

2018-11-04 ... 6.30pm Thanksgiving and Memorial Address ...

Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Isaiah 25: 1 – 8; John 2: 1 – 11

'The Heavenly Banquet'

Introduction ...

When I meet with families about a funeral and we chat about their memories of life with the person who has died ... the topic of 'food' often comes up!

It might be:

favourite foods that the person cooked, baked or ate ...

particular family celebrations ...

places that you liked to eat together, pubs, restaurants, picnics ...

Sharing food ...

Sharing food is – somehow – an important and positive part of being human ... because it **is** shared, because there's time to listen and to talk – it deepens relationships ... strengthen bonds.

That's perhaps why heaven, why life in heaven, is often depicted in the Bible as being like a celebratory banquet meal.

So in our first reading from Isaiah – leading up to the statement:

'God will swallow up death for ever'

we have the description of God:

'making for all peoples a feast of rich food of well-matured wines.'

And in our second reading, we were reminded that Jesus joined in feasts during his earthly life ... and brought God's abundant provision to transform that particular wedding banquet. I doubt that any of the guests ever forgot that **party** with its **changing of water into wine**.

Theme ...

So I'd encourage you to continue to bring to mind the good experiences of sharing food with those you have come to remember tonight. **PTO**

Yes – that may well bring some sense of sadness that those times cannot be the same again in this life ... but you can still build other memories for the future and you can look forward to that heavenly banquet.

Jesus and Holy Communion ...

And we can link this strongly to Jesus himself ... not only because of the **'water into wine'** but because he gave us a meal to remember him by ... and to remember that his death and resurrection bring us the assurance, the certainty, that there is a life through and beyond death.

Jesus – in his last meal with his family and friends told us to remember him in shared bread and wine. And he pointed forward to the heavenly banquet as he said:

**'I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day
when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'**

(Matthew 26:29)

Conclusion ...

Tonight, therefore, let us both look back to meals we have shared and look forward to those which are to come ... especially in heaven.

Amen.