

A Liturgy of Death and Resurrection

for Individuals and Groups Unable to Gather in Person

Overview: When there is a death in a church family at a time when the church cannot gather in large groups, whether or not there is a small funeral in the near-term, many may want to have a time of prayer and reflection to praise God and honor the deceased. On such an occasion, worshipers may use this liturgy individually or together (while connected virtually). If the worshiper chooses, they may wish to find out the date and time of any small service and say this liturgy at that appointed hour.

The liturgy is designed to take 15-30 minutes.

Materials (if available): *a candle, a Bible, a hymnal, a cross, a photo of the deceased or an object that reminds you of them, a phone or device to connect with others.*

GATHERING *At the appointed hour, light a candle and pray these words aloud or in silence:*

Opening Sentences

Dying, Christ destroyed our death.

Rising, Christ restored our life.

Christ will come again in glory.

As in baptism *Name* put on Christ,
so in Christ may *Name* be clothed with glory.

Jesus said, I am the resurrection and I am life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live,
and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

I died, and behold I am alive for evermore,
and I hold the keys of hell and death.

Because I live, you shall live also.

Hymn - *Consider singing a hymn, or reading the words to a hymn. Suggested Hymns include:*

Abide with Me, Amazing Grace, Rock of Ages, Blessed Assurance, Come Thou Fount, all available in the UMC Hymnal or online.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Scripture - *Psalm 23 is almost always read at United Methodist funerals. A Gospel lesson is also always read. Consider asking the family or pastor if there is a lesson chosen for any formal services. If not, choose a passage that you think would honor God's work in the life of the deceased.*

Witness - *Remember and bear witness to the life of the deceased. If with others virtually, offer stories from their life, and thoughts about how God's light shone to and through their life. If alone, offer these remembrances to God and the deceased through prayer in the Holy Spirit.*

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

While holding or touching the cross or a Bible, offer these prayers of commendation.

God of us all, your love never ends.
When all else fails, you still are God.
We pray to you for one another in our need,
and for all, anywhere, who mourn with us this day.
To those who doubt, give light;
to those who are weak, strength;
to all who have sinned, mercy;
to all who sorrow, your peace.
Keep true in us
the love with which we hold one another.
In all our ways we trust you.
O God, all that you have given us is yours.
As first you gave *Name* to us,
now we give *Name* back to you.
Receive *Name* into the arms of your mercy.
Raise *Name* up with all your people.
Receive us also, and raise us into a new life.
Help us so to love and serve you in this world
that we may enter into your joy in the world to come. Amen.
Into your hands, O merciful Savior,
we commend your servant *Name*.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you,
a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock,
a sinner of your own redeeming.
Receive *Name* into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints of light. Amen.

SENDING FORTH

Conclude with the Lord's Prayer, perhaps a verse of a hymn, and this final blessing:

Now may the Father
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
according to the riches of God's glory,
grant us to be strengthened with might
through God's Spirit in our inner being,
that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith;
that, being rooted and grounded in love,
we may be able to comprehend with all the saints
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,
that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Amen.