**FUNERAL SERVICE  
IN THE EVENT OF A MISCARRIAGE OR STILLBIRTH**

**Gathering in God’s Name**

**Sentences of Scripture**

God is our refuge and strength:

a very present help in trouble. *Psalm 46: 1*

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,  
   his mercies never come to an end;   
they are new every morning;  
   great is your faithfulness. *Lamentations 3: 22-23*

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. *Matthew 5: 4*

No eye has seen, no ear has heard,  
   nor has the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him. *1 Corinthians 2: 9*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. *1 Peter 1: 3*

**Greeting**

*The minister says*

May the peace and consolation of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*These or other suitable words of introduction may be used.*

We have gathered here today to commend a beloved child, *name …* to our heavenly Father, to assure the parent(s) … and … of God’s everlasting love, to acknowledge the deep sorrow in this loss, and to offer comfort and support.

Heavenly Father,

your Son took little children into his arms and blessed them.

Grant to us now the assurance that baby *…*

is encircled by those arms of love.

In the midst of our grief,

strengthen by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

our faith and hope in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*or*

For those who trust in God,  
in the pain of sorrow there is consolation  
in the face of despair there is hope,  
in the midst of death there is life.  
... *and .,.* as we mourn the death of …

we place ourselves in the hands of God

and ask for strength, for healing and for love. **Amen.**

**Proclaiming and Receiving the Word**

*These or other suitable readings may be used.*

The First Reading

*Jeremiah 31: 15-17*

Thus says the Lord:  
A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
   she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.   
Thus says the Lord:  
Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears;  
for there is a reward for your work, says the Lord:  
   they shall come back from the land of the enemy;   
there is hope for your future, says the Lord:  
   your children shall come back to their own country.

*or*

*Revelation 21: 1-5*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
‘See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;   
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.’

And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’

Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’

*or*

*1 John 3: 1‐2*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

A Psalm

*This or another suitable Psalm is used.*

*Psalm 139 – adapted.*

O Lord, you have searched us out and known us.

You know when we sit down and when we rise up;

you discern our thoughts from far away.

You search out our paths and our lying down,

and are acquainted with all our ways.

Even before a word is on our tongues, O Lord,

you know it completely.

You hem us in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon us.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for us.

**Search us out O Lord, and lay your hand upon us.**

Where can we go from your spirit?

Or where can we flee from your presence?

If we ascend to heaven, you are there;

if we make our beds in the depths, you are there.

If we take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead us.

**Search us out O Lord, and lay your hand upon us.**

If we say, “Surely the darkness shall cover us,

and the light around us become night,”

even the darkness is not dark to you;

the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

**Search us out O Lord, and lay your hand upon us.**

For it was you who formed our inward parts;

you knit us together in our mothers’ wombs.

We praise you, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; that we know very well.

**Search us out O Lord, and lay your hand upon us.**

The Gospel Reading

*Mark 10: 13-16*

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

*or*

*John 14: 1-3*

Jesus said, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.’

**Sermon**

*and/or*

**Symbolic Acts, and/or Reflection from the Minister/Parents/Family/Friends**

**The Prayers**

*May be said by the parents, other family members, or the minister.*

*The minister, a family member other than the parent(s), or a friend of the family says the last petition.*

O God, we offer our thanks for *…*,

who came to us as a precious gift from you,

even though *his/her* potential was not realised

as we would have wished.

Although we come with sorrow and with tears,

we trust in your unfailing love.

Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

We thank you that the Scriptures proclaim

that nothing can separate us from your love.

We acknowledge that even though *…*

has been part of our lives for a short time,

*he/she* has left a mark that will never be lost.

Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

We thank you too for the promise

that what we see here in this world is not all there is,

and for the hope of seeing *him/her* again

because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

Increase our capacity to trust in your grace, even through our loss.

Despite the emptiness that we now feel,

we know that *…* is safe in your arms of love.

Lord, in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

*The minister, a family member other than the parent(s), or a friend of the family say(s)*

O God, help and comfort the parent(s) of *…*

and all who grieve today.

We thank you for the people

who hold and support them

and ask that you continue to show

your grace to this family.

May your peace, courage, hope and light

draw us all together in this hour;

this we pray in the name of Jesus,

who died, and yet lives forever.  **Amen.**

**The Farewell in Christ**

*The minister says*

All loving and caring God, parent of us all,

you know our grief in our loss,

for you too suffered the death of your child.

Give us strength to go forward from this day,

trusting, where we do not understand, that your love never ends.

When all else fails, you still are God.

We thank you for the life and hope that you give

through the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ.

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 sorrow, your peace;

and to you, with your Church on earth and in heaven,

we offer honour and praise, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*The minister (and others if desired) stand before the coffin or urn and lay hands on it saying*

God our creator and redeemer,  
by your power Christ conquered death and entered into glory.

Confident of his victory  
and claiming his promises,  
we now leave your child .... in your gracious keeping;  
in the name of Jesus our Lord,  
who died and is alive  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

***or where the body is not present***Lord, faithful creator and most loving redeemer,  
whose Son took little children in his arms and blessed them:  
we now leave your child ... in your gracious keeping.  
We believe *he/she* is yours in death as in life.   
Comfort, we pray, all who have loved *him/her* on earth,  
and bring us all to your everlasting kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**The Committal**

Sentences of Scripture

*Any or all the following sentences of Scripture may be read.*

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. *John 11: 25, 26*

For I know that my redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth; then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold and not another. *Job 19: 25, 27*

For we brought nothing into the world so that we can take nothing out of it.   
*I Timothy 6: 7*

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1: 21*

*When the coffin or urn has been lowered into the grave, the minister says*

In as much as Almighty God,

in his wise providence,

has received from this world baby … ,

we therefore commit *this mortal body/these ashes* to the ground,

looking for the resurrection in the last day

and the life of the world to come,

through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*The minister continues*

Father in heaven,

raise us from the death of sin

to the life of righteousness,

that when we shall depart this life

we may rest in Christ.

We pray that at the resurrection on the last day

we may be found acceptable in your sight

and receive that blessing which your beloved Son

shall then pronounce to all who love and fear you, saying,

‘Come, you blessed of my Father,

receive the kingdom prepared for you

from the beginning of the world.’

Grant this, O merciful Father,

through Jesus Christ, our redeemer. **Amen.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of love, we thank you

for all with which you have blessed us,

for the gift of joy in days of health and strength

and for the gifts of your abiding presence and promise

in days of pain and grief.

We praise you for home and friends,

and for our baptism and place in your Church

with all who have faithfully lived and died.

Above all else we thank you for your Son

our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who knows our grief,

who died our death and rose for our sake,

and who lives and prays for us.

The Lord’s Prayer

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours**

**now and for ever. Amen.**

*or*

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

**Our Father, who art in heaven:**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory**

**for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The Dismissal**

Loving God,  
be with us as we face the mystery of life and death.  
Strengthen the bonds of this family as they bear their loss.  
Help them to go from here  
with courage and confidence in your care and love;  
through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

*A priest says*

May Christ the Good Shepherd enfold you with love,  
fill you with peace, and lead you in hope,  
this day and all your days:

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

be with you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

*If no priest is present the following is used.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with us all evermore.  **Amen.**

**Additional Liturgical and Pastoral Resources**

Alternative Introduction to the Funeral Service

*The minister says*

We meet in God’s loving presence

to acknowledge our loss of one so young.

God knows and loves this child

*[whose parent(s), … and …,*

*have given her/him the name …].*

We ask for God’s grace

that in our pain we may find comfort;

in our sorrow, hope;

in our questioning, understanding;

and in the experience of death, resurrection.

*or*

We have come together to worship God,

to thank him for his love,

and to remember the [short] life on earth of ....;

to share our grief and to leave *him/her* to the eternal care of God.

[We meet in the faith that death is not the end,

and may be faced without fear, bitterness or guilt.]

God of all mercies,

you make nothing in vain

and love all that you have made.

Comfort us in our grief,

and console us by the knowledge of your unfailing love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Alternative Old Testament Readings

*Where a child has lived briefly after birth:*

**Isaiah 65: 17-25**

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.   
But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.   
I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.   
No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days,

or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.   
They shall build houses and inhabit them;

they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.   
They shall not build and another inhabit;

they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.   
They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord - and their descendants as well.   
Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.   
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox;  
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

*On the theme of grief and hope:*

**Lamentations 3: 19-26, 31-33**

The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!   
My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.   
But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;   
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.   
‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.   
It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.   
For the Lord will not reject for ever.   
Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;   
for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

Prayers

*This prayer may be used within the funeral service or in hospital or at home.*

Lord, we do not understand why this life,

which we had hoped to bring into this world,

is now gone from us.

We only know that where there was sweet expectation,

now there is bitter disappointment;

where there was hope and excitement,

there is a sense of failure.

We have seen how fragile life is,

and nothing can replace this life, this child,

whom we have loved before seeing,

before feeling *him/her* stirring in the womb,

even before *he/she* was conceived.

In our pain and confusion, we look to you, Lord,

in whom no life is without meaning, however small or brief.

Let not our limited understanding confine our faith.

Draw us closer to you and to one another.

Lay our broken hearts open in faith to you

and in ever greater compassion to one another.

So raise us from death to life,

we pray in Christ’s name.  **Amen.**

*For use in the Funeral Service*

The Lord Jesus is the lover of his people and our only sure hope.  
Let us ask him to deepen our faith and sustain us in this dark hour.

You became a little child for our sake,

sharing our human life.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

You grew in wisdom, age and grace  
and learned obedience through suffering.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

You welcomed children, promising them your kingdom.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

You comforted those who mourned the loss of children and friends.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

You took upon yourself the suffering and death of us all.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

You promised to raise up those who believe in you,  
just as you were raised up in glory by the Father.  
To you we pray:

**bless us and keep us, O Lord.**

Pastoral Prayers

*For use with or by parents.*

God of hope,  
we come to you in shock and grief and confusion of heart.  
Help us to find peace  
in the knowledge of your loving mercy to all your children,  
and give us light to guide us out of our darkness  
into the assurance of your love. **Amen.**

*For use with parents.*

Compassionate God,

you alone can heal broken hearts and wipe away every tear.

We believe that you make nothing in vain;

nothing and no one is beyond your love and care.

Be with those whose time of joy has been turned to sadness,

that together we may be enfolded in your love,

now and in all eternity

in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Loving Father, you are our refuge and strength,

our hope and constant care.

Comfort these parents

with the knowledge that the child for whom they grieve

is now entrusted to your loving embrace.

Wipe every tear from their eyes

and mend their broken hearts

that, yearning for life,

they may find fulfilment in Jesus your Son

whose rising from the dead restores our lives to you,

and leads us to the life of heaven.

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The material contained in this file is Copyright © 2020 The Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland.*