

Burial Office
I *Corinthians* 15/*Revelation* 21
St. Paul's Church, Halifax
3 July 2007

Funeral Homily--Mrs. Gertrude (Trudie) Lovett

~Paul H. Friesen~

We are gathered here this beautiful July morning to say farewell to Trudie Lovett, and to affirm her Christian hope, and ours, in the Gospel promise of the Resurrection. This promise is the reason for the church's use of the white of Easter. This promise is the reason for blooming flowers in our midst, the sign of new birth that has sprung from the cold earth of a Nova Scotia winter.

As her family put it, so we remember her: 'Trudie spent her life dedicated to her husband, her children, her church, her friends and her garden.' As for St. Paul's, she will be remembered not only as a faithful worshipper of our Lord, but as a member of the Chancel Guild that has over the centuries aided the worship of this ancient congregation. For all of this we give thanks.

Trudie lived a very long life, as we all know. She was born four years after the death of Queen Victoria and has just died, deep in the era of the world-wide web. She was able to communicate directly with all dear to her for most of her life. And when her words failed her late in life, she communed with the world in other ways. When I celebrated the Eucharist with her and another St. Paul's member in her apartment some time after her 100th birthday it was obvious that the bread and wine were recalling to her something very deep. For it was always right to assume that Trudie was truly alive and that her experience was very real. And it always is right to assume the same as we spend time in the company of those whose words we cannot hear, but whose experience is the same as every one of us, created in God's image.

But now Trudie has passed another threshold, and is just days into her new life beyond the grave. We might say that she is a child again, learning the new ways of a new land.

We know so little about what will happens to us at the death of our bodies, so little about the life of those we love as they begin living beyond the grave. We speak in metaphors, as we always do when it comes to the truth of the greatest things, like love, and faithfulness, and generosity. The deepest logic is needed for the deepest things—and that requires the logic of stories and the logic of poetic images. Here the logic of politics and philosophical arguments fail, trapped in their own little worlds, far too small to explain these great things.

It is not surprising that the greatest of the Apostles, St. Paul, used images from the garden and from farmers' fields to talk about the resurrection of Jesus

Christ and the resurrection of the human race. As a dry, cracked seed that falls into the hard soil of November and rises green and flowers in May, so is the human movement through death into new life. And so we must confess that in the Christian faith both our earthly and heavenly lives are stages of one complete journey, one pilgrimage, something that the frantic distractions of modern life make us forget.

And in the lesson from the book of *The Revelation*, the exiled St. John travels in heavenly visions to the resurrection of the human race at the end of time. 'And he that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new".' St. John uses the language of a real place, a city like our own. He uses the language of actual people whose tears will be dried by a real God, our father, whose face we shall see as we see each other's today. We commit Trudie's ashes to the grave only because we believe that she journeys beyond it to where we shall join her, and greet her.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. *Amen.*