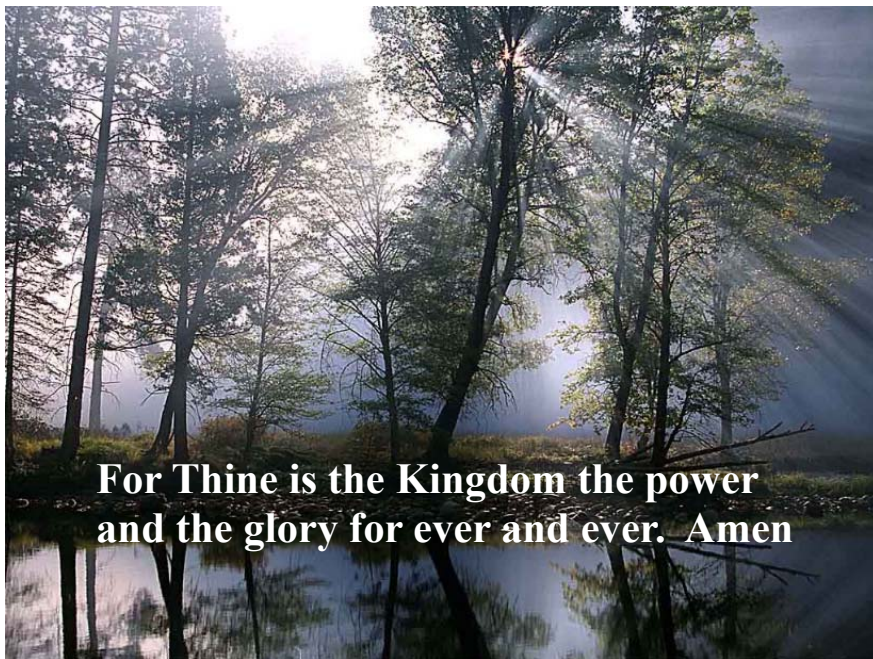


Funeral Services



Hymns for Funeral Services

1. Abide with me
2. And did those feet (Jerusalem)
3. All things bright and beautiful
4. Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!
5. Amazing Grace
6. Blest are the pure in heart
7. Dear Lord and father of mankind
8. Eternal father strong to save
9. Father hear the prayer we offer
10. For all the saints, who from their labours rest
11. God be in my head
12. Great is thy faithfulness
13. Guide me O, Thou great Redeemer
14. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
15. Immortal invisible God only wise
16. In heavenly love abiding
17. Jesu lover of my soul
18. Lead us heavenly father lead us
19. Lord of all hopefulness
20. Love divine, all loves excelling
21. Make me a channel of your peace
22. Morning has broken
23. Now thank we all our God
24. O God our help in ages past
25. O love that wilt not let me go
26. On a hill far away (Old rugged cross)
27. Onward Christian soldiers
28. Praise my soul the king of heaven
29. Rock of ages, cleft for me
30. The Lord's my shepherd
31. The day thou gavest Lord is ended
32. There is a green hill far away
33. Thine be the glory
34. When I survey the wondrous cross

Funeral Service

I am convinced 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 8.38,39

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. *John 3.16*

Introductions

We have come here today
to remember before God our *brother/sister N*;
to give thanks for *his/her* life;
to commend *him/her* to God our merciful redeemer and judge;
to commit *his/her* body to be *buried/cremated*,
and to comfort one another in our grief.

The minister may say a prayer

God of all consolation,
your Son Jesus Christ was moved to tears
at the grave of Lazarus his friend.
Look with compassion on your children in their loss;
give to troubled hearts the light of hope,
and strengthen in us the gift of faith,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

God our comforter, you are our refuge and strength,
a helper close at hand in times of trouble.
Help us so to hear your word that our fears may be dispelled,
our loneliness eased, and our hope reawakened.
May your Holy Spirit lift us above our sorrow,
to the peace and light of your constant love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible Readings

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

John Chapter 14:1-6

Jesus said, 'Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God,
believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it
were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and
receive you unto myself; so that where I am, there you may be also.
And whither I go you know, and the way you know.
Thomas said unto him, Lord, we know not where you are going;
how can we know the way? Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the
truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father
will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all
things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Prayers

Lord God our loving heavenly father, we give you thanks for the gift of life, especially this day we give thanks for the life of _____
We thank you for all that they were, all that they are, and all that they will continue to be, in the hearts and minds of those who love them and in your presence for ever. Amen.

And as we give you thanks for _____ so we commend him/her to the mercy of God our Maker and Redeemer. Heavenly Father by your mighty power you gave us life, and in your love you promise us everlasting life, beyond death, We entrust _____ to your merciful keeping, in the faith of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord who died and rose again to save us, and is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in glory for ever. Amen.

As we remember _____ we pray also for those who mourn. We ask that you would visit them with your peace, pour your comfort into their hearts and that after a time you would wipe the tears from their eyes. Amen.

Grant us, O God
in all our duties your help.
in all our perplexities your guidance,
in all our dangers your protection
and in all our sorrows your peace;
(through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.)

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over
and our work is done.
Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at last;
through Christ our Lord.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who have trespassed against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen**

Closing Words

At St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church this Sunday we will be remembering _____ and lighting a candle in the service in their memory. We will also pray for the family as they mourn, I hope that you too will continue to uphold them with your prayers and thought over the coming months

The Committal

Man born of a woman has but a short time to live. Like a flower he blossoms and then withers; like a shadow he flees and never stays.

In the midst of life we are in death; to whom can we turn for help, but to you, Lord.

For the Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great goodness.
As a father is tender towards his children,
so is the Lord tender to those that fear him.
For he knows of what we are made;
he remembers that we are but dust.

Our days are like the grass;
we flourish like a flower of the field;
when the wind goes over it, it is gone
and its place will know it no more.
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures
for ever and ever toward those that fear him
and his righteousness upon their children's children.

We have entrusted our *brother/sister N* to God's mercy,
and we now commit *his/her* body to be cremated:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust:
in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who will transform our frail bodies
that they may be conformed to his glorious body,
who died, was buried, and rose again for us.
To him be glory for ever.

Additional Prayers

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
Go from this world! Go, in the name of God
The omnipotent Father who created thee!
Go in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Son of the Living God, who bled for thee!
Go, in the name of the Holy Spirit, who
hath been poured out on thee!
Go on thy course and may thy place today be found in peace
and may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount of Zion.
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant us, Lord, the wisdom and the grace to use aright the time
that is left to us here on earth. Lead us to repent of our sins, the
evil we have done and the good we have not done; and strengthen
us to follow the steps of your Son, in the way that leads to the
fullness of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy, entrusting into your hands all that you have
made and rejoicing in our communion with all your faithful
people, we make our prayers through Jesus Christ our
Saviour. Amen. Let us commend our brother/sister N. to the
mercy of God our maker and redeemer.

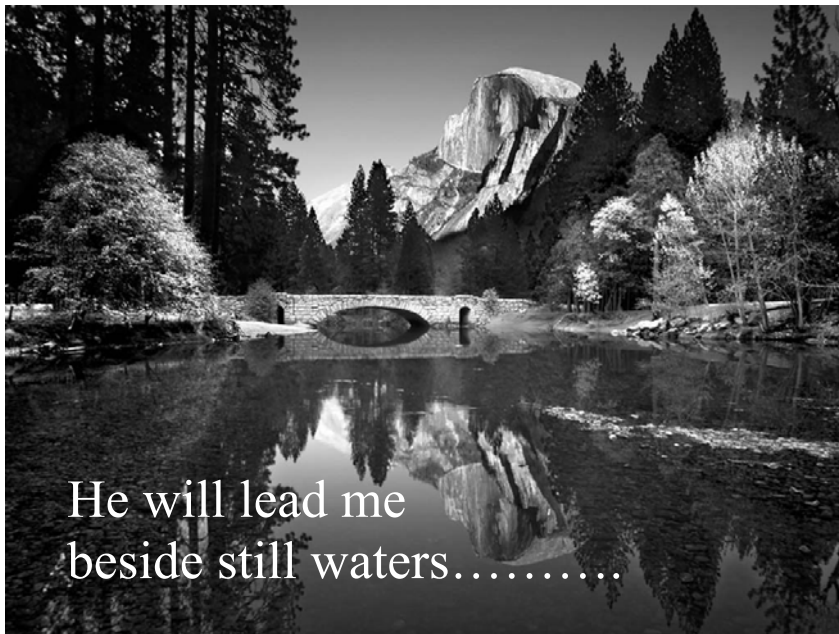
Endings

May God in his infinite love and mercy
bring the whole Church,
living and departed in the Lord Jesus,
to a joyful resurrection
and the fulfilment of his eternal kingdom.

All **Amen.**

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the people of every Church and Nation, peace and concord; and to us and all the servants of God, life everlasting; and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Additional Resources



Introductions

Pastoral Introduction

This may be read silently by those present before the service begins.

God's love and power extend over all creation. Every life, including our own, is precious to God. Christians have always believed that there is hope in death as in life, and that there is new life in Christ over death.

Even those who share such faith find that there is a real sense of loss at the death of a loved one. We will each have had our own experiences of their life and death, with different memories and different feelings of love, grief and respect. To acknowledge this at the beginning of the service should help us to use this occasion to express our faith and our feelings as we say farewell, acknowledge our loss and our sorrow, and to reflect on our own mortality. Those who mourn need support and consolation. Our presence here today is part of that continuing support.

We meet in the name of Jesus Christ,
who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.
Grace and mercy be with you.

Opening Verses of Scripture

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11.25,26

I am convinced 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 8.38,39

Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. So we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4.14,17b,18

We brought nothing into the world, and we take nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

1 Timothy 6.7; Job 1.21b

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.

Lamentations 3.22,23

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5.4

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3.16

Opening Prayers

**Heavenly Father,
in your Son Jesus Christ
you have given us a true faith and a sure hope.
Strengthen this faith and hope in us all our days,
that we may live as those who believe in
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
and the resurrection to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Collect

Merciful Father,
hear our prayers and comfort us;
renew our trust in your Son,
whom you raised from the dead;
strengthen our faith
that all who have died in the love of Christ
will share in his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Prayers

God of mercy, Lord of life,
you have made us in your image
to reflect your truth and light:
we give you thanks for *N*,
for the grace and mercy *he/she* received from you,
for all that was good in *his/her* life,
for the memories we treasure today.

You promised eternal life to those who believe.
Remember for good this your servant *N*
as we also remember *him/her*.
Bring all who rest in Christ
into the fullness of your kingdom
where sins have been forgiven
and death is no more.

Your mighty power brings joy out of grief
and life out of death.
Look in mercy on [... *and*] all who mourn.
Give them patient faith in times of darkness.
Strengthen them with the knowledge of your love.

You are tender towards your children
and your mercy is over all your works.
Heal the memories of hurt and failure.
Give us the wisdom and grace to use aright
the time that is left to us here on earth,
to turn to Christ and follow in his steps
in the way that leads to everlasting life.

All **God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at my end,
and at my departing. Amen.**

THE RESPONSES

Minister: Enter not into judgement with thy servant, O Lord;
Answer: For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
Minister: Grant unto her eternal rest.
Answer: And let perpetual light shine upon her.
Minister: We believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord;
Answer: In the land of the living.
Minister: O Lord, hear our prayer:
Answer: And let our cry come unto thee.

Grant, O Lord that keeping in glad remembrance those who have gone before, who have stood by us and helped us; cheered us by their sympathy and kindness and strengthened us by their example and fortitude in adversity, we may rejoice in the promise of a glorious resurrection with them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May God in his infinite love and mercy bring the whole Church, living and departed in the Lord Jesus, to a joyful resurrection and the fulfilment of his eternal kingdom. Amen.

Commendation and Farewell

Let us commend *N* to the mercy of God
our maker and redeemer.
God our creator and redeemer,
by your power Christ conquered death
and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
and claiming his promises,
we entrust *N* to your mercy
in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive
and reigns with you,
now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Readings

'I am not there'

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken, in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.
Anon

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.
For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: 1-8,15,19-20.

What is dying? I am standing on the sea shore. A ship sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean. She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her until at last she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says, 'She is gone' Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination. The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her: and just at the moment when someone at my side says, 'She is gone', there are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up a glad shout, 'There she comes', - and that is dying.

Bishop Brent

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
I am I, and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other, that we still are.
Call me by my old familiar name,
speak to me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference in your tone,
wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed,
at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Pray, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word it always was,
let it be spoken without effect,
without the trace of a shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was;
there is unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near, just round the corner.
All is well.

Henry Scott Holland 1847-1918
Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Christina Rossetti Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

A Lesson from the Book of Wisdom

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die. Their going looked like disaster, their leaving us like utter destruction: but they are in peace: for though they may seem to be punished as we see things, their hope is rich with immortality: and having been a little chastened, they shall be greatly rewarded, for God proved them and them worthy of himself.

Those who put their trust in God shall understand the truth, and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him, for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

The righteous live for ever, and the care of them is with the most high for God created man for immortality and made him an image of his own eternal self.

Psalm 90

Lord, thou hast been our refuge: from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made: thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

Thou turnest man to destruction: again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep: and fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green, and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered. For we consume away in thy displeasure: and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.

Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee: and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For when thou art angry all our days are gone: we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.

The days of our age are threescore years and ten ; and though men be strong, that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

But who regardeth the power of thy wrath: for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure. So teach us to number our days: that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last: and be gracious unto thy servants.

O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon: so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life. Comfort us again now after the time that thou hast plagued us: and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

Shew thy servants thy work: and their children thy glory.

And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy-work. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth,
and even for evermore.

Reading

Not, how did he die, but how did he live?
Not, what did he gain, but what did he give?
These are the units to measure the worth
Of a man regardless of birth.
Not what was his church, nor what was his creed?
But had he befriended those really in need?
Was he ever ready with words of good cheer?
To bring back a smile, to banish a tear?
Not what did the sketch in the newspaper say?
But how many were sorry when he passed away.

The river of death runs through the Church of God and at present we cannot see across it; but it is all one church each side, just as London each side of the Thames is one city. The living and the dead are one 'in Christ'; and we can speak of them to him.

Herbert Tomkinson

And I said to the one who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the Unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'"

Minnie Haskins, 1875-1957

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul! Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God the omnipotent Father who created thee! Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Son of the Living God, who bled for thee! Go in the Name of the Holy Spirit, who hath been poured out on thee! Go on thy course; and may thy place to-day be found in peace, And may thy dwelling place be the Holy Mount of Sion. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Footprints

One night I had a dream.

I dreamed I was walking along the beach with God and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonged to me and the other to God.

When the last scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at times along the path of life there was only one set of footprints.

I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of my life. This really bothered me and I questioned God about it. "God, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way, but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why in times when I needed you most you would leave me."

God replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never, never leave you during your times of trials and suffering. When you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

For what is to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt in the sun? And what is to cease breathing but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered? Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing. And when you have reached the mountain top then you shall begin to climb. And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

W H Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,

Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.
He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My moon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,
As if you were dismay'd : be cheerful, sir :
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air :
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest, IV. I.*)

Up-Hill Christina G. Rossetti

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

For Those Who Grieve
by Iris Bolton

I don't know why....
I'll never know why...
I don't have to know why...
I don't like it...
I don't have to like it...

What I do have to do is make a choice about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.
The choice is mine.

I can go on living, valuing every
Moment in a way I never did before.
Or I can be destroyed by it and,
In turn, destroy others.
I thought I was immortal, that my
Children and family were also.
That tragedy happened only to
others....
But I know now that life is tenuous
And valuable.

And I choose to go on living, making
The most of the time I have.
And valuing my family and friends in
A way I never experienced before.

Death Beckoned To Me With An Outstretched Hand
by Unknown Author

Death beckoned to me with an outstretched hand
And whispered softly of an unknown land

But she was not afraid to go
For though the path she did not know

She took death's hand without a fear
For He who safely brought her here

Has told her he would lead the way
Into Eternity's Bright Day

And so she did not go alone
Into the Valley that's unknown

She gently took Death by the Hand
And journeyed to the "Promised Land"

And there with step so light and gay
She polishes the sun by day

And lights the stars that shine at night
And keeps the moonbeams silvery bright

For angels really never die
They just keep house up in the sky

And in the Heavenly Home above
They wait to 'welcome' those they love.

I Asked For Strength...

by Unknown Author

I asked for strength...
And God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom...
And God gave me Problems to solve.

I asked for Prosperity...
And God gave me Brain and Brawn to work.

I asked for Courage...
And God gave me danger to overcome.

I asked for Love...
And God gave me people that need love.

I asked for Favors...
And God gave me Opportunities.

Love – Gratitude
by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

The agony is so great....
And yet I will stand it.
Had I not loved so very much
I would not hurt so much.
But goodness knows I would not
Want to diminish that precious love
By one fraction of an ounce.
I will hurt.
And I will be grateful to the hurt
For it bears witness to
The depth of our meanings,
And for that I will be
Eternally grateful.

Poem
by Rainer Maria Rilke

Be patient with all that is unresolved in your heart.
And try to love the questions themselves.
Do not seek for the answers that cannot be given.
For you would not be able to live them.
And the point is to live everything.
Live the questions now.
And perhaps without knowing it.
You will live along some day into the answers.

Tell Me Not In Mournful Numbers
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream!
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time.

Funeral Services for a Child

Bible Reading Mark Chapter 10:13

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Introduction

We gather today in the face of an enormous sense of loss in the death of a child.

Prayers

Thank you for the gift of this child for the love and trust which they inspired in the hearts of those to whom he/she came. We thank you that you knew him/her growing in mother's womb. Our cherished hopes have been shattered and we have been deprived of so much which we wanted to share with this child. We ask for your healing presence to be upon all who are in pain this day.

In our emptiness may we know your peace

In place of confusion may we know your peace

Dwell in them and be their refuge and strength until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Lord Jesus Christ you welcomed children in your arms and placed your blessing upon them. Bless ____ this day grant to us the assurance that they are cradled safe in your arms of mercy this day.

Surround these parents with love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss but trust in your goodness and strength. Give them your peace.

Committal

Revelation Chapter 7:17

The Lamb at the centre of the throne shall feed them and will be their

Lord God into your merciful hands we entrust this precious baby, a lamb of your flock We entrust him/her to your tender mercy and care

Thoughts

What concerns us most about individual death is the loss of loved ones out of our lives. This is even more significant than the loss of our own lives, you would quite probably have given of your own life for this child.

When a child dies this loss of grief is so much stronger. Grief takes on new proportions when a baby dies, a tiny body so wonderfully made seem incongruous in a coffin, the greatest grief comes in the smallest cage.

The future seem cheated, and even if we believe that there is a meaningful future for us after death there is nevertheless the feeling that this death was untimely. Experiences should have been enjoyed and you are rightly sunk into a pit of grief because of all that could have been.

Yet the physical death of a human being is never the total losing from this world of what that person had been. Personality exists in relationship and this baby is your child and has been a part of you as it grew and was dearly loved. You must not focus on what could have been but on what is. We cannot judge a biography by its length, by the number of pages in it. We must judge by the richness of its contents. Your baby is loved and deeply so, nobody could love this child more than you. Sometimes the 'unfinished'

are among the most beautiful symphonies. So it is with our lives. On occasions a person dies and nobody attends a funeral, there is no great feeling of loss for a life that has lasted many years. Though your baby was denied so much of life, yet to live in the hearts she/he leaves is not to die, there will be a presence of this baby with you for the rest of your lives.

*They shall not grow old as we that are left shall grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

