

# Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church (USA)

Changing Lives and  
Growing In God's Love

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Minister of Word and Sacrament

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## Memorial Day

**Dear Readers,**

I remember very clearly being at the cemetery when my grandmother died. A decade has passed now. I remember grandma and the cemetery when Memorial Day comes along because she was always so insistent about making sure that the urns at the graves were prepared with flowers for Memorial Day.

As a child I was always drafted into service to help with the painting of the urn, the planting of the flowers, and the carrying of water in order to water those flowers. In retrospect, I do not think that Grandma did much work out there—she was the boss and I was the laborer. In the picture I have of her stone from a few years ago, the flowers are not looking very good—it was mid August, however, after the heat has consumed most blossoming flowers. I'm sure there are new flowers this weekend and the urn has been sprayed with bright white paint.



The day of Grandma J's funeral a decade ago I remember clearly the experience of the cemetery. It was not that the committal was outstanding or even difficult. I remember that my mother had this look of strength and belief in her eyes that day. I also remember that my niece was standing in front of her and mom had her arms draped over my niece's shoulders. My older brother asked, "How are you doing so well?" And my mom responded, "Because I have these." She was referring, of course, to her grandchildren. I saw the generations that day. I saw a bigger perspective.

I remember too as part of that bigger perspective and that picture of the generations that day, there was Aunt Evie. Aunt Evie looked over the landscape and she took my arm and she said, "One day we will all be here." Now what I cannot convey was the tone in her voice when she spoke those words. She was not saying it with a sense of impending doom. She said it rather,



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with a sense of hopefulness. There was lift and even comfort in her tone. "One day we will all be here."

Those words have stuck with me. Not because they pointed to the cemetery, but because they pointed beyond it. I don't know what she fully intended, but by the hopeful tone in her voice I believe those words pointed beyond the grave and to the fullness of life that comes for us all as we pass from this present moment into the reality of that which is to come. I am convinced that while cemeteries make great memorials and serve a function, there is really nothing there. We are pointed to a reality that is beyond; we are pointed to a life that does not cease even though our bodies do.

Let us look toward that shore when God sweeps us into the everlasting arms. One day we will all be there!

In the meantime, I do give thanks for those who walk upon the earth and those who walked upon the earth who have fought and toiled and worked, and died too, for our freedom. Soldiers, thinkers, pioneers, teachers, tellers of the faith...they have been formative in my life and yours. Let us praise God for the gift of their lives and their ministry to us and this world!

Blessings,  
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