

MEMORIAL SERVICE

As we Join our hearts in preparation for this time of remembrance for our loved one, our relative, and friend, let us listen to the words of comfort from the Psalmist. Let us hear these words as a special blessing to this moment:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still water; He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me... Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou anointest 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." (Momentary Pause)

Will you pray with me now the prayer that is dear to the hearts of all Christians, the Lord's Prayer? Let us pray:

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...and leave us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN."

Dear friends, sometimes in life we seem to be confronted with a challenge that seems too much for us to bear alone. At a time like this we gain comfort and strength from those caring people around us and, also, from the word of the master teacher, Jesus. He said:

"Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

He added this promise:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14)

When we are confronted with a challenge of saying good-bye to a loved one it is good to remember another admonition of Jesus. He said: "Do not Judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." (Or right thinking.)

Last Winter as we looked across the way to the trees whose branches were bare to the winter winds, we might have said that they looked as if they had no life; for after all, where were the green leaves that indicate life and movement? (Growth) Their limbs were naked and bare.

Life takes many forms and expressions. With the coming of spring, we saw the evidence of the life in the trees as they brought forth their new garment of blossoms and foliage.

Life takes many expressions. What we see now is only a pause, a rest in the ongoing procession of eternal life.

Our loved one, _____, has moved into a new cycle, a new phase of his/her eternal pilgrimage of life. For life does not begin with birth and it does not end with what we call death. We come together today to bless him/her on his/her way. We see _____ moving into higher realms of awareness of God's presence and peace. We know this is a pause, not the end of the Journey.

---Personal Comments---

For now, _____ has found it necessary to give up the garment of the soul that we call the body through which s/he completed this season of life. S/he has moved into a new dimension, a new room, one which we do not know. But of this we are assured, we each live in the Father's house of eternal life. It may appear that we are separate, yet we still live in the same house of eternal life in God. The wall that separates our loved one from our sight is but the human lack of comprehension of the things of Spirit. It, like a leafless tree, is symbolic of the many things we do not understand concerning death and life.., but we can know, with the assurance of the seasons, that we are all one in Spirit, and we are all one in God. In this oneness, life has no beginning, nor does it have an end.

Saying good-bye to someone is not always easy. I would say to you, bless _____, let _____ go.

To the body expression, the garment of the soul laid aside, we say: Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

But to this loved one we say: We bless you, _____, beloved of God. We behold you enfolded in the infinite love of God.

The infinite love from which you can never be separated. As we lose you and let you go on to the new horizons, new experiences in expression, our prayer for you is this:

The light of God surrounds you;
The love of God enfolds you;
The power of God protect you;
The presence of God watches over you;
Wherever you are, God is.

---Poem: "The Traveler"---

Let us pray:

Father-(Mother)-God, Holy Spirit of Life...we know that in your great love you are guiding your beloved children along the path of spiritual unfoldment; to your infinite love and care we release the spirit of our loved one, and place all who were near and dear to _____ lovingly in your hands, knowing that your peace which passes all understanding will fill their hearts and minds, now and forever. AMEN.

---This concludes our service.---