death, remember to be present with those who have lost a loved one. I remind those who gather at every funeral service at which I officiate to continue to share stories about the person that has died.

It is likely that you know stories and have memories that would be helpful to share with others. When we tell stories, it helps keep the memory alive. It can be helpful as a comfort to those closed to the deceased.

In the days, weeks and months ahead, you will need to care for and comfort each other and the family. If you feel like giving someone a call, do that. If you have a story that you want to share about the deceased, I encourage you to do that as well.

Watch over and care for one another.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, NIV.

<sup>3</sup> Romans 8:35-37-39, NIV.

## Conclusion

### Good News

The good news is that Jesus has prepared a place for us and walks with us on the journey from this life to the next.

### Call to Action

Be present with those near the end of their life.  
Trust God when death is near.  
Comfort those who mourn.

### Invitation

Don't be afraid of death or of spending time with those who are near to the end of their life. God's love and grace are stronger than death. We can trust God when preparing for death, when death is near and when we comfort those who mourn.

Trust God today and know that Jesus has prepared a place for you.

### Closing Prayer

[Text here]  
Amen.

	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
Sermon Time		