



# *A service of remembrance*

## for when we cannot gather in person

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### **Opening words and prayer**

We begin by recognizing that we would rather be together in the same physical space. We recognize the grief upon grief of the death of one we loved coupled with our inability to comfort each other through meals shared and hugs given. There is no substitute for human touch and face-to-face gatherings. Yet our faith assures us that God's love transcends these painful limitations. Now more than ever we affirm these words of Scripture from Romans 8:

*For 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.*

United in God's love, upheld by the Holy Spirit and prayed for by Christ our Lord, we come to the throne of grace. Let us pray:

Lord, maker of heaven and earth, our help is in you. Our trust is in you. Our hope is in you. When we feel as if nothing is certain and the future is frightening, we seek shelter in your loving kindness. When even the rituals of our faith are upended, our sacred spaces off limits, our closest companions inaccessible, we seek relief in your grace upon grace. When our sorrow overflows, our losses mount and our loneliness refuses to relent, we seek solace in your presence. Be with us now. Abide with us here. As you promised, remain with us always. Amen.

### **Scripture readings**

*Some suggested texts:*

- Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 139:1-12
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- John 14:1-5, 25-27



## Homily

### **Affirmation of faith** *(from A Declaration of Faith)*

In the death of Jesus Christ God's way in the world seemed finally defeated. But death was no match for God. The resurrection of Jesus was God's victory over death. Death often seems to prove that life is not worth living, that our best efforts and deepest affections go for nothing. We do not yet see the end of death. But Christ has been raised from the dead, transformed and yet the same person. In his resurrection is the promise of ours. We are convinced the life God wills for each of us is stronger than the death that destroys us. The glory of that life exceeds our imagination but we know we shall be with Christ. So we treat death as a broken power.

Its ultimate defeat is certain. In the face of death we grieve. Yet in hope we celebrate life. No life ends so tragically that its meaning and value are destroyed. Nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **At this time memories may be shared by family members and friends.**


Close this time by reading Philippians 4:8-9:

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.*

### **Prayer of remembrance**

Gracious God, you have heard our memories, shared in grief and in gratitude. You know of our sadness in the death of \_\_\_\_\_. Even in our sorrow, we give thanks for the gift of \_\_\_\_\_, for his/her life, the many ways he/she impacted your beloved world for good and for the time on earth we shared. We rejoice in all that was praiseworthy in the life of \_\_\_\_\_. We will think about these things, remembering all that was commendable in \_\_\_\_\_ as we, too, seek to live in ways that are honorable and pleasing in your sight.

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You tell us, Lord of all, that there is nowhere we can flee from your presence. You assure us that even before a word is on our tongue, you know it completely. You promise us that in life and death we belong to you. We trust that whether we live or whether we die we are yours. In this liminal space of being gathered and yet not physically together, we ask for a sure sense of unity in Christ. Send your Holy Spirit to assure us that we are inextricably connected to you, to each other, to the entire Communion of Saints across all time and space. Grant us courage as we seek to be faithful in this difficult season. Give us hope even as we mourn. Envelop us with the peace that passes understanding, the peace given to us by our Savior Jesus Christ, the One who taught us to say when we pray, *Our Father...*

**Commendation** *(from The Book of Common Worship)*

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of all. We are mortal, formed of the earth, and to the earth we return. This you ordained with you created us, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with all your saints, where there is neither pain nor sorrow nor sighing, but life everlasting.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant \_\_\_\_\_. Acknowledge, we humbly pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him/her into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints of life. Amen.

**Blessing**

May God in endless mercy bring the whole church, the living and the departed, to a joyful resurrection in the fulfillment of the eternal kingdom.

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Liturgy written by Jill Duffield  
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