

# A Short service of Thanksgiving for those we love

*Offered for use by those who cannot attend funerals*

*Jesus said – I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*

*The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.*

*We do not live only for ourselves. At every turn life links us with God; in death we come face to face. In life or death we are in God's hands. Christ lived and died – and lives again so that in life or death we can belong to him.*

## **So you are invited to pray:**

Though we cannot be physically together  
I join my heart with all who honour our loved one who has died  
Each of us has been touched by their life  
And so are affected by their loss.  
Help us to hear again the great words of our faith  
Words that have sustained those in every generation  
Who, like us, have mourned those they have loved and lost.

We pause to consider  
To remember  
And with quiet gratitude to give thanks for that life now passed  
and our lives that continue.

We seek to renew our trust in God  
And discover even in our isolation  
The truth of those words of Jesus  
“I will never leave you or forsake you”

Father, your love is stronger than death  
By you we are all being brought into life  
Help us as we hear the promises of your word  
To believe them and receive the comfort they offer

You are the giver of hope  
Fill us with joy and peace  
So that in believing our fears might be dispelled  
Our loneliness eased  
And our hope re-awakened

PAUSE

**This is the moment in our service when we would normally share the stories and memories of the one we have lost – perhaps through a sermon or a eulogy – but you have your own story of this person's life – so spend some time journeying through that story.**

Think about your earliest memory of them, and how you came to know each other.  
Think about the person they were – what were the qualities in them that you valued and admired  
What were the things they did that made you smile?  
What were the places that you met them – take a moment to remember the times you had there  
What were the events that you shared together that you will always treasure  
What did you accomplish together?  
When were they there for you in your own struggles?  
What were the events that you shared together? What memories will you always treasure?  
What were their foibles – the things that made them unique – perhaps the things that at times drove you crazy

Hold those memories in your heart  
Spend time inhabiting them  
They are there to be recalled  
There to sustain you in your grief  
Those memories cannot be taken from you  
And you should not be afraid to share them.

And there will of course be regrets  
Don't feel that you have to contain them  
These are natural,  
and as you hold them in God's presence,  
Seek God's comfort and healing.

There may be things done and said  
That you wish had not happened  
They are passed now,  
None of us live perfect lives,  
But God offers the gift of grace and forgiveness.

Current circumstances may have prevented you, or those close to them from being with them in their final hours  
Acknowledge the pain of that, but they will have understood  
And the one thing they would have longed for,  
Is that those they loved would not have to suffer as they did.  
They will have understood,  
And they will have found comfort in knowing that even in their isolation  
They were protecting and helping those they loved.

And as God can be present with us in our mourning  
Draw strength from knowing that God would have been with them  
Perhaps unseen and unnoticed  
But God would have been with them as their days came to an end.  
Do not deny yourself grief and regret  
It cannot be eased by simply ignoring it  
Acknowledge it, seek God's strength to bear it  
And God's healing presence and your journey through it.

**And so we pray:**

Gracious God  
We praise and thank you for the world in which we live  
And for the lives you have given us.  
Even in this time of isolation and anxiety  
We come to appreciate even more those things which for a season we have been denied.

We thank you for the new life offered to us in Jesus Christ  
Through his death on a cross, and his raising to life again.  
We thank you for the life of the one we mourn today  
And all that they meant to us  
For those things in their life which gave us glimpses of your goodness and love  
Especially we thank you for those memories and moments that we have just recalled.

Thank you that in you, sins are forgiven  
Suffering comes to its end

And that the same love that surrounds us in our grief  
Welcomes those who enter your everlasting Kingdom.  
Help us to be content to release them to you

Grant that our grief will be neither overwhelming nor unending  
Assure us of your love  
Strengthen our trust in your grace  
And grant us your peace  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord AMEN

O God of infinite compassion  
Look in love and pity on your sorrowing servants  
Be our support, our strength, our shield  
That we may trust in you  
And be delivered from our distresses – and we pray together, the words of Jesus

Our Father in Heaven  
Hallowed be your name  
Your Kingdom come  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us  
May we not be led into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
Now and forever  
Amen

**And so we release the one we love and mourn into God's safe keeping:**

Depart I precious soul out of this world  
In the name of God the father who created you  
In the name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you  
In the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you  
May you rest this day in peace  
And find your dwelling in the paradise of God.

And now we pray for God's blessing  
We have entrusted the one we love to God's merciful keeping  
And we have committed their body to it's final end  
Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust  
In sure and certain hope of eternal life that Jesus secured

May the peace of God,  
Which is beyond our utmost understanding  
And of far more worth than human reasoning  
Keep guard over our hearts and thoughts;  
In Christ Jesus our Lord AMEN