

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

Loved ones, we have assurances that this life is not the end of our story. And the life after this is not going to be like this one. We will be in a place where suffering and pain are things of the past. Joy will replace sorrow and dancing will replace pain. We find in Revelation 21:3-4, 23 this:

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.” ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light.

Life is hard. We suffer loss and pain, sorrow and hardship. But what is to come can't be compared to all of this. Paul tells us in Romans 8:18-19, 25;

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

May Jesus Christ who strengthens and redeems you keep your hearts and minds filled with peace. Amen.

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.



I want to share with you some things that have happened to me. I have never shared these things with people other than those who are very close to me. I'd like to share them with you today.

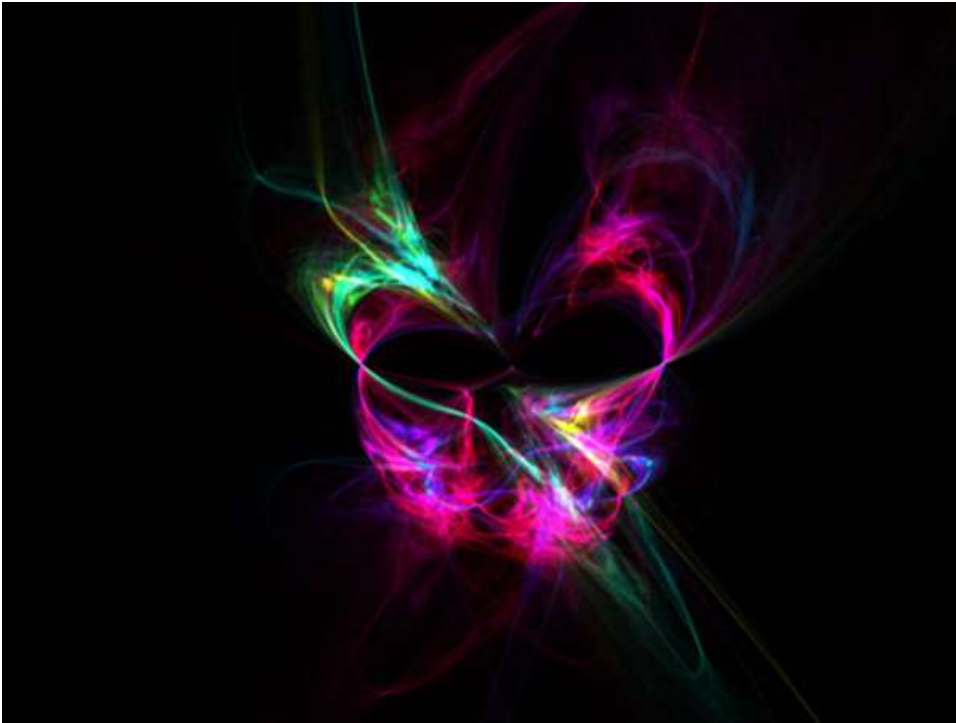
I've always had a sense that there is something beyond this plane. Even before I knew the stories of the bible or God's promise of eternity or some of the scientific work had been done surrounding the human soul.

This started when I was very young. I can't tell you how young. But some of my early memories are of when I would begin to drift off to sleep. I would begin to feel myself lift off the bed. It never startled me because I felt peaceful and comfortable. Then I would see a bright light above me. It wasn't like a lightbulb or like the sun, it was like love. And I would feel myself being drawn towards it. As I went, I felt so good, so happy, so full of peace...

This would happen pretty much every night.

Some nights I would dream that I had hit something - I had fallen off a cliff or my body had been hit by something forceful and I would immediately feel like I bounced out of my body. I would see myself laying there and would feel released and free. Weightless and filled with energy and purpose.

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.



And then there was the one dream I had where I woke up to see my soul leaving my body. I didn't feel panic. All I could think of was how beautiful it was. I can still see it – bright colors swirling out of my midsection. It was a strange feeling of celebration.

As I got older, the story of Jesus' gift of eternal life resonated with me. It all began to make sense. I started to research what was happening to me and learned that many people had had similar experiences. I discovered terms like Out of Body Experience, and Near Death Experience. My research told me that I wasn't alone. In fact, it had been documented many times over. Even though the Experiences slowed down, I continued my interest in this phenomena. It would lead me to a lifelong interest in death, dying and the afterlife.

What I would learn later from my mother is that when she would get home from work, roughly around midnight, she would always check on me. She was very concerned because since I was a baby, my sleep breathing was so shallow and my skin so cold that she would sometimes panic and wake me to make sure I was still alive.

I've often wondered, then, if my experiences were indeed more than just dreams. And what I've discovered along the way is that what I've experienced, research on near death and the Bible seem to line up.

I say this this morning to offer you hope.

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

I realize that what I just told you is a bit unorthodox, but I consider it a testimony of sorts. Because as we explore scripture, we find the testimonies of many that have gone before us. In Revelation, John shares in Revelation 21:4.



“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

What does this tell us?

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

[John 5:24](#)

Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

[John 11:25](#)

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

[Luke 23:43](#)

And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Jesus had some specific things to tell us about what happens when we die.

John 5:24 “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.”

Luke 23:43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.



John 14:1-31 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ...

I can tell you from my experience with people who are leaving this world and entering into the next that there is something that happens that we cannot explain.

Today we remember our loved ones. Those who have gone before us. No matter how long they’ve been gone we still grieve their absence. We used to talk with them, laugh with them, share our lives with them. We miss them.

Today is a day to honor them, remember them and thank them for their role in our lives. We remember that their light has not gone out. They are still alive – only differently than what we can physically recognize.

Even more, we thank our Messiah, Jesus Christ, who opened the way for us to have life everlasting. So that we will indeed see our loved ones once again.

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.



There's a Christian artist by the name of Jeremy Camp. He has dealt with loss first hand when his 21-year-old wife Melissa died from cancer. It was right after their honeymoon that the doctors ran tests and told them that the cancer had spread. She said, 'Jeremy, if I die from this cancer and if one person gets to know Jesus as their savior because of it, it'll all be worth it.'

She died 4 and a half months after their wedding day.

Jeremy says that it wasn't like he was happy about it and said, "Hey, thanks God, it's all good." He remembers throwing his Bible across the room and screaming, "How could you let this happen! We believed!"

But Jeremy will tell you that in the months that followed, in his prayers and his pleading, God reassured him. He was reminded of scripture that says, "For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face-to-face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully.

Those whom we've lost... we hold on to this hope: That Christ Jesus made a way for us to forever dwell with the God of our creation and salvation. And in that...

Message: “For I Hold On To This Hope”, presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 10-30-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,
“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”**

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death
nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor
things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor
anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

- Romans 8:35-39