



Liturgies for a Dispersed Church

Sharing in rituals, familiar liturgies and blessings in times of uncertainty is what keeps us connected as the body of Christ. In the days and weeks ahead there will be times when we need to re-think how we understand the expression of the fundamental elements of our faith and experience. These liturgies are offered as a starting place for us to navigate these uncharted waters.

Blessing and Prayers in the Valley of the Shadow of Death

(prepared by Rev Kath Behan)

This liturgy is prepared for those family and friends who are not able to gather at the bedside of a loved one who is near to death. It is a way of acknowledging this part of the journey, even though they cannot be present with their loved one. It can be led over the phone, preferably by a chaplain/minister/pastoral carer, or even another family member, at the bedside of their loved one, or even remotely if unable to be present at the bedside. In this instance it may be helpful for dispersed family members to hold a photo of their loved one as the liturgy is read.

We Gather to Hear God's Word

We gather in this moment
to remember God's word of hope to us:

(Psalm 23)

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.



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(Romans 8:38-39)

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.

We Respond in Faith

God of all ages, of all that is – seen and unseen, we come to You in this moment of farewell.
Remind us now of Your presence with us,
and of Your promise to us that You will never leave us or forsake us.
Give us the courage to surrender our loved one _____ into your eternal care,
knowing that You will keep them safe
and they will know joy and peace unending.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

God says:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you.

_____ (name):

For you, Jesus lived.

For you, Jesus died.

For you, Jesus rose again.

Therefore, as a reminder of that love and grace,
we mark the sign of the cross on your forehead
(or if unable to be present with the person:
'we draw the sign of the cross on this photo of _____ (name)').)

_____, we send you into the next part of your journey



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with our love and care.

When you are ready to go, we free you to take this journey.
Even though you are precious to us,
we will not cling to you,
for we know in our hearts new life is waiting for you.

(offer to dispersed family to draw the sign of the cross on their photo of the person)

We go forth by faith:

Receive this blessing of comfort from God who made you and loves you:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

Do not be afraid. **Amen.**