

Signposts along the Way

A liturgy of remembering and thanksgiving



In memory of

N

beloved colleague and friend

Time is too slow for those who wait,
too swift for those who fear,
too long for those who grieve,
too short for those who rejoice,
but for those who love, time is eternity.

Henry Van Dyke

Pastoral Introduction

When people die, their families, friends and colleagues suffer loss, shock and grief. Grief is like **a wound that requires time and care** if it is to heal.

Every life, including N's and our own, is precious. Increasingly people understand that there is a timeless, spiritual quality to our lives that continues even after our physical bodies have died. Even those who appreciate this spirituality find that there is a real sense of loss and pain at the death of a loved one.

It is my hope that the resources in this booklet will help you to express compassionate love in solidarity with all those who mourn; may it also afford you the opportunity to share your grief as well as your gratefulness for all that N was and all that she helped you to become.

Chaplain

I invite you now to take a stone
as a symbol of the love we share,
the memories we hold.

Everyone comes forward to take a different stone from the one they placed.

Take your new stone
and place it where you will along the way....
take it as a symbol of our moving forward in hope,
committed to building new cairns of love
among those with whom we share our living,
our loving, our being.

Go from here as people of eternal life:
life lived in the light of everything that truly matters
- the life and love that lasts for all time.
Lift high that life among the people you meet.
And may the life of God be wide and deep among us,
may the universe witness to the wonder of eternity
and our every moment be a moment worth keeping.

All **May every moment
be a moment worth keeping.**

To a troubled world: the peace of God
To a searching world: the love of God
To a waiting world: hope from God.
And may the blessing of God almighty,
+Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be upon you, and those whom you love,
both those you see and those you see no longer
now and always.

Amen.

All Let us go from here in peace.
To live in love and in hope. Amen.

Voice 3 **Time Will Ease The Hurt**

The sadness of the present days
is locked and set in time,
and moving to the future
is a slow and painful climb.

But all the feelings that are now
so vivid and so real
can't hold their fresh intensity
as time begins to heal.

No wound so deep will ever go
entirely away
yet every hurt becomes
a little less from day to day.

Nothing can erase the painful
imprints on your mind
but there are softer memories
that time will let you find.

Though your heart won't let the sadness
simply slide away, the echoes will diminish
even though the memories stay.

Anon

6 Going on our Way

The road, for each of us, will be furnished with love,
challenges, opportunities, friends, memories,
eternal, lasting treasures.
It will bring us to moments of choice and decision-making.
Wherever your journey takes you,
know that those you love are but a breath away.
Learn from their life, their wisdom, their freedom.

1 Some thoughts to begin...

Death is not the extinguishing of the light,
but the putting out of the lamp
because the dawn has come.

Rabindranath Tagore

2 Bringing what we bring...

As we gather, we bring with us a curious cocktail of emotions:
our own experiences, re-awakened today; memories of N,
times of fun, challenging times,
special moments shared along the way.

Through the ages, people on great
journeys have stopped at important places,
and at decisive moments, to build cairns at the roadside.

Today we will build a cairn of memories
to express our thankfulness for all that N was
and how she touched our lives
and the lives of so many others.

I invite you to collect a stone
and hold it gently in the palm of your hand
as you call N to mind.

Everyone collects a stone

I invite you to place your stone,
building a cairn,
naming either aloud or silently,
a word in remembrance of N...

The cairn is made



The cairn is blessed:

Loving God, bless this cairn, and all it represents
as we remember N:
For this moment in time, this cairn is sacred to us,
not because it holds N's spirit
—her spirit could not be bound by stone or limited in time....
N's true life is, we pray - through God's mercy -
to be found in the Kingdom God has promised to her
and to each one of us.
We give our respect as a mark of our love
and we honour that part of human life
that returns to the One who created us:
the Source of life and love
- we do this as those who are now prepared to let her go,
even as we grieve.

3 Readings are shared

Voice 1 **Afterglow**

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways.
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun.
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done

Carol Mirkel

Voice 2 **Memory**

She has achieved success who has lived well,
laughed often, and loved much;
Who has gained the respect of intelligent people
and the love of children;
Who has filled her niche and accomplished her task;
Who has left the world better than she found it;
Who has looked for the best in others
and given the best she had;
Whose life was an inspiration, whose memory is a blessing.

Robert Louis Stevenson

4 Prayers

O God, you live deeply within our lives:
we pray today that you will open the eyes of our hearts
that we may see what matters most
in our efforts to share your eternal love
that you give to us in our loved ones,
in those who challenge us,
and in our own hearts.
We thank you
for the time N shared with us in this place, and beyond:
for the memories we treasure;
the fun that was shared,
and the difficult times
during which arms were held out in loving embrace.

All **Reach your arms out to us, O God,
and embrace us with the love that will not let us go.**

5 The Entrusting of N's soul to God

The memory of N is a blessing to us and to others:
We entrust her soul, her spirit,
to the eternal tapestry of human endeavour.
May N's soul rest in peace.
in a place of joy, rest and fulfilment.

All **Loving God,
you have made each of us in your own image:
we thank you for N;
for the time we shared with her,
for the good we saw in her,
and for the memories we treasure.
Give us strength and courage
to leave her soul in your care
confident in your promise of eternal life:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**