This Sermon is going to be as short or as long as the Spirit leads us. What I mean by that is I am going to speak for short period of time and then I am going to turn it over to you, and you will understand more in several minutes.

Here we are gathered today in the tradition of our faith to celebrate those who have gone on before us, and now live in glory with Christ forever and ever for all eternity whom we will meet once again when we are called home.

This day is about remembering, transitioning, and praising. It is a day of remembering because we remember the ones who we have lost. The ones we have and maybe still are grieving and mourning. Today we remember the lives of our loved ones 1. Rayford Stuckey 2. Melissa Turner\*3. Marshall Sizemore

4. Noah White 5. Phil Lebarron 6. Howard Thayer 7. Ruth Thayer 8. Peter Thayer

9. Earl Meiers 10. Lillian Meiers 11. Ann Hearne 12. William David Lindsey

13. Michael Witte\* 14. Barbara Curry 15. Anthony Braunstein 16. James Love

17. Samuel “Sam” Dodd Ellisor\* 18. Lester Blohm 19. Irma Blohm

20. Ethel Waldvogel 21. Kenneth Waldvogel 22. Rose Waldvogel 23. Melvin Blohm

24. Pat Nadeau 25. Libbie Koether\* 26. Ed Scully\* 27. Mitchell Sansbury\*

28. Doug Glenn 29. Albert Kane\* 30. Pat Kale\* 31. Tommy Moore\*

32. Edward Fromm\* 33. Elaine Thomas 34. EW Thomas 35. Arthur Fromm

36. Alberta Fromm 37. David Thomas 38. Larry Joe Robbins 39. Marion Jordan Jr

40. James (Mack) Litaker 41. Joseph Kubinec 42. Anne Kubinec

43. Marlene Kubinec and Grandpa Junior.

We remember them and we grieve them because we love them, and I use that present tense purposefully because we never stop loving those who move on to the other side of eternity. We grieve them because when we love we open ourselves up to the potential for pain, because that person to me, becomes a part of us. They imprint on our lives, they touch us in ways we could not have imagined, they leave lasting memories that we carry with us all the days of our lives, and when we lost them it was as if we lost a part of ourselves, the part that we invested in them and they took with them to heaven. And we know that they are there because of God’s promises and one of which is in our reading from Daniel.

Promises are amazing in that they don’t just describe things, they have the capacity actually to create the reality they name. For example, Alice promises to play a board game after she gets home from work and the pieces are out ready to play when she walks through the door. Promises come as a word beyond us and set things in motion. Which is why they’re so important. When stuck in grief or loss, there is little capacity to imagine, let alone move toward a future not dominated by these difficult realities. And so we hold onto the promises of God like the one in Daniel where we are told that the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever and ever. And we trust that in Christ our loved ones have received their inheritance with him as a beloved child of God.

Martin Luther, in the middle of his reforms, once took up the matter of the “marks of the church” – preaching, sacraments, and all that. He left it pretty much unchanged, but added one “mark” – struggle. He figured that where there is faith there is also always struggle. Especially when we take up the call of Christ to love one another.

I honestly believe that we have these promises in scripture because God sees us. God sees our pain. God sees our hurt. God sees our stress. God sees the pits in our stomachs. God sees the looks on our faces. God sees the downward spirals we can go through after loss, the depression, and the anxiety, God sees the tears, and God responds with a promise that our loved ones will be resurrected, and that we will see them again, and we will be with them worshipping the lamb for all eternity.

And that is why today is a day of transition and praise because we recognize that our loved ones are not gone forever, they are in the arms of Christ and we praise Him who is worthy to be praised for opening to us eternal life by his death and resurrection. The one who meets us at the altar every Sunday and brings with him our loved ones to the banquet that He hosts. That’s why you see the butterflies a symbol of resurrection to remind is of this truth.

And so as we prepare for Holy Communion this morning, I want you to think about your loved ones who await you and I want to open up this space to you who feel so moved to share a story of a loved one you remember today.