

Abbey Ceremonies- Victoria

Christian Funeral Rites and Liturgy



Organizing a Funeral

Information on organizing a Funeral service in a church, chapel or public place, that is nominally Christian, but not overly religious.

Saying Goodbye

It's not easy saying farewell to someone we love. We usually feel dulled by the whole experience.

Sometimes it takes a few days for us to face what's happened and for us to get into the grieving process.

The feelings are actually quite strange. We start out denying death, then we get angry and start blaming, then there is grief and finally, after many months, acceptance.

We have to deal with all the things we should have said and didn't, all the things we said and shouldn't have. If we didn't get to say goodbye we can be quite broken hearted, even angry with the person who has left us. "Such is life!"

We are also faced with our own mortality and so fear is added to the feelings. When we were young we had all the answers, now there is mystery. Life's shadows leave us disturbed. Each of us must draw from our own spiritual source as we face the darkness. When my son was dying of a brain tumor, I reminded him one day of the Bible story where Jesus was on the cross and the thief next to him asked "remember me." Jesus said to him, "this evening you will be with me in paradise." I said to my son, "if Jesus is willing to remember a thief, he will certainly remember you if you ask him."

The funeral service is a very important part of the grieving process. Making it a thanksgiving, an affirmation of the person's life,

a celebration even, is the way to go - dignified yes, but not morbid. We try to affirm all that is good in the person we loved, and so in this final moment, allow them to leave us as we say goodbye and move on.

Notes

Organization

When a relative dies and we must handle the arrangements, we can very easily feel helpless. Yet, the organization of a funeral is actually quite simple. By contacting a funeral home, an arranger will take the matter completely in hand. All the elements from legal documents, funeral notices, casket, service and burial or cremation will be smoothly organized. We have usually attended a funeral recently or know someone who has and so, through experience or recommendation it is easy to find a reputable funeral company. Always check whether the deceased was in a funeral fund before arranging the service. Remember, much of the cost of a funeral is in the extras. For example, the cost of a casket can vary enormously.

The Minister

Where the family has no direct contact with a local church we as celebrants are able to help. Most people like some religious content in the service, but they don't like it to be preachy or parsonic. The vast majority of people believe in God, but they are not overtly religious and so a service that recognizes the presence of the Lord, that is dignified and reflective and affirms the life of the deceased, is the shape to aim at. The funeral director knows the local ministers and priests and can recommend the right person for the service.

Music

A favourite piece of music can be played at the "Reflection", just before the committal, either religious, such as "Amazing Grace", "Nearer my God to thee", etc. or popular. eg. "The Last Farewell", "Unforgettable", "It's a beautiful world", "A time to say good-bye", "Yesterday", "Wind beneath my wings", "Imagine", "To where you are" and "You raise me up", Josh Groban, "Goodbye" Lionel Ritchie...

For a Vietnam vet.: "I was only 19", Red Gum; "Brother in arms", Dire Straits.

For a young person: "Fall", Single Gun Theory, "Teardrop", Massive Attack, "Into My Arms", Nick Cave, "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For", U2, "Wish You Were Here", Pink Floyd.....

An instrumental is not very effective. Most Funeral Homes have a large library of suitable music. If a tape is used, make sure it is properly queued to the beginning of the song. Music for before and after the service can also be selected by the family. The person in charge of the CD's should make sure they are in the box and are not left in the CD player at home. Stick a note on each box indicating the track to be played and where in the service it will be played, eg. "In, track 8."

Eulogy

The following is a sample outline of a eulogy:

History:

Born: where, when, to whom, family

Grew up: how and where.

Schooling

Early work years: profession, where

Marriage: when, where, to whom, children, grandchildren.....

Married years: where, significant events

Retirement

Interests: sports, craft.....

Achievements

Personal qualities

Special care needs to be taken where the deceased is a child. Where the family is blended, all members should be mentioned even where there may be tensions. Time the eulogy from between 5 to 7 minutes. Personal tributes following the eulogy should be limited to a few sentences. It is often a good idea to have younger members of the family write a few sentences about the deceased and for the person delivering the eulogy to read them. Emotional comments are best left to the end of the eulogy.

Most funeral home chapels these days are set up for a digital PowerPoint presentation. For those who are computer-smart it is easy to gather a selection of family snapshots, scan them, arrange aideshow and burn to a CD. This presentation can then be used to illustrate the eulogy, or be incorporated as a separate element of the

service with music and commentary. Check compatibility..... To be sure of compatibility, produce a DVD slide show.

Placing of Symbols

When the body is placed in the church or chapel and received, "we receive the body of our dear sister/brother", symbols may be placed on or beside the coffin:

i] A candle can add meaning to a service. This should be lit at the beginning of the service by a family member and snuffed out at the end of the service. The candle is kept by the family. A stubby candle to sit on the coffin itself works well, but in a church it is best to use a candle stand.

ii] Water. Sprinkled on the coffin by the minister.

iii] The Bible. Placed near the coffin.

iv] A Cross. Placed on the coffin.

v] Memorabilia - a photo, implements of trade, regalia, personal items..... Placed on or near the coffin by family members.

vi] The national flag. For members, or former members of the armed services.

vii] Small individual flowers - These are often placed, as a personal tribute to the deceased person, on the coffin just before the committal, or in the case of a burial, just after the coffin is lowered into the grave. A handwritten note may be attached to the flower. At a chapel or crematorium, a carefully selected track of music is often played while the congregation moves forward to place their flower. This item in the service is known as "The Reflection."

Symbols of the soul's release

The release of gas-filled balloons at the conclusion of a burial service is a symbol often used for the death of a young person where young people will attend the service. In the case of an older person, the release of a dove (homing pigeon) at the end of the service can be a very special symbol. Most funeral homes can provide this service.

Personal items placed in the coffin

Items that are to go with the deceased must be placed in the coffin before it is sealed. This can only be done by the funeral directors at the funeral home, unless there is a viewing, in which case family members may place items into the coffin at the time of

the viewing. There are certain requirements regarding cremations so check with the undertakers before placing non combustibles in the coffin. Usually only combustibles can be placed in the coffin with a cremation.

The Committal

At the crematorium or funeral chapel, it is best to lower the coffin or close the curtains in the presence of the congregation to reinforce "closure" and so free those in grief to move on. Allow the deceased person to do the leaving, rather than leave the deceased alone in the chapel. Yes, this is the hardest part of the service, but it is very important to get it right. A person who leaves the chapel without closure can find themselves quite distressed for years to come.

Photographs / Video

Do not be afraid to photograph the arrival of the hearse and the burial. Ask a relative to perform this task, but of course to do so with dignity. Many chapels now have the facilities to video the service. It is simply a matter of bringing a blank VHS tape along on the day and asking the conductor to set it up for you. Where these facilities do not exist a family member could video the salient parts of the service.

Service Sheet

If a family member has access to a computer it is very easy to produce a service sheet in folded A4 format printed both sides (4 page A5). Front Page: Include: page title, "A Service of Thanksgiving", or "Memorial Tribute" etc... ; name of the deceased; dates of birth and death; photograph in the middle of the page; date of service; text, eg. "At rest". Consider using a photograph of the person representing a powerful period in their life. Photographs of a debilitated person is unwise, as this is not how the person will be remembered. Middle Pages 2 & 3: The Service. See below for the full text of a sample service which will fit on two pages in 10 point type and take about 7 minutes to read (ie. to suit a 30 minute service). Where hymns are included it will be necessary to reduce the printed text to a service outline only - just print the element headings and possibly the Lord's Prayer in full. Printing the text of the service out in full is normally unnecessary, so where there are no hymns, print a service outline with the Lord's Prayer in full, on page 3. On page 4 and 5 it is often a good idea to print the deceased's life story along

with some photographs. A 10 point type will suffice. The story can be the text of the eulogy. Conclude at the bottom of the last page, page 4, with a thank you to all those who have attended for their love and support, along with an invite to the afters.

Timing

Given the charged atmosphere, it is best to aim at a 30 – 40 minute service. Most churches, crematoriums and funeral home chapels plan for a service of around 30 – 40 minutes. Only for a full religious service do you need to plan for 60 minutes. The minister/celebrant can adjust the service to fit a longer eulogy with personal words from some of the guests, but it is necessary for him/her to know in advance how long they will take. A returned soldier's tribute adds 5 minutes and a Masonic service adds 7 minutes. It is very difficult to include both in a 30 minute service.

Counselling

Some people find it difficult to move on from a heart-wrenching loss. Don't be ashamed to seek professional help.

Cremation or burial?

This is really a matter of personal preference or custom. In the Christian faith there is no word from the Lord on the matter, since the resurrection of the dead is not in any way influenced by the method of a body's disposal. Consider how you would like to remember the deceased. Will you want to visit the site where they were laid to rest? If so, a burial may be for you, but remember, the cost is doubled. If your memories are in cards, photo's etc, then cremation may be best for you.

Funeral Services and Resources

A Prayer Book for Australia published in 1995 has a wealth of resources for conducting a funeral service. If the reader is seeking guidance in the conducting of a simple liturgical services for infants through to the aged, then this prayer book is well worth the purchase price.



The Funeral Service

A traditional service format that is not overly religious

*The following service format uses a range of different approaches and sources: **C.** Nominally Christian (eg. Anglican Prayer Books - AAPB, APBA); **N.** Neutral (a belief in God); and **E.** Eastern (eg. Nominally Buddhist). The keys **C, N, E**, designate each approach. In using this service it is necessary to select from the different options provided to produce a 30 minute service: entry music / a hymn; one of the introductions; one or two sentences; a prayer / meditation; a reading; eulogy; personal words; a poem; a prayer / meditation; reflection; committal; closure: eg. The Lord's Prayer and a blessing; exit music.*

Music / Hymn *Entry music before the service commences or a hymn at the commencement of the service, eg.*

1 Praise my soul the king of heaven
To his feet you tribute bring
Ransomed, healed restored forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing
Alleluia, alleluia! praise the everlasting king.

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same as ever.
Slow to blame and swift to bless;

Alleluia, alleluia! glorious in his faithfulness!

Father like he tends and spares us:
All our hopes and fears he knows,
In his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us for all our foes,
Alleluia, alleluia! widely as his mercy flows.

Angels help us to adore him
You behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
All that is in time and space,
Alleluia, alleluia, praise with us the God of grace!

2 The Lord's my shepherd: I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table thou has furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head with oil thou dost anoint
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;

And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

3 What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer:
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge;
Take it to the Lord in prayer:
Do they friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and shield thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

*Other suitable Hymns: Abide with me, Rock of Ages, Blest are the
ties that bind, Amazing Grace, Nearer my God to thee, Softly and
Tenderly*

Welcome. *A family member may like to thank people for attending and*

invite all to the afters.

Introduction *Minister / Celebrant / MC.*

C. Friends, you come together to say farewell to a relative, to honour a departed friend, to dispose reverently of the mortal body and to show sympathy with those who are hurting at this time.

We offer our prayer of thanksgiving and trust to God, in whose care you leave your friend; we recall the certainty of our own coming death; and we proclaim that Christ is risen, that those who believe in him will rise with him, and be united with him forever.

N. We humans have sensed the mystery of death, and the pain of grief, since time immemorial. And so we mark the vale of death by commemorating the passing of those we love.

Today you join together for this memorial service - this affirmation of life.

You come together to say farewell to a relative, to honour a departed friend, to dispose reverently of the mortal body and to encourage those who are hurting at this time.

Hopefully, this gathering will be an encouragement to all here today. For those who are hurting, may it enable you to acknowledge the loss, give thanks for life, to affirm it and make your last farewell and then begin to take up life once more.

Sentences

C. I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. *John 11:25-26.*

C. I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:38-39.*

C. What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, God has prepared for those who seek after him. *1 Corinthians 2:9*.

Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal; Dust thou art, to dust returnest, Was not spoken of the soul. *Longfellow*

To sleep; perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub; For in that sleep of death what dreams may come When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, Must give us pause. *William Shakespeare. Hamlet*

The dead don't die. They look on and help. *D.H. Lawrence*

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other wound we seek to heal, every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open: this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude. *Washington Irvine*

"In one sense there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond departure. You will always feel that life touching yours, that voice speaking to you. He/She lives on in your life and in the lives of all others that knew him/her." *Angelo Patri*

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." - *Henry David Thoreau Walden*

"For every end no matter how tragic, there will be a new beginning."
- *Anonymous*

E. Whoso is compassionate is everywhere beloved. By the kind and good he is prized as a friend, and at death his heart is full of peace.
Namu Amida Butsu

E. To die or not to die ... we really don't have a choice. We can

therefore only take care of our life-body, until the fullness of time and being ends our existence on earth." *Taitesu Unno*

E. Gone, gone, gone beyond. Gone utterly beyond. Oh what an awakening. *Heart Sutra*.

Meditation/Prayer

N. Today in this quiet place we remember the life of N....., along with all those we have loved and who have gone before. Their faces are before us at this very moment and we remember them and treasure them. There are all the things we should have said and never did, all that we said and should never have said. We may have even missed saying good-by. Yet, they're with us at the sparkle of dawn and dull setting sun. In the unexpected moment they're there. The memories so precious, so warming, touching the heart, shedding a tear. Time seems to dull their face just as it dulls the memories, but the joy and warmth is never dulled. [Lord, dry our tears and warm our memories. Amen]

C. Heavenly Father, in your Son Jesus Christ you have given us a true faith and a sure hope. Help us to live as those who believe in your eternal friendship, the forgiveness of all our failings and the resurrection to eternal life; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. AAPB

C. Loving God, you alone are the source of life. May your life-giving Spirit flow through us, and fill us with compassion, one for another. In our sorrow give us the calm of your peace. Kindle our hope, and let our grief give way to joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. APBA

Item *If there is to be a musical item it is best placed here*

Reading *Read by a family member, or friend, if possible*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

[What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He] God has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil - this is the gift of God.

[I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him. Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.]

Psalm 23 Modern

The Lord is my shepherd: therefore I lack nothing.

He will make me lie down in green pastures; and lead me beside still waters

He will refresh my soul: and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

For you are with me, your rod and staff comfort me.

You spread a table before me: in the face of those who trouble me:

You have anointed my head with oil and my cup will be full.

Surely your goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life:

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

John 14:1-6

He said to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

N. Footprints

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. he noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said that you'd 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 when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My son, my precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

From Hamlet

To die, to sleep; no more;
And by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
The flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream; ay there's the rub
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause.

Other appropriate Bible Readings: John 5:24-27., 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 15 selections, John 6:35-40, John 11:17-27 Romans 8:31-39, Romans 14:7-9, 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 21:1-7.

For a non religious reading use a poem, words of a song, or some other suitable reading.

Address *A maximum of 5 minutes - the samples are outlines only. Usually by Minister/Celebrant*

C. *The shepherd of the sheep Ps.23*

C. *The way, truth and life. Jn.14:1-6*

N. *A faded photograph, Ecc.3:1-15*

John Lennon said "Life is what happens to you while making other plans", and of course, if it's not making other plans it's getting into the "what if's?" - The realestate stories.....

I have a photograph in our family album, a faded photograph, probably just like a photo in your family album. It looks like a Christmas day. In the photo is my great grandmother, sitting in a chair surrounded by the family. Her hair is white, her face marked with the passing of time. I have many such photos spanning the years. One day, if I am lucky enough, I may get to sit in a chair like hers, surrounded by my family, although reaching nearly a hundred years old is something beyond most of us.

Don Bradman once said "although death is inevitable, it is not something I approach with any great enthusiasm." N..... 's death reminds us about the law of impermanence, of the precarious nature of life. It reminds us that time moves quickly by and every moment is precious.

E. *Liberation through enlightenment*

The Gate of Death is a lesson in life. It teaches about the law of impermanence, of the precarious nature of life. So, death reminds us to

be mindful of our daily life and to practice the art of kindly living from moment to moment: to avoid evil, to do good and to purify the mind. In that sense, death benefits the living, teaching us to unlearn our self-centred ways. Great teachings of the past have often pointed to the way beyond our passions. For example, the Five Precepts speak of abstinence from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech and intoxicants. We do well to use death to remind us of the impermanence of life and of the liberation that can be ours through enlightenment.

Impermanent alas are formations, subject to rise and fall.

Having arisen, they cease; their subsiding is bliss.

Eulogy *Presented by a family member, friend or the minister. Five to seven minutes*

Personal Words *A few sentences by family members or friends*

Poem *At this point, a poem read by say a grandchild is very appropriate*

Miss Me But Let Me Go

"When I come to the end of the road and the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room. Why cry for a soul set free?"

Miss me a little - but not too long, and not with your head held low
Remember the love that we once shared. Miss me - but let me go

For this is a journey that we all must take, and each must go alone
It's all a part of the Master's plan, a step on the road to home."

The clock of life

The clock of life is wound but once,
and no man has the power
to tell just when the hands will stop
at late or early hour.

Now is the only time you own

live, love, toil with a will
place no faith in tomorrow, for
the clock may then be still

All is well Cannon H. Scott Holland

"Death is just an open door
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.

Let my name be ever the household word
that 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;

safe and secure,
all is well."

My Mother's Garden

My Mother kept a garden
A garden of the heart
She planted all the good things
That gave my life its start
She turned me to the sunshine
And encouraged me to dream
Fostering and nurturing
The seeds of self-esteem

And when the winds and rains came
She protected me enough
But not too much, she new I'd need
To stand up strong and tough
Her constant good example
Always taught me right from wrong
Markers for my pathway
That will last a lifetime long

I am my Mother's garden
I am her legacy
And I hope today she feels the love
Reflected back from me.

Don't grieve for me Thresiamma Abraham

Don't grieve for me, for I'm free
I'm following the path God laid for me
I took his hand when I heard his call,
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,
To laugh, to love, to work or play
Tasks left undone must stay that way,

I've found that peace at the close of day.

If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy,
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
Ah, yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow,
My life's been full, I savored much
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief
Lift up your hearts and share with me,
God wanted me now, He has set me free.

I am vertical Sylvia Plath

I am vertical
But I would rather be horizontal.
I am not a tree with my root in the soil
Sucking up minerals and motherly love
So that each March I may gleam into leaf.
Nor am I the beauty of a garden bed
Attracting my share of "ahs" and "spectacularly painted"
And knowing I must soon unpetal.
Compared to me, a tree is immortal
And a flower-head not tall, but more startling.
And I want the one's longevity and the other's daring.
Tonight, in the infinitesimal light of the stars
The trees and the flowers have been stewing their cool odours.
I walk among them, but none of them are noticing.
Sometimes I think that when I am sleeping
I must perfectly resemble them - thoughts gone dim.
It is more natural to me, lying down.
Then the sky and I are in open conversation,

And I shall be useful when I lie down finally;
Then the trees may touch me for once,
And the flowers have time for me.

God's garden

God looked around his garden and he found an empty place.
And then he looked down upon the earth, and saw your tired face.
He put his arms around you, and lifted you to rest.
God's garden must be beautiful, he always takes the best.
He knew that you were suffering, he knew you were in pain,
He knew that you would never get well on earth again.
He saw the road was getting rough, and the hills were hard to climb.
So he closed your weary eyelids, and whispered "Peace be thine."
It broke our hearts to lose you, but you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you, the day God called you home.

I did not die

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 softly falling snow,
I am the gentle shower of rain,
I am the fields of ripening grain,
I am in the morning hush,
I am in the graceful rush
Of beautiful birds in circling flight.
I am the starshine of the night,
I am in the flowers that bloom,
I am in a quiet room,
I am in the birds that sing,
I am in each lovely thing.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there - I did not die.

Prayer/Meditation *Choose either a poem or a prayer*

N. When I am dead, cry for me a little.

Think of me sometimes, but not too much.

It is not good to allow your thoughts to dwell too long on the dead.

Think of me now and again as I was in life at some time pleasant to recall, but not for long.

Leave me in peace and I shall leave you in peace.

While you live let your thoughts be with the living. *An Indian*

Prayer

N. May we forgive the failings of those we love

May we show compassion to those who are hurting

May we know peace,

May our sorrow turn to joy

May we be filled with hope for tomorrow. [**Amen**]

Holy and loving Father, you gave us life when you created us, and in your redeeming love you have given us new life in Christ Jesus. We give you thanks for, N..... In faith and trust we leave her/him in your keeping; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who died and rose again to save us, and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in glory for ever. **Amen.**

Loving Lord, we thank you for the gifts and talents of N....., the years he/she shared with friends and family, the good that was so evident in his/her life. He/she stood by the crew and helped them, cheered and gave them sympathy, strengthened them by his/her example. May he/she rest in peace.[**Amen**]

We have come together with a deep sense of loss at the death of this child, N..... We share the sadness of his/her family, and seek to support them in their grief. [Jesus taught that heaven belongs to those with a childlike trust, so we leave this little person in His care. **Amen.**]

Reflection *A piece of music is played here, where possible, a favorite of the deceased. Or, RSL/Masonic tribute. Increasingly power point presentations are being used at funerals and this seems the best moment*

in the service for a visual presentation. The photos and video clips should be confined to the length of one song. Lengthy presentations are too draining.

The Committal *The congregation usually stands.*

Introductory words

C. Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

He comes forth like a flower, and withers. He passes like a shadow and does not stay.

In the midst of life we are in death.

From whom may we seek help, but from you Lord God, though you are justly displeased on account of our failings?

And yet, Lord God almighty, most holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us from the bitterness of eternal death.

You know the secrets of our hearts;

mercifully hear us, most worthy judge eternal; keep us, at our last hour, in the consolation of your love.

N/E. It is no small thing to have enjoyed the sun, to have lived light in the spring, to have loved, to have thought, to have done. *Matthew Arnold.*

The words of committal

C. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you have given us a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life; in your keeping are all those who have departed in Christ. We here commit the body of our dear sister/brother N..... to the ground/to be cremated: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, and who shall change our mortal body that it might be like his glorious body. Thanks be to

God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!. **Amen**

N/E. We here commit the body of our dear sister/brother
N..... to the ground/to be cremated: earth to earth, ashes to
ashes, dust to dust;

E. Death is not the end it is the beginning. He/She is now free from
all worldly attachments and continues on the journey to transcend
suffering and achieve liberation.

N. Death be not proud, though some have called thee mighty and
dreadful, for thou art not so. *John Donne*

C. Saint John tells us: I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Blessed
are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth, 'Blessed indeed', says the
Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours." Rev.14:13

The Lord's Prayer

Let us join together in the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who 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 trespass 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.**

A Closting Prayer

C. Support us, O Lord, all the days of our life, until the shadows
lengthen and the evening comes, the busy world is hushed, the fever of
life is over and our work done. Then, good Lord, in your kindness, grant

us a safe home and peace at last. **Amen.**

N. I shall pass this way but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it; for I shall not pass this way again. [**Amen.**]

N. God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference [**Amen**]. *The Serenity Prayer*

Blessing

N. May the road rise to meet us;
May the wind be always at our back;
May the sun shine warm upon our face,
The rain fall soft upon our fields,
[And until we meet again,
May God hold us in the palm of his hand. **Amen**]

Now to him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with everlasting joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. **Amen.** *Jude 24, 25.*

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Concluding Music / Song

Note order changes between a single service or a two-part service. The format here is a single service. For a two-part service [part 1: church or chapel & part 2: crematorium or grave side] the order of the service from Eulogy/Personal Words is: Reflection,

*The Lord's Prayer,
Intercession,
Concluding Prayer*

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

*Part 2:
The Committal,
Blessing.*

Note

People do not like an overtly religious service which is preachy and parsonic and goes longer than 30 minutes. Yet, in my own experience I have found that the majority of people do not mind a simple service that reflects the Christian faith. Naturally, in the end, the service should always reflect the deceased' spiritual convictions. Remember, do not overpack the service - KISS (keep it simple stupid!).

Abbot Stephen M Morrissy

2011