

**Funeral of Evelyn Linda Kuchel – 11.6.2019 – WE HAVE AN ETERNAL HOME IN HEAVEN –
2 Corinthians 5.1-10**

Evelyn was dedicated to God and to Christ Church. I first met her in Christ Church. She always sat up the front on my right in her wheelchair. Then she moved to Oak Field nursing home in Mt Barker. I took services there every month, and I met her there, in her wheelchair every month. She never missed worship. I'd walk into her room to be greeted with a big smile and the warm greeting: Oh Pastor! I was there on Sunday, and I missed her. I really miss this faithful, Godly, smiling woman. And if I miss her, then you, her family and friends will miss her even more. But today is not a day to be too sad. Evelyn has left us, but she has not left her Lord. And I have three pieces of Good News for you, about Evelyn and her Lord.

THIS IS NOT OUR PERMANENT HOME. St Paul calls the body we live in on earth **our earthly tent**. A tent is not a permanent dwelling. It's something you live in when you have a short holiday or maybe something you live in while you wait for your permanent home to be built. It can be fun living in a tent for a while. But if you live in it for too long you really long for a permanent dwelling with all the conveniences. Evelyn lived in her earthly tent for 92 years. That's a long time, especially when adversity strikes, and it struck Evelyn many times, not least when her daughter died, and then when her husband died. When death strikes, living in a tent doesn't seem so much fun. St Paul says: **While we are in this tent we groan and are burdened because we do not wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling**. As we go through life we are stripped of many of the things we treasure. We begin to lose the people we love, the homes we live in, our health, our mobility: Evelyn lost them all. We talk about the blessing of old age. But often old age is also a curse. We lose one treasure after the other. And so in the last years Evelyn lost her home in Murray Bridge and had to move into a nursing home in Mt Barker. It was a very good nursing home, but it is not a permanent home. It is a sign that our earthly tent is being packed up, and death is round the corner.

The Good News is that Evelyn did not lose the most important thing. She kept trusting in God. She kept loving God. She kept worshipping God. She kept looking forward to the permanent home God had prepared for her in heaven. That we do not have a permanent home on earth is not bad news. There is a time to move on, to leave the sufferings behind.

THERE IS A PERMANENT DWELLING. **We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built with human hands**. As we heard in the reading from St John today, Jesus says: **I have gone to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and take you to myself, to be where I am**. Evelyn had a blessing which all too many people don't have. She believed in God and in Jesus Christ her Saviour, and she knew Jesus had prepared a permanent home for her, and she knew that when she left this temporary home, she would go to the place God had prepared for her: an eternal place; a better place; a place with **no more pain, no more weeping, no more death**; a place of **love and joy and peace**, with Jesus and with all we have

loved on earth, who believed in Jesus. Do you believe this? What a difference this makes. Then we can live in hope. We cannot yet see this permanent home. We don't need to. **We live by faith, not by sight.** And there is some even better news.

THERE IS A SURE AND CERTAIN WAY HOME. We don't cross our fingers and hope. St John says: **I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.** Not wish so; not hope so, but **know so.** In John 14 Thomas is unclear about how to get to the life to come. Jesus makes it very clear: **I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.** Jesus is the one and only way to eternal life, to our permanent home. Those who trust in him look forward to their permanent home with confidence in Jesus. Jesus has prepared the way. He died for all our sins which would keep us out of heaven. He has forgiven all our sins. He has been raised from the dead, and gone ahead to prepare **a mansion for us.** Jesus says it so well: **I am the resurrection and the life. All who believe in me will live, even though they die... do you believe this?** Evelyn did... Praise God, Evelyn did! But, do you believe this? You have no permanent home on earth. Do you believe Jesus has prepared an eternal home for you in heaven? There is no way to arrive at that heavenly home except through faith in Jesus. Do you believe in Jesus as your one and only Saviour?

Come, Holy Spirit, open all hearts here today to believe in Jesus as their Saviour, so that all of us will one day join Jesus and Evelyn and all your saints in the heaven. Amen.