



THE CHURCH OF THE
ADVENT

Read: Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 42:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; John 11:21-27

Summary: This is the final week in our series entitled “This Is My Body.” This week Pastor Tommy focused on the hope of our resurrection bodies. According to Paul, one of the problems with death is its “sting.” This sting is a haunting fear and uncertainty about our eventual death that lurks in the shadow of our daily life. Death’s sting fills us with disdain for our bodies which regularly remind us of our inescapable mortality. People try various ways to cope with this sting but in the end, we cannot escape it.

Paul, however, believes we can face death with confidence and hope because our bodies will be raised to new life in Christ. Our mortal bodies will be like seeds, sown in death and raised to our resurrection bodies. While our resurrected bodies will be radically transformed, there will also be continuity with the bodies we have now. Therefore, our earthly lives and work matter, for they will in some way continue into eternity.

Christmas is the proof of this resurrection hope. The Word put on flesh, was born of Mary, and was crucified for our sake. Yet he rose again, defeating death itself. Christ’s new humanity removes the sting of death and assures us of our coming bodily resurrection. Christmas is therefore the simultaneous celebration of Christ’s Incarnation and his ultimate victory over death.

- Questions:**
1. We used the Book of Common Prayer’s funeral liturgy for this Sunday’s worship. Reflect on how you experienced this service. What emotions did it stir? How did it give words to your own experience of mortality?
 2. How has the sting of death – the haunting fear of our mortality – manifested itself in your life? How have you sought to cope with it?
 3. Pastor Tommy used several analogies to describe our death as well as the transformation and continuity of our resurrection bodies: a sown seed, a cocoon, a doorway. Reflect on how these images help us to reorient our posture towards death and give us the confidence needed fully live now.
 4. How does Christ’s Incarnation remove the sting of death? Reflect on all of the readings and discuss how the resurrection is central to our faith.
 5. How can we communally embody, practice, and proclaim this resurrection hope in a world that compulsively seeks to avoid or master death?

Prayer: Pray that God would expose the various ways that we try to avoid our mortality and that he would strengthen our confidence and hope in the resurrection. For those that are mourning the death of loved ones, pray that he would comfort you and your families in the midst of your grief.

Do: Use the remaining few days of Advent to reflect on the connections between Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection. Celebrate the coming redemption of our bodies as you celebrate Christmas. Reflect also on this series as a whole and the centrality of our embodiment for our walk with Christ.