

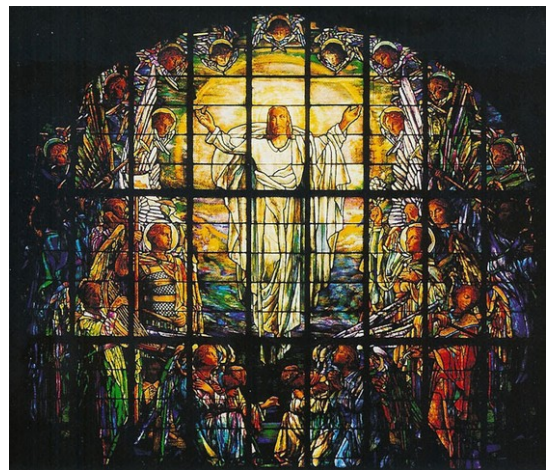
A Letter To My Dear One In Heaven, “Wedding Memories” ...

Dearest husband of my heart:

I am assuming you are one of the “great cloud of witnesses” written about in the book of Hebrews. That you were privy to the ins and outs of the weekend our beautiful granddaughter, Tessa, married Luke. That you smiled, and even shared some of this joy with one of your heavenly friends, or Jesus, perhaps? Or even that a whole contingency of those who have gone before, who loved us on earth, participated in celebration. Though I cannot know for sure I, still earth-bound, can assume.

Did you see how rain slanted horizontal that Saturday afternoon and wind whipped hair and clothes, how groomsmen in perfect sync kept us sheltered and dry? Did you see the historic Second Presbyterian Church, “late Gothic revival,” the interior replete with a Tiffany window, a scene of Christ in all His ascension glory, a glorious mural, and somber interior colors of gold, crimson and russet, all of a piece?

Did you hear how the prelude began, sweetheart, Bach’s “Fugue in C Major,” the organ alive with Bach’s simple perfection? And did you listen when our dear family friend, she of the soaring soprano (the one, Babe, who sang at your memorial service) graced *us* with “Amazing Grace”?



window, Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago
image credit: April D. Carlson

Were you observing our walk, escorted to the front of the sanctuary by grandson groomsmen, so strong and grown and capable? Remember how we sat on endless bleachers to watch their basketball and soccer play? And how we loved it? They seat us to Mozart's *Water Music*. Bridesmaids come next in hunter green, flowers profuse. Lilah, age eight, is a junior bridesmaid, her bouquet held just right with serious purpose. Then Jackson, age six, totes the ring in a miniature suitcase, solemn, respectful as befits the occasion.

We stand, then, as "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" begins the processional. We turn, and there she is, Tessa Kate on the arm of her father David. Did you see how radiant she was?

Did you remember how she called you *Pops* and how you and she had a kind of sweet back and forth repartee, a relationship that was a boon for you both, full of humor and knowing? She is a glowingly lovely bride, relaxed and eager to be joined with Luke, the love of her life.

I am assuming, honey, that you were praying all these months, as saints who have gone before pray, for the hope that Dawn, her mother, our daughter, would be well enough to be a part of all this joy. And here she is in all of her blonde and courageous loveliness, an answer to the prayers of saints on earth, yes, together with prayers as they are spoken in heaven. This answer to prayer conveys an underlying sense of gratitude permeating every nuance, every moment of celebration.

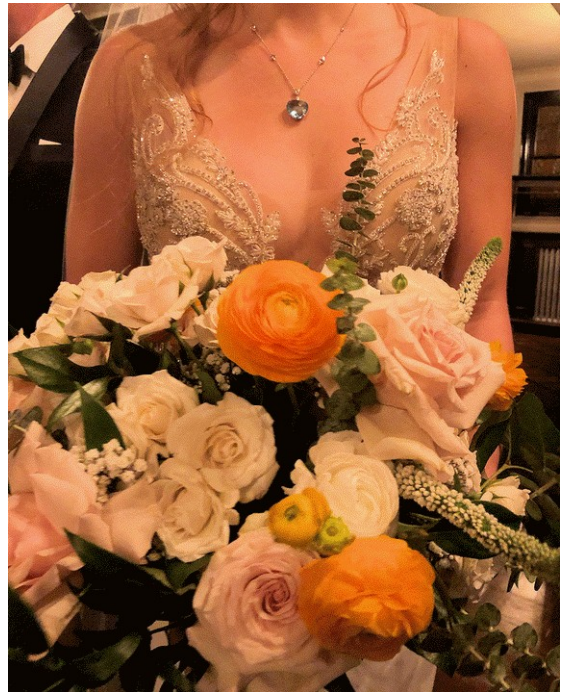


image credit: April D. Carlson

Dear heart, I often wonder how sheer is the membrane that separates us from one another, earth from heaven? In my ignorance I only suppose that you are able to conjure all that happened in this beatific ceremony with a single thought, a kind of seeing that eludes me here. Still, for my sake, bear with me. I need to share.

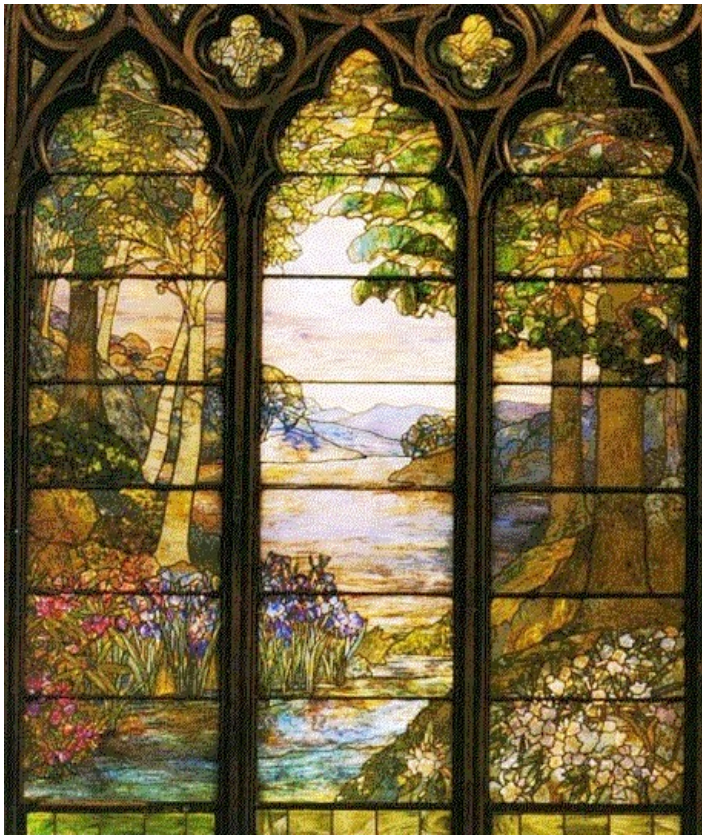
Scriptures are read, the marriage rite proclaimed, the homily delivered. Every part is infused with meaning, holiness, commitment. “Ave Maria” sung from the chancel, our friend’s bell-like voice transporting. Am I imagining that you are rejoicing with me, rejoicing with a heavenly understanding I am yet to experience? The minister stands behind Tessa and Luke, his eyes closed to the music, transported too, into near-heavenly realms.

Finally, vows are exchanged. As a congregation we say the Lord’s Prayer together (using “trespasses”), like *you and I* would say holding hands before sleep, remember? And there is the DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE, the benediction. The couple is introduced. Did you see their faces, honey? How full of happiness? How we clapped and relished this moment? I can only believe you shared this with me, earth and heaven touching, hearts touching, if not in the physical sense.

I know you fully comprehend how nothing can eclipse the wonder of this day. Not driving rain nor wind that buffets. For before God and “these witnesses” another couple has been united “for better or worse, in sickness and in health, until death do them part.” I am assuming you are praying with me

for all those we love, for this new marriage, for each couple and grandchild and great grandchild in their challenges, their unknowns, their joys, their sorrows, for health, healing, and perspective.

Do you see that now we leave the stalwart structure behind, hustle under the waiting umbrellas of groomsmen through rain and wind that has not abated and that only brings a kind of excitement, a specificity of memory? And we are thankful. 🌿



window, Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago
image credit: April D. Carlson