

**MAY 10, 2020**

**A PLACE FOR US**

**JOHN 14:1-6**

This is one of the most heard and beloved Bible passages in the world. It is read at 2/3 of all funerals. I have pastored over 700 funerals in my career. Many a funeral was planned by the person dying and I would take notes. Two passages were the favorites: Psalm 23 and John 14:1-6. Many would not remember the John passage by book or chapter or verse, instead they would say "The one about the Father's house and that Jesus goes to prepare a place for you." This passage would often open up the dying as to what they expected or wanted in Heaven. They would talk about their room. They would talk about what their jobs would be in Heaven. They would talk about the questions they would ask Jesus. I would ask them who they wanted to see in Heaven. It was never the rich and famous. It was Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, sister, brother, friend.

The corona virus reminds us that death can take any and all at any time. God does not spare us from death. It is the stark reality of life. We die! What then? That is the hope we have in Jesus who promises to have a place for us. I do not want to die yet but I will and when I do, Jesus take me to your place.

Prayer: Dear Lord, bring us all in time to our heavenly places. May we enjoy each other and God forever and ever. Amen.

Notes from the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA:

She has said that the Bishops of the ELCA are not ready to reopen our churches. She goes on, saying that many church goers are elderly, which puts them at risk and nearly 42% of ELCA clergy are at least 60 years old. In Christian understanding, when we are baptized, we become members of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is right now Covid-19 positive. So inviting more of the body of Christ to put itself in harm's way with the possibility of becoming infected or taking the infection home to someone else, spreading it further, that is just not faithful.

And there are other precautions to keep in mind. Churches have to decide, for example, whether to allow singing, which could spread the virus even farther than six feet. Church leaders will also need to be diligent about cleaning and ventilation in their buildings. We will certainly not be having potlucks any time soon.