

An enduring memory of Ginny is laughter. To be with Ginny was to enjoy life, to have fun, to know you were loved.

There is a time, the prophets tell us, for everything under the sun. To be born and to die. To laugh and to cry. To mourn and to dance. A beginning and an end. The end of this physical life is not the end of everything though.

We Episcopalians believe that our time together today in this gathered community to celebrate Ginny's life is an important part of our relationship with each other, including the one whose life we celebrate today. Although Ginny is no longer with us in a physical body, she is very much with us in spirit and in our memories of times spent with her. She lives on through our remembrances and the stories we have and we should continue to share about our times with her.

The belief that Ginny lives on does not mean we should not grieve, we should not cry. We will no longer have those times with her over a glass of wine, over a book discussion or a meal, or all the many ways in which Ginny was a part of your life. Keep her alive by telling others what Ginny meant to you. Do not be afraid to speak her name. She is still with us in spirit.

Ginny is an example of a "can do" attitude. She got her college degree at about age 60! That takes grit and gumption to put yourself into a classroom of 18-to-22 year olds. That takes perseverance. I'm sure Ginny got some questions from well-meaning people about "why now" or "what will it get you; you're retired!" Maybe, for Ginny, it was simply a goal she set for herself and when the time was right, she pursued and obtained that goal. Maybe she wanted to be an example to others that it is never too late to make your dream a reality.

The list of programs and organizations that Ginny was active in especially during her retirement is impressive. They showcase her care for others through counseling, helping people learn to read, encouraging voting and helping to bring meals to shut-ins among others. She used the gifts and talents that God had given her to better herself and to help others grow into and live out their own gifts and talents. Ginny was faithful to her faith in this and many other ways.

With all her outside activities, Ginny also was close to her 4 children. She regularly traveled to visit them. She was fond of saying “I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again. It was a lucky day in our lives when the Ly girls came into our lives.” An example of open and welcoming hospitality which is so much a part of our Biblical mandate to welcome others. One of the prayers in the Book of Common Prayer is for the care of children:

Almighty God, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In our conversations with Ginny whenever we visited Wellbrooke, she always had something new and positive to say about her grandchildren (and her children too!). You, her children and grandchildren, were such an integral part of her life and you and she are to be commended for that relationship. Our prayers for the family now include that you will find ways to be together in this new phase of your lives without Ginny’s physical presence. Don’t let her death cause you to drift apart. Families are an important part of our culture and our traditions.

Ginny knew that none of us has life in ourselves. She knew, through her faith, that we are bound together in community and we are alive in our faith. A story was told

of wheeling her around Wellbrooke and asking if she was still praying. The response was “you bet I am!” Maybe now at the end of life even more than in times earlier. Ginny knew that upon death she would be reunited with those whom she loved who have gone ahead of her. May that bring you, her family, some peace, even as you grieve. Ginny is waiting for you when it is your turn to “shuffle off this mortal coil” from Hamlet’s soliloquy.

Ginny is now at rest, in peace and fully restored. No torment shall ever touch her again. No lapses of memory or pain of infection. She has been found worthy of God’s love, in life and in death.

One of Ginny’s favorite hymns was “Just a closer walk with thee”<sup>1</sup> which Jerilyn will play at the postlude. The lyrics and music tell us a lot about Ginny. First, no somber music, please. And if you can jazz it up a bit, that’s great. And a belief that there is a personal relationship between Ginny and God. An acknowledgment that “I am weak but thou art strong” and “I’ll be satisfied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.” She knew that even though our world can be full of snares, and as humans we can too often fail, that Jesus will be with us at our said when we have a closer walk with Thee. The final verse sums up her faith: “When my feeble life is o’er, Time for me will be no more; Guide me gently, safely o’er; To the kingdom shore, to thy shore. Just a closer walk with thee, Grant it Jesus is my plea; Daily walking close to thee, Let it be, Lord, let it be.” **Amen.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Lift Every Voice and Sing, 72.