

A Celebration of Life

Gene F. Thomas



February 17, 1927 - October 3, 2021

October 14, 2021 – 9:30 AM
Calvary Lutheran Church
Richland Hills, TX

Call to Worship

Please stand and face the rear of the sanctuary.

A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass,

and all its beauty is like the
flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows
upon it;

Surely the people is grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand
for ever.

Isaiah 40: 6-7

P Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Placement of the Pall

P When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Lift High the Cross



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till



all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827-1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874-1956. Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875-1947. Text and music © 1974 Hope Publishing Company.

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you**

Prayer of the Day

P O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today our brother Gene. We thank you for giving him to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth. In your boundless compassion, console all who mourn. Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

Psalm 121 – spoken in unison

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
- ² My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
- ⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
- ⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
- ⁸ the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Remembrances of Gene

Erik Thomas, Grandson
Scott Thomas, Grandson
Michael Thomas, Son

On Eagle's Wings

1 You who dwell in the shel - ter of the Lord, who a -
bide in his shad - ow for life, say to the Lord: "My
ref - uge, my rock in whom I trust!"
Refrain
And he will raise you up on ea - gle's wings,

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first three staves correspond to the main verses of the song, and the fourth staff is labeled 'Refrain'. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

bear you on the breath on dawn, make you to shine like the
 sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.

To stanzas (last time to coda)

2 The snare of the fowl-er will nev - er cap-ture you, and
 fam-ine will bring you no fear; un - der his wings your
 ref - uge, his faith - ful - ness your shield.

Refrain

3 You need not fear the ter - ror of the night, nor the
 ar-row that flies by day; though thou - sands fall a -
 bout you, near you it shall not come.

Refrain

4 For to his an - gels he's giv - en a com-mand to
 guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will
 bear you up, lest you dash your foot a-gainst a stone.

Refrain

Coda
 And hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.

Old Testament Reading

Job 19:23-27a

²³O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!
²⁴O that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved on a rock forever!
²⁵For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
²⁶and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

New Testament Reading

Romans 5:1-8

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. ⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 14th chapter

C **Glory to you, O Lord**

¹Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going.

How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

P The Gospel of our Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

The Homily

The Reverend Phillip Heinze

I Love to Tell the Story



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

The Creed

P We confess the faith of the church throughout the ages, the faith Jesus lived and the faith in which he died.

C **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

The Prayers

P Almighty God, in holy baptism you have knit your chosen people together into one communion of saints in the body of Christ. Give to your whole church in heaven and on earth your light and your peace. God of mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to share the new life in Christ. God of mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Give courage and faith to all who mourn, and a sure and certain hope in your loving care, that, casting all their sorrow on you, they may have strength for the days ahead. God of mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that, where this world groans in grief and pain, your Holy Spirit may lead us to bear witness to your light and life. God of mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P God of all grace, we give you thanks because by his death our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death and by his resurrection he opened the

kingdom of heaven to all believers. Make us certain that because he lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

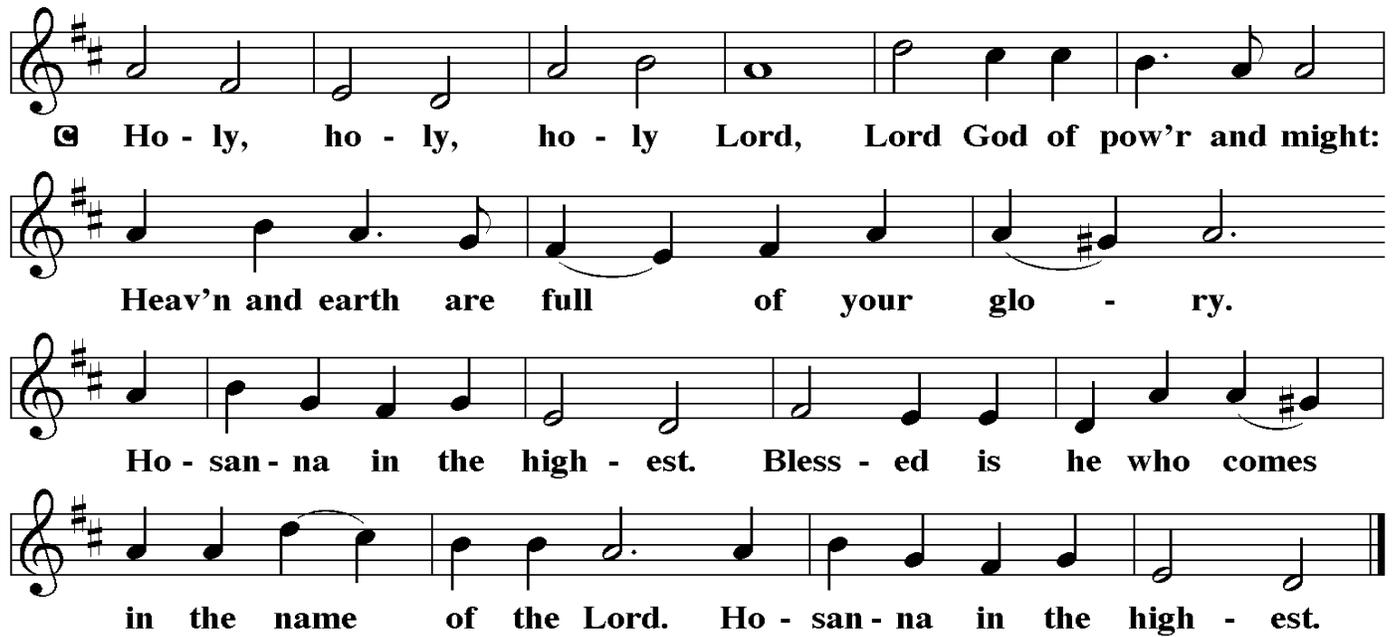
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
who rose from the dead, and in whom our hope of resurrection dawns.
The sting of death has been removed by the glorious promise of his risen life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Acclamation



We pro-claim your death, Lord; we cel - e - brate your ris - ing; we
break this bread and share this cup un - til you come a - gain.

Eucharistic Prayer

P Remember us in your kingdom, O Lord, and teach us to pray.

C **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**

Distribution of Holy Communion

The Post Communion Blessing

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

C **Amen.**

The Commendation

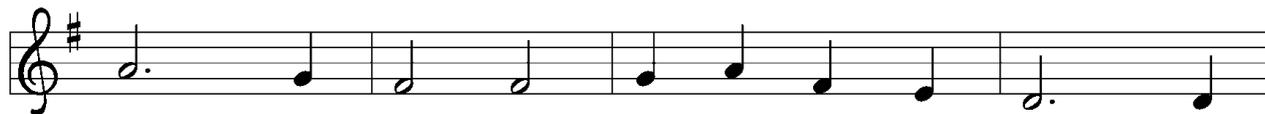
P Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant, Gene. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

C **Into paradise may the angels lead you. At your coming may the martyrs receive you and bring you into the holy city Jerusalem. May a choir of angels welcome you, and, where Lazarus is poor no more, may you have everlasting rest.**

For All the Saints



1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who
 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might; thou,
Stanzas 3-5 below.
 6 But then there breaks a yet more glorious day: the
 7 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through

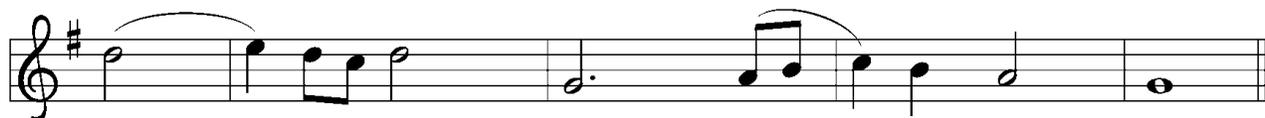


thee by faith before the world confessed, thy
 Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight; ..
 saints triumphant rise in bright array; the
 gates of pearl streams in the countless host, ..



name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
 thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.

King of glory passes on his way.
 singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



3 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine, we feebly struggle,
 4 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the
 5 The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful



they in glory shine; yet all are one in thee, for all are
 distant triumph song, and hearts are brave again and arms are
 servants cometh rest; . . . sweet is the calm of paradise the



thine. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 strong.
 blest.

✘ ✘ ✘

The Reverend Phillip Heinze
The Reverend Kyle Rouze
Viktor Andersson, organ/piano
Chris Thomas, lector

✘ ✘ ✘

Pall Bearers

Steve Kamprath
Diana Williams
Scott Thomas

Erik Thomas
Teresa Lewis
Christopher Thomas

Memorials may be made in Gene's memory to Calvary Lutheran Church
Internship fund to support the pastoral intern ministry at Calvary.

Life History

Gene Frederick Thomas was born in Columbus, Ohio on February 17, 1927 and was raised by his mother, Ruth [née: Wilbarger] and step-father John Ryland. Gene was baptized, and subsequently confirmed his Christian faith at Linden Lutheran Church. Raised in the suburb of Linden, he attended McKinley High School and was a member of the track team. Armed with a strong sense of community, faith, and civic duty; he served his country by enlisting in the United States Army in June 1945 until his honorable discharge in November 1946.

While studying Business Administration at Bliss College in Columbus, Gene met the love of his life Audrey Susan Ball. The two were married on July 23, 1949 in Columbus, Ohio, and gave birth to their only child, Michael. In 1955, the young family moved to Detroit, Michigan where Gene accepted a position with Fruehauf Trailer Corporation. As Finance Manager, his responsibilities grew with the company over the next 17 years, even international work which involved some travel to their plant

in Mexico City. Gene continued his active and social nature, pitching for the company's softball team and enjoying golf outings.

As members of Christ Lutheran Church in the suburb of Warren, the family's faith continued to deepen, and Gene served as church council president and worship assistant on Sunday mornings. In 1979, Gene and Susan relocated to Nashville, TN where he worked with Transport Acceptance Company before transferring to Jacksonville, FL. The loving couple found their ultimate home in 1981 when they moved to North Richland Hills, Texas. Gene earned his nickname "the hammer," while working with Hobbs Trailer Corporation in the repossession area until his retirement in 1992.

Even in retirement, Gene served others and worked to brighten the lives of those around him, delivering flowers for Davis Floral Designs and working as an election judge for Tarrant County. He took pride in giving tours of the new Texas Rangers Stadium. Rooted in their faith and community, he and Susan were members of Calvary Lutheran Church in Richland Hills, where he served as a member of the internship committee and two terms as church council president. Gene was a devoted member of the Mosiah Shriners International. For over 50 years, he was involved as a Mason of the A&A Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of Fort Worth, Texas and a Master Mason of the Grand Lodge of Texas, Richland Hills.

Gene loved to support local restaurants and was a regular at Babe's and Dunston's, where the staff all knew him by name. He enjoyed traveling, hosting friends and family, and beating his grandsons in cards, particularly Euchre.

Gene is survived by his son Michael Thomas and daughter-in-law Jacqueline of Fremont, NE; grandsons Christopher, Scott, and Erik, as well as his great-granddaughter Genesis-Dolce. Additionally, nieces Diane (and Chuck) Ailes of Roseville, CA; Nancy (and Jack) Paddon of Newcastle, CA and numerous grandnieces and nephews. Gene was preceded in death by his wife Susan; parents Ruth and John; brother-in-law, Webb Ball and wife, Gloria.

Please direct any memorials to Calvary Lutheran Church Internship Fund.

Gene leaves behind a lasting and profound impact on his community and family, and now receives his promised reward of everlasting peace in the presence of his Lord.