

Discover More: Together

Small Group Study

Together in Community

Check in with one another.

- + If there is a new person, welcome them and introduce group members.
- + (High) Share something good or eventful that you give thanks and praise for?
- + (Low) What has been a challenge or a prayer concern for you?

Discover More about the Message

Message Introduction: This year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

Reflect on the message you heard in person or on-line.

- + What is something you heard that was interesting or engaging?
- + Is there anything that raised a question or needed more explanation?

Discover Scripture and Life

+ Read the scripture.

Revelation 21:1-6a

¹I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ^{6a}Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

Gospel: John 11:32-44

³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he

loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

- + Did you experience a loss during COVID where the gathering for a funeral was changed? What happened? What effect did that have on you or others?
- + Why do you think Jesus wept?
- + Last week, Jesus said, the truth will make you free. This week, Jesus says, “Unbind him. There is the physical act of unbinding, but also the emotional/spiritual act of unbinding. How does the Gospel of Jesus unbind

you? How does forgiveness unbind you?
Or the promises of God unbind you?

- + What questions do you have about heaven and the promise of eternal life?

Together for the Coming Week

- + What did you take away from the message? What will stay with you this week?
- + As you look to the coming week, what is one word that summarizes how you are feeling.
- + Do you have any prayer concern that you would like to share? What is it?
- + Close in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Five Minutes with God

Introduction. Traditionally, people of faith have seen tears as an expression of strength not weakness. Tears are a gift of "soul medicine" that opens us up to our deepest griefs and greatest joys. In sorrow, tears cleanse and heal us as we grieve. Tears of rejoicing celebrate God's grace and goodness in our lives. In both sorrow and joy, tears remind us of God's nearness in all of life.

Spiritual Practice. Hold a tissue or handkerchief as a symbol of a sorrow or loss in your life or in the life of someone you care about. Talk to God about this sadness. Be honest about it without being apologetic or dismissive of how you feel. Maybe tears will come; maybe they won't. Either way is okay. The important thing is to be honest in your grief so that healing can eventually come. Repeat this practice whenever you need to express your sorrow. Feel free to use this practice to celebrate your joys as well by talking to God about your happiness. Whether in sadness and joy, know that God is with you in both.



First Lutheran
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