

# *Resources Pack*



Compiled by Linda Frost

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## Fact or Myth

Myth	Fact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who talk about it do not die by suicide.</li> </ul>	<p>Most people who kill themselves have given definite warnings of their intentions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicidal people are absolutely intent on dying.</li> </ul>	<p>Most suicidal people have mixed feelings about living and dying; they gamble with death, but may keep the desire to live.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicide happens without warning.</li> </ul>	<p>Suicidal people often use words or actions to indicate that they are thinking about suicide.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once a person becomes suicidal they are suicidal forever.</li> </ul>	<p>Suicidal thoughts may return, but they are not permanent, and in some people, they may never return.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a crisis, improvement means that the suicide risk is over.</li> </ul>	<p>Many suicides occur in a 'period of improvement' when the person has the energy and will to turn despairing thoughts into self- destructive action.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicide occurs mainly among the poor.</li> </ul>	<p>Suicide occurs in all groups of society.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicidal behaviour is a sign of mental illness.</li> </ul>	<p>Suicidal behaviour means a person is very unhappy, but they are not necessarily mentally ill.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are either suicidal or you are not.</li> </ul>	<p>It could happen to anyone.</p>

*Suicide Prevention in the Community, A Practical Guide*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mary O'Sullivan and Mike Rainsford, Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention, Health Service Executive (HSE) West, with the assistance of Nicole Sihera, Research Officer < [http://www.nosp.ie/practical\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nosp.ie/practical_guide.pdf) > (accessed 9 March 2014)

### **What are the warning signs that someone is at risk from Suicide?**

- Threats of suicide, for example, ‘I’m going to shoot myself’ or ‘I don’t want to go on.’
- Preoccupation with death, including talk of hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness.
- Previous suicide attempts.
- Depression.
- Trouble with school or work.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Risk-taking.
- Isolation; withdrawal from family and friends.
- Personality changes or odd behaviour.
- Difficulty with sleep or loss of appetite
- Moodiness, including anger and crying.
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting one’s life in order, including the preparation or changing of a will.
- The sudden appearance of happiness and calm after a period during which some of the above characteristics were present.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Marcus, *Why Suicide ?* (New York, HarperCollins, 2010), p 105.

## What to say or not to say

### Do say

- “I can’t begin to imagine how you feel, but I’m here.”
- “I remember ‘this’ or ‘that’ about\_\_\_\_\_ “(Single out some special quality of the deceased, and comment on it.)
- “I don’t have an answer.”
- “You have a right to feel as you do.”
- “You feel alone now, but some of us have been where you are. When you are ready, we may be of help. ”
- “There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Take your time.”
- “You may not believe it now, but time will help in some ways.
- “Life can be unfair; this is unfair.”
- “You’re on my mind. I know you’re surviving, but how are you?”
- “I’m glad you are showing anger, because it lets me know how you really feel.”
- “Tell me how you feel.”
- “I don’t know what to say to you. Help me.”
- “I feel so helpless. Do you?”
- “I have so many questions. Do you?”
- “Would you rather not talk about it?” or “Do you want to talk about it?”
- “I wish I knew what you are thinking”
- “What are you remembering?”
- “It’s okay if you are at a loss for words when you are with me.”
- “Of course, you don’t always know what to say.’
- “It isn’t easy, is it?”
- “Would you like to discuss how you plan to deal with this?”
- “You must be very confused. Do you want to talk about it?”
- “I’m confused. May I talk about it?”
- “If you care to tell me what you want or need, maybe we can work together to find some answers.”<sup>3</sup>

### Don’t Say

- *Time’s a great healer*  
Time alone does not heal and must not be taken for a healer. It only brings a new perspective and when those bereaved are faced with future losses then the hurts resurface to overwhelm them once again.

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<sup>3</sup> Eleanora Betsy Ross, *After Suicide, A Ray of Hope for those left Behind* (Cambridge, Da Capo Press, 2001), pp166-7

- *There's a reason for everything.*  
In the minds of those grieving there is no good reason for such devastating pain and loss.
- *God is good...*  
To those grieving a 'good God' wouldn't give only to take away and leave such emptiness.
- *God has deserted you.*  
Having been abandoned and rejected by a person who chose to leave is bad enough, but to also add God as doing the same is far too much for those grieving. God may be a comforting, reassuring presence for many and it's wrong to make such a negative, untrue statement. God never deserts us, especially in an hour of need.
- *Your loved one is at peace now.*  
Those bereaved aren't feeling at peace or at ease and are struggling in their pain, but hopefully they won't have to go to heaven to find peace again.
- *He/she is up in Heaven with the angels.*  
Bereaved people just want the person back on earth with them.
- *God can be so cruel.*  
This implies God has picked out the family for punishment and is only loving and sustaining when He decides to be.
- *How are feeling?*  
The bereaved do not what they are or what they are supposed to be feeling.
- *How will you cope?*  
The bereaved do not know how or if they will cope.
- *You must be in a state of shock.*  
They do not know whether they are in shock or not, all they know is that they are living a nightmare and they can't wake up.
- *He/she had everything to live for.* If the loved one had everything to live for they would be alive instead of dead.
- *God never gives more than we able to cope with.*  
If this was true, in the minds of the bereaved suicide wouldn't take place.
- *You are so brave and strong.*  
This implies that to be weak physically or mentally is wrong.
- *He/she was not meant for this life.*  
It implies that the person should never have born in the first place.
- *He/she has not gone; they will always be with you.*  
This means little as they cannot see or talk to the person. Many feel like killing their loved one for leaving so much pain and anguish behind.
- *I know how you feel.*  
No two circumstances or grieving process is the same.
- *You must do this or that.* The bereaved have no energy and are hardly able for breathing at times.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Sarah McCarthy, *A Voice for Those Bereaved by Suicide*, (Dublin, Veritas, 2001), pp 25-28.

## Self-Care

### Taking care of yourself while helping a depressed person

There's a natural impulse to want to fix the problems of people we love, but you can't control a loved one's depression. You can, however, control how well you take care of yourself. It's just as important for you to stay healthy as it is for the depressed person to get treatment, so make your own well-being a priority.

Remember the advice of airline flight attendants: put on your own oxygen mask before you assist anyone else. In other words, make sure your own health and happiness are solid before you try to help someone who is depressed. You won't do your friend or family member any good if you collapse under the pressure of trying to help. When your own needs are taken care of, you'll have the energy you need to lend a helping hand.

### Tips for taking care of yourself

Think of this challenging time like a marathon; you need extra sustenance to keep yourself going. The following ideas will help you keep your strength up as you support your loved one through depression treatment and recovery.

- **Speak up for yourself.** You may be hesitant to speak out when the depressed person in your life upsets you or lets you down. However, honest communication will actually help the relationship in the long run. If you're suffering in silence and letting resentment build, your loved one will pick up on these negative emotions and feel even worse. Gently talk about how you're feeling before pent-up emotions make it too hard to communicate with sensitivity.
- **Set boundaries.** Of course you want to help, but you can only do so much. Your own health will suffer if you let your life be controlled by your loved one's depression. You can't be a caretaker round the clock without paying a psychological price. To avoid burnout and resentment, set clear limits on what you are willing and able to do. You are not your loved one's therapist, so don't take on that responsibility.
- **Stay on track with your own life.** While some changes in your daily routine may be unavoidable while caring for your friend or relative, do your best to keep appointments and plans with friends. If your depressed loved one is unable to go on an outing or trip you had planned, ask a friend to join you instead.
- **Seek support.** You are NOT betraying your depressed relative or friend by turning to others for support. Joining a support group, talking to a counsellor or clergyman, or confiding in a trusted friend will help you get through this tough time. You don't need to go into detail about your loved one's depression or betray confidences; instead focus on your emotions and what you are feeling. Make sure you can be totally honest with the person you turn to - no judging your emotions!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I Choose Life- Facebook <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/i-choose-life/taking-care-of-yourself-while-helping-a-depressed-person/19336858086989914>> January 2014 at 13:33  
>, 25 January 2014

## Self-Care for Helpers

**Make Adequate Time for Yourself.** It's easy to be consumed by all the various demands in our lives. Regularly scheduling time for yourself can make a big difference. Even something as simple as scheduling a lunch hour and really taking it can help.

**Do something you enjoy.** Do something just for you. This can range from pleasure reading, to taking a class unrelated to our profession just because you have an interest in that area, to doing something connected to athletics and the arts.

**Take Care of Yourself Physically and Spiritually.** Take the time to undergo regular physical exams and dental care, exercise regularly (even a little is better than none), get adequate rest, maintain a healthy diet (keeping fast food to a minimum if possible), get a massage, take a yoga class, or meditate, attend to your spiritual needs in some other more personal way. Keep in mind that self-care is a good thing. Self-care is not selfishness. The better job we do in taking care of ourselves, the better job we can do to take care of our communities.

**Say NO!** Setting reasonable limits and having realistic expectations for yourself is of great importance. Have firm and consistent boundaries and limit the number of difficult individuals you counsel at any one time.

**Don't Isolate.** Stay involved in outside organizations and community projects. Schedule regular lunch meetings with other faith community leaders in your area. Attend national conferences. Build a network of support outside the walls of your individual faith community. Consider peer supervision among pastoral care providers.

**Watch Out for Warning Signs of Burnout.** These include: violating boundaries, self-medicating, wishing those who are in need would not show up, finding it difficult to focus on the needs of your faith community, and being preoccupied with our own needs and issues.

**Be your Brothers' and Sisters' Keeper.** Watch out for warning signs of distress, burnout, and impairment in colleagues.

Don't overlook the signs or think they will work it out on their own.

**Conduct Periodic Distress and Impairment Self-Assessments and Seek Help When Needed.** Be aware of your caregiver blind spot. We can see others' needs but often overlook our own. If assistance is needed, consult with a trusted colleague.

**Focus on Prevention.** By attending to the issues raised and by using the strategies outlined above, we can live a healthier lifestyle that will help to prevent distress and impairment. Stress is a part of our lives. Accept it, respond to it, and avoid the costly consequences of practicing while impaired.

**Make Time for Self-Care!** Integrate it into your lifestyle and regular routine. You'll be glad you did.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The Role of Faith Communities in Suicide Prevention, the Carson J. Spencer Foundation, <<http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/2010FaithLeaderGuideBookweb.pdf>> (accessed 25 January 2014)

## **Books**

*After Suicide: A Ray of Hope for those Left Behind*, by Elenora Betsy Ross (Cambridge, MA, DaCapo Press, 2001)

*No Time to say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One* by Carla Fine (Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 2002)

*Grieving A Suicide: A Loved One's Search for Comfort, Answers & Hope*, by Albert Y. Hsu (Madison, InterVarsity Press, 2002)

The three books listed above provide comfort and understanding, through real life stories and research for both carers and survivors.

### **Also for Survivors,**

*A Special Scar: The Experiences of People Bereaved by Suicide*, by Alison Wertheimer (New York, Routledge, 2001)

*After Suicide: Help for the Bereaved* by Sheila Clark (South Yarra, Australia, Michelle Anderson Publishing, 1995) A Bereavement Workbook.

*A Voice for those Bereaved by Suicide*, by Sarah McCarthy (Dublin, Veritas, 2001)

*When Heaven is Silent; Trusting God when Life Hurts*, by Ron Dunn (Fort Washington, PLC Publications, 2008)

### **Children**

*The Little Flower Bulb: Helping Children Bereaved by Suicide* by Eleanor Gormally, (Dublin, Veritas, 2011)

### **Books for Clergy**

*Sermons on Suicide* by James Clemons (Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989)

Flourish. *Suicide Awareness, A Churches Initiative on Suicide* (Northern Ireland: Churches Community Work Alliance NI in conjunction with Public Health Agency)

Free Download, *Faith Leaders Guide Book*, The Role of Faith Communities in Suicide Prevention, the Carson J. Spencer Foundation, <

<http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/2010FaithLeaderGuideBookweb.pdf>

*From Dispair to Hope: A Christian Perspective on the Tragedy of Suicide*, by Robert Cochran, Edith Loane, Katherine Meyer, Joan Rippingale, and Tony Walsh (Dublin, Veritas, Methodist Church in Ireland 2002)

## **Other useful sources**

*Suicide Prevention in the Community; A Practical Guide* by Mary O'Sullivan, Mike Rainsford, and Nicole Sihera. (Health Service Executive, 2011)

ASIST Training Program – Free training for all. Contact numbers for all areas can be found on the following website, National Office for Suicide Prevention, < [http://www.nosp.ie/html/HSE\\_officers.html](http://www.nosp.ie/html/HSE_officers.html) > accessed 9 March 2014

Console is a National Organisation supporting people in Suicidal Crisis and those Bereaved by Suicide through Professional Counselling, Support and Helpline Services. < <http://www.console.ie/> >

Living Links provide practical help and support to those bereaved by Suicide, < <http://www.livinglinks.ie/> >

A full bibliography can be found at the back of my dissertation.

The American Association of Suicidology also provides an extensive book list on the following website < [http://www.suicidology.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=257&name=DLFE-455.pdf](http://www.suicidology.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=257&name=DLFE-455.pdf) > (accessed 9 March 2014)

## HELP – Contact Numbers and websites

- AWARE – A National Voluntary Organisation providing support through depression, **Phone 1890 303 302**, < [info@aware.ie](mailto:info@aware.ie) >
- HEADSTRONG – Headstrong works with communities to ensure young people between 12 and 25 are better supported to achieve mental health and wellbeing, Phone **(01) 6607343**, < [info@headstrong.ie](mailto:info@headstrong.ie) >
- HEADSUP – Information on where to go for help in a crisis is now available through your mobile phone. **Text the word Heads Up to 50424**
- SAMARITANS – The Samaritans offer a 24/7 support service all year round, for anyone in emotional distress. **Phone 1850 60 90 90**
- CONSOLE – Supports and helps those bereaved by suicide. Services include counselling, support groups, confidential listening service. **Freephone 1800 201 890**, < [www.console.ie](http://www.console.ie) >
- 1Life – 24 hr, Suicide prevention line, **Freephone 1800 247 100**
- SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT – Offers support, support groups and information to those bereaved by suicide, **0214553802**
- LIVING LINKS – Trained volunteers who offer practical support and advice to families who have experienced a death by suicide. Phone **087 9693021**, < [www.livinglinks.ie](http://www.livinglinks.ie) >
- SOSAD – An organisation supporting those dealing with suicide, Phone **041 984 8754**, < [www.sosadireland.ie](http://www.sosadireland.ie) >
- 3ts, Turning the Tide of Suicide, Phone 01 2139905, < [www.3ts.ie](http://www.3ts.ie) >
- Pieta House – Prevention and Support, Suicidal thoughts, self-harm **01-6010000**, < <http://www.pieta.ie/index.php/about> >
- The HSE provide an extensive help list for all mental health issues < [http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/support\\_services/](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/support_services/) > (accessed 9 March 2014)
- For further contact numbers for mental health and depression, children and teenagers, drugs and alcohol, Console in conjunction with the Irish examiner have produced a very helpful booklet, *Let's Talk Suicide*, [www.console.ie](http://www.console.ie)

# *Liturgical Resources*



*A light shone in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*Poems  
and  
Reflections*



Rosemary for Remembrance

## **We are Living Links**

Like you  
We too have lived in dread  
Have circled someone else's pain.  
We too have made appointments  
And sat in waiting rooms, gazing unseeing at magazines.

Like you,  
We have suffered the knock on the door  
Or the late -night ringing of the phone  
And paced the Purgatory of A and E  
And seen our worst nightmare in a doctor's face.

Like you  
We too have asked 'why?'  
We have tortured our hearts with 'if only'  
Have been dumbed and deafened  
By the consolation of others.

We are Living Links.  
We have been bereaved by suicide.

In the shadow of death, we have chosen to live.  
Despite the pain, we have chosen to feel.  
Tempted to forgetfulness, We have chosen to remember.  
We are like you but not you.  
Our losses are alike but not the same.  
Grief is always a singular word  
Unique to the one who lives it.

We offer a hand and heart  
To those who are numbed by pain  
Burning with anger  
Scalded by guilt.  
We have no answers  
No reasons  
We make no promises.  
Except, that we will walk with you  
Or sit in your silence  
Or listen as you tell your story.  
We will not tire of you.  
Take our hand in yours  
Rest awhile in our companionship  
Be real and free to feel

If peace will come  
It will come at your own pace  
In your own time.  
Until that time  
We are here for you. Today, tomorrow  
And for as long as you need us.  
*Christy Kenneally, Author and Broadcaster.*

## **Grief Cannot be Shared**

Grief cannot be shared, for it is mine alone.  
Grief is a dying within me,  
a great emptiness.  
A frightening void.  
It is loneliness,  
a sickening sorrow at night,  
on awakening a terrible dread.  
Another's words do not help.  
A reasoned argument explains little  
for having tried too much.  
Silence is the best response to another's grief.  
Not the silence that is a pause in speech,  
awkward and unwanted,  
but one that unites heart to heart.  
Love, speaking in silence, is the way into  
the void of another's grief.  
The best of all loves comes silently,  
and slowly too, to soften the pain of grief  
and begin to dispel the sadness.  
It is the love of God, warm and true,  
which will touch the grieving heart and heal it.  
He looks at the grieving person and has pity,  
for grief is a great pain.  
He came among us to learn about grief  
And much else too, this Man of Sorrows.  
He knows. He understands.  
Grief will yield to peace – in time.

*Cardinal Basil Hume*

## **Grief – A Reflection**

Though the silent weeping of your heart lessens, you get on, more or less, with your life; a place is kept within you for the one who is gone. No other will ever be given the key to that door. As the years go on you may not remember the departed every day with your conscious mind. Yet below your surface mind, some part of you is always in their presence.

From their side, our friends in the unseen world are always secretly embracing us in their new and bright belongings. Though we may forget them, they can never forget us; their secret embrace unknowingly shelters and minds us.

The bright moment in grief is when the sore absence gradually changes into a well of presence. You become aware of the subtle companionship of the departed one. You know that when you are in trouble, you can turn to this presence beside you and draw on it for encouragement and blessing. The departed is now no longer restricted to any one place and can be with you any place you are. It is good to know the blessings of this presence.

*John O'Donohue, 1998*

*The following poems and reflections have been provided by Console and were part of their Celebration of Light Services in 2012 and 2013.*

### **No One Knew**

No one knew the torment,  
that you were going through;  
We only kept on seeing  
What we really wanted to.

We saw the outward smile,  
but not your inner pain;  
We never really dreamt,  
That you would never smile again.

Forgive us if we failed to see,  
What we could do to aid;  
Or if we failed to comprehend,  
How much you were afraid.

We pray your mental anguish,  
Will now forever cease;  
And that your deep anxieties,  
Will be replaced by peace.

We know your pain invaded,  
Every single thought you had;  
It made you cry internally,  
And deeply, deeply sad.

But we in turn remember,  
The good times, not the bad;  
We remember when you smiled at us,  
And not when you were sad.

So when we think about your life,  
We won't dwell upon its close;  
We'll remember all the good times,  
And forget about life's blows.

We'll remember all the happiness,  
The joy and not the tears;  
The assurance and the confidence,  
And not irrational fears.

Our lives have all been better,  
Because you have been there;  
So now we leave your memory,  
With gentle-loving care

**‘We Remember Them’ -**

In the rising of the sun and in its going down

**We remember them.**

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,

**We remember them.**

In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,

**We remember them.**

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,

**We remember them.**

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,

**We remember them.**

In the beginning of the year and when it ends,

**We remember them.**

When we are weary and in need of strength,

**We remember them.**

When we are lost and sick at heart,

**We remember them.**

When we have joys we yearn to share,

**We remember them.**

*Eileen Dunne*

**I have left a little Light for you**

I have left a little light for you

so you will know

That someone cares...

Just where it becomes

The most dark and difficult

To find your way,

There is the light left for you

And when your way becomes lighter,

Please go back to the darkest place

Where you have been,

And set the little light there

To give heart

To the next trembling soul

That braves the path through the dark ...

*Eileen Dunne*

## Companions

'A companion is someone who shares bread with me.  
The making of bread involves an unmaking.  
The kernels of corn are crushed  
Water and salt are added  
And every element is subjected to the intense heat of an oven.

In our losses  
We break and dismantle the normal life we once knew  
We do this with tears; salt and water.  
And subject every element to the fiery passion of our emotions.

As we journey through grief  
We become aware of the resilience;  
the adaptability we have developed  
through other trials in our lives  
and become companions to our real  
and resourceful selves.

We reach out to the companionship of others,  
to family, friends and neighbours  
granting them the privilege of walking this road with us  
and blessing them for their companionship.

And finally, we integrate our loved one into our hearts  
as life-companions  
Who will be with us, within us  
In tears and joys  
In smiles and memories,  
Forever'

*Christie Kenneally*

### **Console me...**

My world is shattered... console me  
My heart is aching... comfort me  
Walk in my shoes... understand me.  
Be a light in my darkness... stay with me  
Listen to my heart... reach out to me.  
When my footsteps are slow... don't hurry me.  
When my faith is shaken... be my rock.  
When my tears fall like rain... let me weep.  
When I am fearful... assure me  
When I am searching... walk with me.  
When I am questioning... don't give me answers.  
When I am tortured with self-blame... be gentle with me  
Pray for my wholeness... remember me  
When I am vulnerable... console me.  
And... when I am ready, I will put the shattered pieces of my world  
together again into a new pattern, because you consoled me.

## **“Shoes”**

I am wearing a pair of shoes.  
They are ugly shoes.  
Uncomfortable shoes.  
I hate my shoes.  
Each day I wear them, and each day I wish I had another pair.  
Some days my shoes hurt so bad that I do not think I can take another step.  
Yet, I continue to wear them.  
I get funny looks wearing these shoes.  
They are looks of sympathy.  
I can tell in others eyes that they are glad they are my shoes and not theirs.  
They never talk about my shoes.  
To learn how awful my shoes are might make them uncomfortable.  
To truly understand these shoes you must walk in them.  
But, once you put them on, you can never take them off.

I now realize that I am not the only one who wears these shoes.  
There are many pairs in this world.  
Some people are like me and ache daily as they try and walk in them.  
Some have learned how to walk in them so they don't hurt quite as much.  
Some have worn the shoes so long that days will go by before they think about how much they hurt.  
No person deserves to wear these shoes.  
Yet, because of these shoes I am a stronger person.  
These shoes have given me the strength to face anything.  
They have made me who I am.  
I will forever walk in the shoes of a person who has lost a loved one through Suicide.

*Eillean Dunne*

## **Grief's Companion**

Compassion is grief's loving companion.  
It sits beside the mourner  
often silent,  
holding a space of empathy,  
a warm presence,  
that lets the lost know  
they can be found,  
the empty know  
love will not long tolerate a void,  
but will rush forth once more  
to fill our heart space with hope.

Compassion never says  
'everything will be okay'  
it knows that to be cold comfort  
Often such things are said

to ease the unease of others  
who cannot bear to be so close  
to the raw knife-edge of pain  
for fear that it might open  
the scars of their own wounds.

Instead, it allows things to be  
what they are  
in the moment  
and in that full recognition  
we know the salve of acceptance,  
and the beginning of all  
lasting healing.

*Christy Kenneally*

### **Lifekeepers Promise**

Someone we love  
Did not keep their life  
In pain and anguish  
They ended their strife  
In this lifetime on Earth  
We'll see them no more  
Yet we carry them always  
In our soul, in our core

Now we're left here  
And we must stay  
We have Life to live  
To the fullest each day

For we are the Lifekeepers  
A promise we make  
To celebrate their Lives  
Our own not to take

We are the Lifekeepers  
Truth Bearers, Peace Seekers  
We are the Wounded  
We are the Healed  
We are the Lifekeepers  
Our commitment now sealed

*Sandy Martin*

### **The Hope Prayer**

Lord, I pray this night for all who grieve  
Because their loved one has taken leave  
Without warning  
Without sign  
Gone before their time

What sadness fills the heart  
To cause a soul to thus depart  
And leave so much behind?

Lord, there are so many questions  
Unasked  
Unanswered  
Unknown  
Why such loss  
Should ever come  
To many homes?

Lord  
May your angel bring  
Comfort in the endless night of sorrow  
May a quiet peace settle  
Within the hearts of those left behind  
And in your goodness  
Can You stir a sign?  
A treasured memory  
A word of praise  
A smiling photo  
A friend's embrace  
All reminding  
We are not alone

May you call home, The one who has left us  
To your consoling arms, Where pain and sorrow  
Are no longer known

May quiet understanding  
Come to fill the vacant place  
Where memory serves to ease the pain  
And somewhere deep inside  
Hope will bloom again  
And when you look  
Through heavens veil  
May soft tears fall  
Like silver pearls  
And ease the lonely mind

For in Your House, There is a room  
Your promise to us all, A place of peace  
A place of love, A healing place for all. *Liam Lawton*

### **This is the place**

This is the place  
Where death meets life,  
Where sorrow is present  
Where hard questions are asked  
And not always answered.

This is the place  
Where pain is felt,  
Where partings are real,  
Where holy words  
Can ring empty and hollow.

This is the place  
Where we ask 'Why'  
Where we cry 'what now?'  
Where God is near  
Or feels so far away.

This is the place  
Where emotions are mixed,  
Where tears are shed,  
Where memories return  
Of brighter yesterdays.

This is the place  
Where God says, 'I know.'  
Where God says, 'I am here.'  
Where God sheds a tear  
Along with us.

This is the place  
Where God understands,  
Where God stands and waits,  
Where Jesus says  
'I went through it.'

This is the place  
Where Easter is hope,  
Where eternity is God,  
Where each ending  
Becomes a beginning.

This is the place  
Where God is all around  
And very much alive  
Because we need him  
Here in this place.

*Marjorie Dobson*

### **My God, My God, Why?**

My God, my God, why?  
O God, but he was beautiful!  
Such a lovely boy,  
cheeky, full of fun,  
the life and soul of the party.  
Such a caring boy,  
looking out for his brothers and sisters-  
he'd do anything to help anyone.  
My beautiful, beautiful boy!

My God, my God, why?  
Why did he leave us?  
He had so much to live for-  
partner, children, career.  
Why didn't he confide in us?  
We could have helped:  
a problem shared is a problem solved.

My God, my God, why?  
Why did he forsake us?  
Why was he just so wrapped up  
in a despair we never saw was there?  
Why did he make that awful choice?  
Did he see no other solution,  
or did some switch in his brain simply flip,  
like the psychologist said?

My God, my God, why?  
Did he know he would leave us with this guilt,  
this pain,  
this confusion,  
this despair,  
this anger,  
this grief?  
So many questions,  
and I don't understand!  
Do you understand, God?

My God, my God, why?

*The words of this piece can be adapted as necessary.*

## **Left**

There are times when I am so angry with him.  
How could he have done such a thing to me? Such a selfish thing!  
He's now out of the picture. All his problems are solved.  
He couldn't cope with life, so he ended it all.  
Finished! Done! Let somebody else clear up the mess.  
And that means me.  
Didn't he recognise that the shock of finding him could have killed  
me?  
Or was he so wrapped up in his own misery that he didn't even  
consider that?  
Oh God, Why?  
Why did he not talk about his despair?  
Why didn't he trust me enough to try to explain?  
How can I live with this guilt?  
Should I have noticed something?  
Will I ever forgive myself?  
Or him?  
Will I ever get over this?  
God, if you're there and if you care,  
please listen and understand.  
I need someone who can.

*Marjorie Dobson*

## **When Finest Aspirations Fail**

When finest aspirations fail  
and dreams become dismay  
and all the hopes tomorrow held  
lie felled by yesterday,  
what can we do, where do we turn,  
what can we say?

We hurt for what has happened  
and we fear for what's to come;  
and easy consolation leaves us  
negative and numb  
and wondering whether deeper depths  
are yet to plumb.

Still they control our destiny  
who, deaf to our demands,  
are ruled by other values  
and defer to their commands?  
And are our futures safe  
in these unwanted hands?

Oh, Christ , you lost control,  
or so it seems, when to a tree  
they nailed you and regaled you  
and refused to set you free;  
and all because you showed  
how life was meant to be.

Then must our hopes,  
like you be broken down beyond repair;  
must we be lost powerless,  
befriended by despair,  
in order somehow to be saved  
and sense God's care?

And shall our hope, like you  
arise from where they ceased to be;  
and shall the spirit that was crushed  
be transformed and set free?  
If that's God will, then we await  
what's yet to be.

*Wild Goose Publications*

# *Prayers*



## **Prayers on Depression**

Light of the World  
Bless all who are in darkness,  
Shine upon us in love  
Be with the despairing,  
Support the depressed  
Comfort the suicidal  
Give us your hope  
Give us your joy  
Give us your peace,  
Lighten our darkness  
Today and evermore.

## **The Depressed**

Have compassion, O Lord, on those who are depressed  
And cast down in spirit.  
Let your light shine into their darkness  
Rekindle in them the lamp of hope  
Give them the assurance of your unchanging love and  
Unfailing companionship, and so grant them courage to  
Face life bravely, in the name and strength of  
Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*Martin Parsons*

We remember, Lord, the slenderness of the thread which separates  
life from death, and the suddenness with which it can be broken.  
Help us also to remember that on both sides of that division we are  
surrounded by your love.  
Persuade our hearts that when our dear one die neither we nor they  
are parted from you.  
In you may we find our peace and in you be united with them in the  
glorious body of Christ,  
who has burst the bonds of death and is alive forevermore,  
our saviours and theirs for ever and ever.  
Amen

*Dick Williams*

## Let there be no Whispering Here

Let there be no whispering, no secrets here:  
Our hearts are broken.

\_\_\_\_\_ took his/her own life.  
And even though it might appear  
that s/he died by his/her own hand,  
no one does this without great, coercing pain,  
inner suffering that seems to have no end,  
even though we wish  
s/he knew that no agony is forever.

Source of compassion, help us to cry out loud,  
to hold each other gently,  
to live with unanswerable questions,  
normal feelings of anger and guilt,  
and this gaping hole of loss.  
Help us to reach out to others who are suffering,  
to show them our love, to say the kind word,  
and that this is not a choice we condone  
or is worth imitation.  
It is hard to see the divine image in the lives of those who suffer.

The sun sets and rises.  
We put one foot in front of the other.  
We hold our hearts in our hands.  
We lift them up to You, God of eternal peace,  
and to each other.  
Help us live each day. Amen. *Rabbi Joseph Meszler,*

### A Prayer of Supplication Example –

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, we pray for those who are suffering.

**Response:** Give us wisdom to know what we can do to comfort them and be with us as we attempt to do so.

**Leader:** Today, we especially ask that you be with those who are in despair, those who feel hopeless and those living with a mental illness. Help them to have faith that you are with them even in their most difficult times.

**Response:** Guide us as we show your love and compassion.

**Leader:** Grant us courage and wisdom to help remove the stigma of mental illness from those who suffer.

**Response:** give us understanding and openness that we might reach out in love to persons who are ill and their families.

**Leader:** Lord, bless us with your enabling love. Heal our brokenness that we may be true signs of that love. As you send us, your servants, out from this place, be our constant companion. Guide us in our efforts to better serve our neighbours, those with mental illness and their loved ones. Help us to share the life-giving power of your love that those in need may experience your steadfast love. In our hearts we silently promise to be true signs of Your love for those with a mental illness among us and their families.

**All:** Bless, guide and heal us. We pray in the name of Jesus, who has shown us the way.  
Amen

## **Credo**

In life.  
In death.  
God loves us.

In life.  
In death.  
God cares what happens to us.

In life.  
In death.  
God asks us to be loving.

In life.  
In death.  
God does not abandon us.

In life.  
In death.  
God loves us.

Life without end?

Amen

## **Life's Dark Valleys**

Loving Father,  
We know that life's journey  
Sometimes leads through dark valleys  
And that many are travelling that path right now,  
Even as we are.  
Help us to remember that however dark that valley,  
The darkness does not hide us from you.  
May it not hide you from us  
But may we know that you are always near us,  
Sharing our burden and entering into our grief.  
Help us also to remember  
That the valley will not go on forever;  
That with you by our side  
We shall at length emerge from it, and the darkness will lift,  
And we shall again praise you, Our Saviour and our God, Amen

## **Suicide Victim Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come to you today mourning the sudden and tragic death of our dear one who suffered such unbearable mental and physical pain. We cannot imagine the intensity of their suffering or the dark depths of their loneliness and despair that prevented them from reaching out to You or to us for help.

We cling to the promise You have made in Psalm 34:18 where You say, “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those crushed in spirit.” (NIV) From this Your Word we believe that You, in Your great and tender mercy, were near to our dear one at the hour of their death and that Your mysterious saving power was at work in their final moments here on earth. We cling to the hope that our dear one is now surrounded by Your healing, loving presence. We claim Revelation 21:4 for our dear one and for ourselves, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (NIV)

Dear Father, we lay before you the burning questions weighing heavily on our hearts today. We offer these questions up to You as part of our continuing yet wounded love for our dear one. We wonder if we could we have done something to intervene before it was too late. We are second guessing whether there were signs we overlooked or didn't know how to read. We are examining our thoughts and actions, questioning whether we expressed our love and support often enough or adequately enough.

We place ourselves, our questions, our guilt and our regrets at the foot of the cross, covering them with your strong promises in Isaiah where it says of Jesus, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows...but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone stray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53: 4,5,6 NIV)

We pray that the beauty and gift of our dear one's life will not be negated or overshadowed by their tragic death or final pain. Help us to celebrate the memory of our dear one and to be thankful for their life among us. Often bring to our minds their unique personality, their accomplishments, their dreams and the ordinary blessings of time spent together. Here are some very special memories of my dear one that I will always treasure in my heart ....

Finally, we pray desperately for ourselves that You will teach us how to go on living. Show us how to bear the daily pain of our grief and sorrow. Give us the courage to reach out for help, to share our story, to admit our needs and to pray when all we see is darkness and discouragement. Guide us, help us, hold us. Grant strength daily and hourly. Carry us in Your arms one day at a time until we are again surrounded by the light of life.

We now say farewell and commend our dear one to Your loving arms. In the name of Jesus, our Saviour, Amen.

*Karen Barber*

*The following prayer could be used, with statistics adapted, in conjunction with teaching/preaching on mental health.*

God of Life,  
our hearts go out  
to all those whose  
suffering and loss  
is so deep and unrelenting  
that they want to end it all.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
help us to understand  
and to empathize with  
the isolation, the fear,  
and the loneliness of  
all those who are bullied  
by others and made to feel  
they are worthless.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
help us to understand  
and to empathize with  
the terrible toll that  
pressure and demands  
from parents, teachers,  
and peers can have  
upon sensitive souls  
who are unappreciated  
and, in many cases,  
are treated like dirt.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
help us to understand  
and to empathize with  
those who have plunged  
into the abyss of depression  
and despair for any number  
of reasons or for no reason.

Forgive us for not paying  
attention and trying to ease  
their pain and fear.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
help us to be present to  
and to take note of the  
distress signals of suicidal  
relatives, friends, or community  
members. If problems persist,  
may we call for help from  
suicide prevention centers,  
crisis hot-lines, and therapists.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
we are all in this life together  
and as fellow travellers  
we know there is more that  
we can do to eradicate  
fear and denial of suicide and  
to make a place in our prayers  
for all those who give up on life  
and choose self-destruction.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

God of Life,  
suicide has touched the lives  
of many of us and we are  
called to bring to both  
the victims and their survivors  
our large reserves of  
love and compassion.  
Every 14.2 minutes  
someone dies by suicide  
in the U.S.

Amen.

*A prayer for all who feel excluded, rejected, marginalized, shamed or made fun of, in any way or in any place, religious or otherwise:*

### **A Prayer When I Feel Hated**

Loving God, you made me who I am.  
I praise you and I love you, for I am wonderfully made,  
in your own image.

But when people make fun of me,  
I feel hurt and embarrassed and even ashamed.  
So please God, help me remember my own goodness,  
which lies in you.  
Help me remember my dignity,  
which you gave me when I was conceived.  
Help me remember that I can live a life of love.  
Because you created my heart.

Be with me when people make fun of me,  
and help me to respond how you would want me to,  
in a love that respects other, but also respects me.  
Help me find friends who love me for who I am.  
Help me, most of all, to be a loving person.

And God, help me remember that Jesus loves me.  
For he was seen as an outcast, too.  
He was misunderstood, too.  
He was beaten and spat upon.  
Jesus understands me, and loves me with a special love,  
because of the way you made me.

And when I am feeling lonely,  
help me remember that Jesus welcomed everyone as a friend.  
Jesus reminded everyone that God loved them.  
And Jesus encouraged everyone to embrace their dignity,  
even when others were blind to that dignity.  
Jesus loved everyone with the love that you gave him.  
And he loves me, too.

One more thing, God:  
Help me remember that nothing is impossible with you,  
that you have a way of making things better,  
that you can find a way of love for me,  
even if I can't see it right now.  
Help me remember all these things in the heart you created,  
loving God. Amen.

*James Martin,*

### **A Prayer If YOU feel suicidal:**

Lord, I come before You with a heavy heart. I feel so much and yet sometimes I feel nothing at all. I don't know where to turn, who to talk to, or how to deal with the things going on in my life. You see everything, Lord. You know everything, Lord. Yet when I seek you it is so hard to feel You here with me. Lord, help me through this. I don't see any other way to get out of this. There is no light at the end of my tunnel, yet everyone says You can show it to me. Lord, help me find that light. Let it be Your light. Give me someone to help. Let me feel You with me. Lord, let me see what You provide and see an alternative to taking my life. Let me feel Your blessings and comfort. Amen.

### **If YOUR FRIEND feels suicidal:**

Lord, I come before You with a heavy heart for my friend. He/She is struggling so much right now with the things happening in his/her life. I know You can be his/her greatest comfort. I know You can step in and make a difference. Show me how I can best help him/her. Give me the words and actions that will keep him/her from taking that ultimate step of suicide, Lord. Let him/her see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that suicide is not the route to take. Lord, let Your presence be felt in his/her life and let your comfort be what he/she needs. Amen.

*Kelli Mahoney*

O Lord and Giver of Life, may we all recognize the great value of the life you have given to each one of us. But look in a special way on those who no longer find any meaning in the life they are leading.

You can see every movement of the human heart and you know what depths of despair, discouragement, frustration, loneliness, or self-hate have led them to the edge they are standing on.

Have mercy on them and open their eyes to see that the road has not ended. Fill their hearts with new hope. Place people in their lives who will love them with your own love, and who will give them a reason to live again. Make them know they are worthwhile and needed.

And Lord, if you wish to use me as your instrument touching someone, feel free to do so. Amen.

# *Liturgies*



## **A Candle Lighting Ritual from Console**

“As we light these four candles in honour of our loved ones, we light one for our Grief, one for our Courage, one for our Memories, and one for our Love.”

### **LIGHTING OF FOUR CANDLES**

*When the first person talks about the First Candle, this candle is placed at a corner of a small table placed in front of alter which has a wreath placed on it.....And so on.....*

#### **The First Candle Lights Our Grief: (COLOUR ORANGE);**

The light of the first candle represents our grief. The pain of our loss is intense, but it reminds us of the depth of our love.

May we reach for healing in our Grief and Loss...

#### **The Second Candle Shines For Our Courage: (COLOUR PURPLE);**

The light of the second candle represents our courage to confront our sorrow; to comfort each other; to change our lives.

May we honour the past but endeavour to welcome the dawn of each new day with courage and hope...

#### **The Third Candle Illuminates Our Memories: (COLOUR GREEN);**

This third candle is a light to all of our memories. To the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things we did, the caring and the joy they gave us.

May we nourish ourselves with positive thoughts and keep connected to family and friends...

#### **The Fourth Candle Reflects Our Love Living On: (COLOUR YELLOW);**

This fourth candle is the light of our love. As we enter this day, we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for our loved one. We give thanks for the gift their life brought to each of us. We will love them always. *Console*



## AFTER A DEATH BY SUICIDE

The sudden, traumatic or violent death of someone is an enormous shock, especially if it is caused by someone committing suicide. The feelings that loved ones and friends have to suddenly confront are in addition to all the more normal and expected grief feelings that are experienced when someone dies from a more natural or expected cause. There are so many 'If onlys' and 'What ifs' to deal with. So many feelings of regret, and of wishing to turn the clock back, and of being unable to do something to prevent what has happened. Feelings of anger and guilt are often present – either directed towards oneself, or directed at someone else, or the person who has committed suicide. Planning a funeral in this case is a particularly sensitive task and requires very careful thought.

### **The Gathering**

*Everyone is given a candle and a drip-shield as they arrive*

### **Welcome**

### **Introduction**

**Opening Responses**      The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear?

**The Lord is the strength of my life;  
of whom then shall I be afraid?**

Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call  
**have mercy upon me and answer me.**

Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and he shall comfort your heart;  
wait patiently for the Lord.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

### **Bible Readings Do not be afraid**

But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.  
Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honoured, and I love you.

### **Isaiah 43.1–4**

#### **The souls of the righteous**

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.  
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,  
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,  
and their going from us to be their destruction;  
but they are at peace.  
For though in the sight of others they were punished,  
their hope is full of immortality.  
Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,  
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;  
like gold in the furnace he tried them,  
and like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them.  
In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,  
and will run like sparks through the stubble.  
They will govern nations and rule over peoples,  
and the Lord will reign over them for ever.  
Those who trust in him will understand truth,  
and the faithful will abide with him in love,  
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones,  
and he watches over his elect.

### **Wisdom of Solomon 3.1–9**

#### **Nothing can separate us from the love of God**

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of

God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 8.31–35, 37–39**

**Do not be anxious**

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4.5b–7**

**He will wipe away all tears**

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.’

**Revelation 21.1–5a**

**Other Readings, When loving someone is not enough**

Jan Brind

The phone rings . . . the voice at the other end sounds nervous. There is dreadful news. Shocking news that no one should ever have to give, or receive. *He is dead. He has taken his own life. He was found this afternoon.* In that moment the world is changed and time is suspended. A dreadful silent scream ‘No! No! No!’ explodes inside me and yet, and yet, with a terrible realisation and certainty, I know it is true. Why didn’t he ’phone? He promised he would. Last conversations are remembered and replayed over and over, word for word. What did we miss?

But, sadly, loving someone is not always enough. His pain was such that, for him, dying was an easier option than living. And now we are left, in this place where he is no longer. With the ‘If onlys’, and the ‘What ifs’, and a huge sadness and regret that someone we loved and cherished chose not to stay with us, but to go. Such truth is hard to accept. But this we do believe. He is at peace now and his pain is no more. He is with God in a place where all things are made well and where all darkness is overcome. Slowly our pain, too, will be healed, and we will remember him as he was before, embracing life to the full and laughing with the joy of it. And we will smile

again at the memory and hold it in our hearts.

From *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

**St John Chrysostom**

He whom we love and lose is no longer where he was before. He is now wherever we are.

From *Revelations of Divine Love*, Julian of Norwich

Because of the tender love which our good Lord feels for all who shall be saved, he supports us willingly and sweetly, meaning this: 'It is true that sin is the cause of all this suffering, but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.'

## Sermon/Address

### Prayers

For sunshine and rainbows,  
for laughter and tears,  
for treasured memories – good and difficult,  
and for the gift of *N* and for all that *N* meant to us,  
we thank you, good Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the family of *N* and those who mourn,  
in this time, suspended and unreal,  
in our raw emotions and muddled thoughts,  
and in our listening and in our words,  
be present, good Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

In our searching to make sense of this,  
in our regrets and for words unsaid,  
in the blame and forgiveness we seek,  
and in your compassion,  
hear us, good Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we may grow in understanding,  
that we may trust in the love of God,  
that we may believe that all shall be well,  
and that we may, at the end, be reunited with the saints in  
heaven,  
we pray to you, good Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

From *The Shade of His Hand*

Michael Hollings and Etta Gullick

Lord we cannot understand why *N* took his own life. You alone know what he suffered. Forgive our lack of understanding, and give him comfort and compassion which we so unthinkingly failed to give. Lord, we pray that he

may rest in peace with you in the warmth of your love; and, Lord, give support to his family and those close to him through your healing and redeeming love which you showed us in your Son.

**Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*A taper is lit from the Paschal Candle and the light is spread to all the people present – the people are then invited to keep a short time of silence when they can offer painful feelings and thoughts to God in the silence of their hearts*

**Responses      The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear?**

Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and he shall comfort your heart;  
wait patiently for the Lord.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.  
Thanks be to God.**

### **Commendation and Farewell**

*The candles remain lit during the Commendation and Farewell and are then extinguished – they can be taken home and lit at difficult times*

### **The Committal**

**The Dismissal**    May the light of Christ shine in our darkness,  
may the love of Christ comfort and heal us,  
may the hope of Christ fill us with courage now and in the  
difficult days ahead, and may the blessing . . .

Jan Brind and Tessa Wilkinson

## Idea for a yearly 'Passion for Life Service'

### Order of Service:

- Personal story from a member of your faith community who has been impacted by suicide. This is an invitation to the community to ignite a passion for care and concern for the issue of suicide.
- The main message of the service can incorporate how the foundations of faith combined with the strength of community can help bring individuals through the “dark times of the soul.” Incorporate your specific faith tradition’s messages of hopefulness and compassion. What about your faith can help promote a passion for life?
- **Call to Action:** ask a member of the community to light a candle as a symbol of dedication to a “Passion for Life.”
- Point out that this is a “job for us all.” Lead the community in a collective prayer with a community response:
  - **Leader:** As we consider those in our community and our world who struggle with emotional turmoil and pain...
  - **All:** Ignite in us a passion for life
  - **Leader:** Provide us with wisdom to encourage our brothers and sisters to seek solace in community...
  - **All:** Give us compassion for those who have experienced “dark times of the soul”
  - **Leader:** Let us remember and lift up those who have lost loved ones
  - **All:** Help us to love, encourage and support the survivors in our community.

## **Grieving a Suicide**

A Liturgy suitable for a 12-18 year olds

*Tragically, people who suicide are often young people. This leaves their friends at school or in a youth group devastated, sometimes full of guilt, sometimes even attracted to death as a form of dealing with life. Sometimes they have not been able to go to the funeral or the funeral has not dealt with the fact that the person died through suicide. This is a service which can be used to help them work with the consequences.*

For this service you will need:

*A large bowl of water to be placed on a central table or cloth flowing from a table.*

*Loose flowers in a basket.*

### **OPENING**

We have come together

because we loved .....

Here we mourn him/her leaving us,  
honour his/her life, and comfort each other.

We come, believing that all human life is valuable,  
that the truth and integrity and hopefulness  
which lies in each life lives on.

We come, believing that ..... life,  
which we remember today  
and for which we now experience great loss,  
is joined with all life, stretching into the past and into the future.  
His/her life was lived in its uniqueness with us  
and now rest secure in the loving hands of God.

### **PRAYER**

O God, at this moment, as we come face to face with death,  
especially this tragic death,  
we have many feelings alongside our grief.  
Please come close to us with your love,  
travel with us into this harsh moment  
and open our hearts to each other.  
We ask it in the name of Christ,  
who faced his own death and the death of a friend.

### **Amen**

..... chose the manner and the time of his/her dying  
and this is hard for us to face.

In our grief, we ask ourselves whether,  
if had we been different people,  
or done something more for him/her  
he/she would have stayed longer with us  
and chose a gentler death.

There will never be enough tears to express our pain  
as we recognise his/her pain at the ending of his/her life.

But the truth is that, in our humanness, there are times when we will never have enough to offer some people, never enough to give them to hold them into life.

We place this bowl of water, the sign of our weeping, at the centre of our life today.

*The bowl is placed on the table.*

## **READING**

Revelation 21:1-6

## **REFLECTION**

We may live with the questions forever, but the word for us at this moment is that all that is ever required of us is that we do our best in loving each other and in responding to each other's needs. This we have done in all integrity, both as family, friends, and as a community of faith.

We are therefore called to receive forgiveness if we feel that is needed and open our lives to the healing and comfort of God.

We are called to live our lives in peace and trust in the grace of God and the generosity of..... himself/herself, a gift which we have all received in many forms over the years.

Let us now begin, in faith and hope, to lay down the difficult things which lie in the past and be open to the gift of the love and understanding of God.

*A silence is kept*

The gifts and graces that ..... offered must never be lost to us in the pain of his/her dying.

The creativity that he/she brought to us in his/her life and relationships lies now in our own lives and travels into the future with us.

Our lives are more beautiful because we lived with .....

None of us knows the whole truth about what lies beyond death.

Christians believe that as we journey between life and death, we are safe in the hands of an infinitely gracious God.

The God we stand with us at that moment is the same God who was prepared to die in love for humankind, a God who has entered every struggle of our life with us and who deeply understands the choices we have made.

## **REMEMBERING..... LIFE**

*As each person speaks about....., they place a flower into the bowl of water with the words:*

In Jesus Christ, the water of our tears will become living water for the ongoing of life.

Let us pray or reflect in silence on this life and what it has meant to us.

*Silent prayer/reflection*

Thanks be to God for the gifts we have received in.....  
Perhaps ..... is here with us now in spirit.  
I will say out loud some of the thoughts that lie in our hearts.  
..... , we will always wish that you stayed much longer with us  
and that you had not chosen to die in this way,  
but we will now set you free as you travel onto a new day.  
We will always remember you and all that you have given to us in your short life  
and we will value who you were for us.

To love someone is to risk the pain of parting.  
Not to love is never to have lived.  
The grief which we now experience is the honouring of our love.  
Let us now in a quiet moment make our farewell to .....

*Silence*

**PRAYER**

O God, we pray that you will care for .....  
in ways which we have not been able to do,  
and that your love will be with us now  
and with all who grieve the loss of family or friend.  
Give us your gifts so that we are able to take up our lives  
in ways which are strong and true and which carry us through into the hope of the future.  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who wept for the loss of a friend.

**Amen**

**SENDING OUT AND BLESSING**

And now let us go into the world,  
glad that we have loved,  
free to weep for the one we have lost,  
free to hold each other in our human frailty,  
empowered to live life to the full and to affirm the hope of human existence.  
And may God be our company,  
Christ Jesus walk before us,  
and the Spirit surround us with a cloud of grace.

**Amen**

## Healing Prayer for Suicide Survivors

*Preparation:* Place a picture of the loved one or something that belonged to him/her, a bowl of water, some rose petals, an open Bible and a lighted candle on a prayer table.

### OPENING PRAYER

Gentle Jesus, come to us in this time of grief and heal the holes in our hearts. There's a void where once we had the loving presence of \_\_\_\_\_. Give us the courage to face our grief and walk forward holding our memories of \_\_\_\_\_ as precious treasure.

### OPENING SONG

“Be Not Afraid” or similar hymn

### SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1:9

### RITUAL

*Play some quiet music.*

I invite you to listen to the music and reflect on something you would like to say about or to \_\_\_\_\_. When you're ready, come forward, place a rose petal in the water and quietly speak to him/her. (*Allow ample time for everyone to come forward and for quiet prayer.*)

### BLESSING

May the Father bless us so that we may begin to see beyond the pain and grief to the time when life and laughter will return.

May Jesus touch our hearts so that our tears of sadness may be replaced with those of joy, and memories may become more precious than painful.

May the Spirit of Life pour out wisdom and respect that allow each of us to work through grief in our own way.

And, Gracious God, remind us that, when the pain becomes too heavy, you're willing to carry the load and walk beside us.

Amen

## **A Healing Liturgy for the Shamed**

*The following service was conducted at the Emotional Health integrative seminar, in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in 2013 by the Revd Dr Robin Stockitt.*

*Many survivors of 'suicide attempts or self-harm suffer shame at the pain and distress they have put their families through. This service could be used for healing individually or in a small group setting. In some areas unfortunately survivors of those who have suicided can also still feel a sense of shame that their loved one has suicided.*

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you, and the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand when I awake, I am still with you.

*Chant*

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, when I call answer me.  
O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer, Come and listen to me.

**A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.**

*Those participating are invited to place their hands in a bowl of ash.*

Gentle God, we come to you bearing the wounds of our shame.  
These wounds, have polluted and damaged; they have dirtied and distorted.

I live in disgrace all day long, and my face is covered with shame.

**A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.**

*Chant* O Lord hear my prayer...

Gentle God, You see our scorn, disgrace and shame.  
Words can barely begin to describe what lies within.

Hiding, covering, blaming, raging.  
Unclean, unaccepted, unacceptable, unacknowledged.  
Dark, alive, sinister, dead.  
Coiling, wreathing, wrapping, entangling.  
Heavy, loaded, broken, burdened.  
Poison, decay, rotten, stinking.  
Alone, secret, stored, cellar.  
Silent, screaming, sobbing, dying  
Here, now, then, always.

*Space is given for the participant to add his own words/images/feelings.*

**A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.**

*Chant...* O Lord hear my prayer..

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Those participating are invited to wash their hands in the water provided.*

*Silence*

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

How can we stand before the mirror of God's face, from which nothing can be hidden?

*Each person is invited to take a small mirror and look at it.*

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

*Silence*

Let us hear the voice of the Lord spoken to us.

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

The LORD kneel before you and protect you from all harm;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and show you favour, grace and elegance.  
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you complete wholeness.

*Silence*

*Anointing with oil*

Receive this anointing and as you do so, may you be given: a crown of beauty for ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of spirit of despair.

*Blessing*

In the name of the Father who adores you and runs to embrace you,  
in the name of the Son who comes looking for you and gives himself for you  
in the name of the Holy Spirit, the dove, the counsellor who is ever beside you.

Amen.

## **A Living Links Service of Remembrance**

**Welcome**

**Hymn – Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord**

### **Gathering**

Like you, we too have lived in dread  
Have circled someone else's pain.  
We too have made appointments  
And sat in waiting rooms, gazing unseeing at magazines.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

Like you, we have suffered the knock on the door  
Or the late -night ringing of the phone  
And paced the Purgatory of A and E  
And seen our worst nightmare in a doctor's face.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

Like you, we too have asked 'why?'  
We have tortured our hearts with 'if only'  
Have been dumbed and deafened  
By the consolation of others.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

In the shadow of death, we have chosen to live.  
Despite the pain, we have chosen to feel.  
Tempted to forgetfulness, we have chosen to remember.  
We are like you but not you.  
Our losses are alike but not the same.  
Grief is always a singular word  
Unique to the one who lives it.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

We offer a hand and heart to those who are numbed by pain  
Burning with anger, scalded by guilt.  
We have no answers, no reasons  
We make no promises.  
Except, that we will walk with you or sit in your silence  
Or listen as you tell your story.  
We will not tire of you.  
Take our hand in yours, rest awhile in our companionship  
Be real and free to feel.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

If peace will come, it will come at your own pace  
In your own time.  
Until that time, we are here for you.  
Today, tomorrow and for as long as you need us.

**We are Living Links. We have been bereaved by suicide.**

*Christy Kenneally*

**Lighting of Living Links Candle –**

**Speaker -**

**Soloist –**

**Reflection –**

**Reading Psalm 139 (New Living Translation)**

- <sup>1</sup> O LORD, you have examined my heart  
and know everything about me.....
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down or stand up.  
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
- <sup>3</sup> You see me when I travel  
and when I rest at home.  
You know everything I do.
- <sup>4</sup> You know what I am going to say  
even before I say it, LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> You go before me and follow me.  
You place your hand of blessing on my head.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too great for me to understand!
- <sup>7</sup> I can never escape from your Spirit!  
I can never get away from your presence!
- <sup>8</sup> If I go up to heaven, you are there;  
if I go down to the grave, you are there.
- <sup>9</sup> If I ride the wings of the morning,  
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
- <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
and your strength will support me.
- <sup>11</sup> I could ask the darkness to hide me  
and the light around me to become night—
- <sup>12</sup> but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.  
To you the night shines as bright as day.  
Darkness and light are the same to you.
- <sup>13</sup> You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body  
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup> Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!  
Your workmanship is marvellous—how well I know it.
- <sup>15</sup> You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,  
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

- <sup>16</sup> You saw me before I was born.  
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.  
Every moment was laid out  
before a single day had passed.
- <sup>17</sup> How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.  
They cannot be numbered!
- <sup>18</sup> I can't even count them;  
they outnumber the grains of sand!  
And when I wake up,  
you are still with me!
- <sup>19</sup> O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!  
Get out of my life, you murderers!
- <sup>20</sup> They blaspheme you;  
your enemies misuse your name.
- <sup>21</sup> O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?  
Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?
- <sup>22</sup> Yes, I hate them with total hatred,  
for your enemies are my enemies.
- <sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- <sup>24</sup> Point out anything in me that offends you,  
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

**Speaker – Ven. Craig McCauley**

**Hymn – What A Friend We Have In Jesus**

**Circle of Light Ceremony**

**Prayers**

**Soloist –**

**Reflection –**

**Hymn – O Praise Ye The Lord**

**Closing Blessing – Fr. John Cusack**

*The Congregation is invited...*

## A Healing Service

### **Survivor Memory Book:**

As people come to the event, have them write down the name of the person they lost to suicide in a memory book. The list of names will be read at the end.

### **Music:**

adds greatly to the emotion of the event. A simple acoustic ensemble is very moving – guitar, piano, flute. The music should be chosen with care. If the event is around the holidays consider: Silent Night, A Bleak Midwinter, or others.

### **Sample Reading:**

We mourn the loss of our loved ones. For many of us the darkness of our loss and sorrow has overshadowed our love of life, has held back happiness and has blinded us to the blessing of wonderful memories.

Light is the symbol of hope. Even the tiniest flame illuminates darkness. As our celebration candles glow, let their radiance warm our grief-frozen beings and remind us of the wonder of love. Let us rejoice and celebrate the richness of a life and relationship shared.

[Other poems and responsive readings can be interspersed throughout the program, depending on the length desired]

### **Candle Lighting:**

For those that want to participate, as the category of the loved one they have lost is read, each person comes forward to light a small votive candle and place it on an altar. Pause to wait until each group has finished lighting their candles before going onto the next.

### **In Memory of Mothers: Sample Reading**

You gave me the gift of life and tenderly held and cared for me. You laughed and made good times within our home.

Caregiver, teacher, the essence of love, is the memory I have of you. Mother, I celebrate your life.

### **In Memory of Fathers: Sample Reading**

You taught me that gentleness was not weakness and that strength was not power or force. Dad, I fill this void with memories of all you taught and meant to me and celebrate your life by sharing memories of you with others.

### **In Memory of Sons: Sample Reading**

I mourn the lost dreams of graduation, college, marriage, and grandchildren, carrying on the family name and your companionship as I grow old. I treasure memories of happy times shared and, always, my son, I celebrate your life.

### **In Memory of Daughters: Sample Reading**

Part of my own life has died in your death, my sweet daughter. Gentleness and laughter and loving is you. I will carry to eternity cherished memories of our time together. I celebrate your life and the blessing of the love we shared.

### **In Memory of Brothers: Sample Reading**

My brother, my friend, your unbearable anguish that we couldn't share is now left for me. I am thankful that as time passes

I am able to focus on the good times and the camaraderie. I celebrate your life and the bond we shared.

**In Memory of Sisters: Sample Reading**

Dear sister, forgive me for not knowing that, for you, the future had lost its promise. I grieve for your unfulfilled dreams. I will cherish your memory always. I celebrate your life and the special friendship we shared.

**In Memory of Partners: Sample Reading**

Our lives had become one and that part of me died when you, in your pain, left me. Dear, partner, I am grateful for the treasury of memories I have of you, of our love and our life together. I celebrate your life and I'm thankful for the blessing of sharing it. Companion, partner, sweetheart. Respect, trust and abiding love enriched our years together. Love is beyond the touch of death, my darling one. I celebrate your life and our love for one another and will forever cherish your memory.

**In Memory of All Other Family Members: Sample Reading**

You were someone very special in my life. I ask forgiveness for the missed opportunities to make life more enjoyable for you. I cherish memories of you and celebrate your life and our relationship.

**In Memory of Friends: Sample Reading**

You were the one with whom I shared my dreams, confided my fears and trusted my secrets. It's painful accepting that I can no longer enjoy with you all the things that meant so much to us. I will always celebrate your life and friendship.

**In Celebration of Their Lives: Sample Reading**

The most beautiful and lasting tribute we can make to those we loved who have died is renewed focus on the future...a future nourished by our memories of them, by thanksgiving, by peace of mind and by the joy of ever-deepening relationships in our continuing lives.

**Silent Reflection:**

Let the participants sit in silence after the candles have been lit. Read the names from the survivor memory book slowly.

As music plays, the participants can leave when they are ready.

## Remembrance Ceremony

### Darkness Transformed

#### The Light Goes On...

##### Room Set Up:

- Table 6' – skirted and draped in center of room
- Several circular mirrors of different sizes on table
- Three large white pillar candles lit on table
- Smaller candles in glass votives displayed around table at different heights
- Lights dimmed, soft music playing as people enter and gather around the table
- Podium with pillar candle and flowers
- People enter and receive program

##### Introduction:

- Leader – Act of Remembrance is Sacred
- Sometimes we forget because we're busy or because it is too painful
- Remembering can be selective – what to let go, what to retain
- Part of the psychological and spiritual healing process
- Grieving is a form of honouring them

##### Responsive Reading:

We hold our loved ones in our hearts and remember them...

For the love they gave to us.

**We are grateful.**

When we need comfort, guidance, humour or strength.

**We remember them.**

For the good times they brought us.

**We are grateful.**

When we have celebrations in life we want to share.

**We remember them.**

For the good people who surround us, who know the reality of love and loss.

**We are grateful.**

For as long as we live and remember them, the light goes on.

**May they be forever in light.**

##### Ceremony of Light and Remembrance:

Music and Reflection – soft reading of names from book of remembrance

*In a moment we will light candles of remembrance and honour those who have taken their lives. The candles will symbolically transform the darkness of this room to light. As you light your candle you can honour your loved one in the way that feels most comfortable to you. You can just think the person's name, you can say the person's name out loud, or you can say their name and one thing you are grateful for regarding what they brought to your life.*

### **Closing Poem**

Hearing things more than beings,  
listening to the voice of fire,  
the voice of water.  
Hearing in wind the weeping bushes,  
sighs of our forefathers.  
The dead are never gone:  
they are in the shadows.  
The dead are not in earth:  
they're in the rustling tree,  
the groaning wood,  
water that runs,  
water that sleeps,  
they're in the hut, in the crowd,  
the dead are not dead.  
The dead are never gone,  
they're in the breast of a woman,  
they're in the crying child,  
in the flaming firebrand.  
The dead are not in earth:  
they're in the dying fire,  
the weeping grasses,  
whimpering rocks,  
they're in the forest, they're in the house,  
the dead are not dead.  
*- Birago Diop, Senegal*

**Our service of remembrance has come to a close. You may stay for reflection or sharing if you like.**

## DESPAIR AND HOPE

Our loved one has died. It could be a close member of our family or a treasured friend. Our lives have changed and, for the time being, we feel numb – our bodies automatically wrapped in layers of protective cotton wool lest we shatter before we have coped with the realities and necessities of death. And then? The terrible pain of grief and disbelief as the reality of loss washes over us in uncontrollable waves and the slow road to healing begins.

Here is a liturgy that attempts to meet the needs and feelings of people at this time. We acknowledge pain and despair, but also hint at the hope and new life that is promised.

### The Gathering

#### Welcome

#### Introduction

**Opening** Jesus said, ‘Do not be afraid.’

**Responses** **We put our trust in him.**

Jesus said, ‘I will be with you.’

**Though we feel alone now, we know Jesus is near.**

Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.’

**Whoever follows Jesus will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

#### Bible Readings **My soul longs for you, O God**

As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.

When shall I come and behold  
the face of God?

My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me continually,  
‘Where is your God?’

These things I remember,  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I went with the throng,  
and led them in procession to the house of God,  
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,  
a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;  
therefore I remember you  
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,  
from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep  
at the thunder of your cataracts;  
all your waves and your billows  
have gone over me.  
By day the LORD commands his steadfast love,  
and at night his song is with me,  
a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock,  
'Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I walk about mournfully  
because the enemy oppresses me?'  
As with a deadly wound in my body,  
my adversaries taunt me,  
while they say to me continually,  
'Where is your God?'

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God.

### **Psalm 42**

#### **For everything there is a season**

There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under heaven:  
a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

### **Ecclesiastes 3.1–8**

#### **The light of the world**

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

### **John 8.12**

#### **Nothing can separate us from the love of God**

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be

against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 8.31–35, 37–39**

**Other Readings** From *Revelations of Divine Love*, Julian of Norwich

He did not say, ‘You shall not be tempest-tossed, you shall not be work-weary, you shall not be discomforted.’ But he said ‘You shall not be overcome.’ God wants us to heed these words so that we shall always be strong in trust, both in sorrow and in joy.

**Prayer of St Francis**

St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
when there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand,  
to be loved as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year**

Minnie Louise Haskins

(Available to view on the internet, see page x.)

**Footprints**

Margaret Fishback Powers

(Available to view on the internet, see page x.)

**Bereavement**

from *Watching for the Kingfisher*

Ann Lewin

Dark place

Where, vulnerable, alone,  
We lick the wounds of loss.  
Wise friends say little,  
But hold us in their love,  
And listen.  
There are no guarantees,  
Only reports from those  
Who've been there,  
That there is hope,  
And life persists.

## **Sermon/Address**

### **Prayers**

#### **Thanksgiving for the life of the departed**

We remember *N* with love and affection and give thanks for *his/her* life. *N's* life has interwoven with ours in so many ways – as (*here name N's relationships to those present*) – and we all have precious memories to cherish. We now entrust *N's* soul to God in the sure and certain knowledge that all will be well.

Compassionate Lord,

**We pray to you in hope.**

#### **Prayer for those who mourn**

Lord, you have said to us, 'Do not be afraid.' When our sadness and grief feels overwhelming give us courage to carry on.

Lord, you have said, 'I will be with you.' We thank you for your presence now. Give us strength to live this day and the difficult days to come.

Lord, you have said, 'I am the light of the world.' Bring us through the darkness into your marvellous light.

Compassionate Lord,

**We pray to you in hope.**

#### **Prayer of penitence**

Lord, as we remember *N* and the good things we have shared, we also remember the times of regret. We have not always walked in your truth and spoken your peace. In silence we name those things that trouble us, asking forgiveness for past wrongs, so that we may be at peace with *N* and reconciled to you.

Compassionate Lord,

**We pray to you in hope.**

#### **Prayer for readiness to live in the light of eternity**

Lord, you have said that neither death nor life will separate us from the love of God. From despair bring us to new hope so that we may once more embrace life.

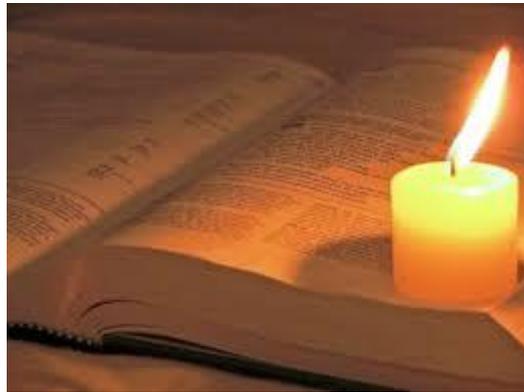
Compassionate Lord,

**We pray to you in hope.**

## **The Lord's Prayer, Commendation and Farewell, The Committal**

**The Dismissal** Compassionate Lord, we leave this place trusting that you walk beside us.  
Lead us from despair to hope and from darkness to light.  
And may the blessing . . .

# *Bible Passages*



## Bible Passages

*I have chosen to include the verse not just the reference for ease of access to the minister and comfort to the distressed.*

**Psalms 130**, Help God, the bottom has fallen out of my world (The Message Bible)

**Psalms 46:1** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**Revelation 7:17** for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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

**Lamentations 3 17-26, 32b, 33** My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;

**Psalms 23** KJV, The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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 mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

**John 14:** 2,3,18,17, 27 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. "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

**Psalms 22:1-11** (Living) My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why do you refuse to help me or even to listen to my groans. ....I have depended upon you since birth; you have always been my God. Don't leave me now, for trouble is near and no one else can possibly help.

*The following examples can be found in the booklet Suicide awareness – Guidelines for Clergy by FLOURISH*

**Psalms 46:1-3** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**Psalms 57:1** Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

**Psalm 139: 7-12** Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me 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.

**Jeremiah 29:11** For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

**Isaiah 40: 28-31** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

**Isaiah 41:10** do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

**Isaiah 43:1-2** But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

**Luke 6:20-22** Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.

**1 John 4:16b, 18a** God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear;

**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.

**1 Corinthians 12:24-26** But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member,<sup>25</sup> that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.<sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

**Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

**Colossians 1:11-14** May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Romans 8:24-26** For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

**Hebrews 13:5** God has said, I will never leave you or forsake you."

**Other suggestions – Mental health, depression and suicidal thoughts.**

Moses in Numbers 11:15 calls out; "Put me to death right now!"

Elijah prays in 1 Kings 19:4, "I have had enough, Lord, take my life".

Jonah (Jonah 2: 8/9) said, "It would be better for me to die than live, I am angry enough to die".

In Matthew 27:5 Jesus is touched by the death of one of his dearest companions and in Acts 16:27

Paul intervenes when the Philippian jailer is just about to take his own life.

# *Hymns and Songs*



### **I'm alone, yet not alone**

I'm alone, yet not alone.  
God's the light that will guide me home.  
With His love and tenderness,  
Leading through the wilderness,  
And wherever I may roam,  
I'm alone, yet not alone.

I will not be bent in fear.  
He's the refuge I know is near.  
In His strength I find my own.  
By His faithful mercies shown.  
That so mighty is His shield  
All His love is now revealed.

When my steps are lost.  
And desperate for a guide,  
I can feel his touch,  
A soothing presence by my side.

Alone, yet not alone.  
Not forsaken when on my own.  
I can lean upon His arm,  
And be lifted up from harm.  
If I stumble, or if I'm thrown,  
I'm alone, yet not alone.

When my steps are lost.  
And desperate for a guide,  
I can feel his touch,  
A soothing presence by my side.

By my side!

He has bound me with His love,  
Watchful angels look from above.  
Every evil can be braved,  
For I know I will be saved.  
Never frightened on my own,  
I'm alone, yet not alone.

I'm alone, yet not alone. *Bruce Broughton*

**God, Hold us, Enfold us**

God, hold us, enfold us,  
through desolate loss.  
The sign of your love  
is your own empty cross.  
The shock and the anger,  
the hopeless despair  
are echoes of Calvary.  
God meet us there!

God, hold us, enfold us,  
through long empty days,  
when living is pointless,  
a meaningless maze,.  
We need you to listen  
to raging and tears,  
to anguish and doubt,  
to remorse and fears.

God, hold us , enfold us,  
by friends who can share  
our sorrow and pain  
with compassionate care.  
By their words you speak out  
your loving concerns.  
They hold us for you,  
while the tide of grief turns.

God, hold us, enfold us,  
til weeping has passed;  
when flickering hope  
parts the shadows at last.  
One step at a time  
you will help us to move  
to face new horizons,  
held safe in your love.

*Marjorie Dobson*

**Other Suggestions** (to accompany *After a Suicide*, pg 26)

**Dear Lord and Father of mankind** (*Hymns Old and New – New Anglican Edition*)

**Do not be afraid** (*Be Still and Know*)

**Go, silent friend** (*When Grief is Raw*)

**God to enfold you** (*Iona Abbey Music Book*)

**Going home** (*Be Still and Know*)

**Jesus, remember me** (*Songs from Taizé*)

**Kindle a flame** (*Celtic Hymn Book*)

**Kyrie (Haugen)** (*Cantate*)

**My peace I leave you** (*Cantate*)

**Nothing can trouble** (Nada te turbe) (*Songs from Taizé*)

**O Christ, you wept** (*When Grief is Raw*)

**O God, why are you silent** (*Turn My Heart*)

**The Lord's my shepherd** (*Hymns Old and New: One Church, One Faith, One Lord*)

**There's a wideness in God's mercy** (*Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*)

**We cannot measure how you heal** (*When Grief is Raw*)

**Within our darkest night** (*Songs from Taizé*)

**Suggested Music**     **The Lord bless you and keep you**

CD: *Gloria: The Sacred Music of John Rutter*, John Rutter, Collegium Records

**Adagio for strings**

Samuel Barber

**Lord our God, receive your servant**

CD: *The Last Journey*, The Cathedral Singers, GIA Publications

**Fields of gold**

CD: *Songbird*, Eva Cassidy, Blix Street Records

**The Lord is my light and my salvation**

CD: *Light in Our Darkness*, Margaret Rizza, Kevin Mayhew

**Christ as a light (Prayer of St Patrick)**

CD: *Celtic Daily Prayer from the Northumbria Community*, Northumbria Community Trust Ltd

**Healer of our every ill**

CD: *Anthology 2*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications

***Come to me***

CD: *Heartcry: Celtic Roots and Rhythms*, Nick and Anita Haig, ICC

Suggested music to accompany Despair and Hope pg 46

**As the deer pants for the water** (*Laudate*)

**God of the living, in whose eyes** (*Church Hymnary*)

**God to enfold you** (*Iona Abbey Music Book*)

**Hear me, dear Lord, in this my time of sorrow** (*Church Hymnary*)

**Holy God, to you we cry** (*See 'Music Supplement' on page 242*)

**Lord, we pray be near us** (*See 'Music Supplement' on page 240*)

**My peace I leave you** (*Cantate*)

**Nothing can trouble (Nada te turbe)** (*Songs from Taizé*)

**Now the green blade riseth** (*Hymns Old and New – New Anglican Edition*)

**The Lord's my shepherd** (*Hymns Old and New: One Church, One Faith, One Lord*)

**There's a wideness in God's mercy** (*Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*)

**We cannot measure how you heal** (*When Grief is Raw*)

**We walk by faith** (*Be Still and Know*)

**Within our darkest night**  
(*Songs from Taizé*)

**Suggested Music     Jesus, remember me**

CD: *Laudate Omnes Gentes*, Taizé Community, Taizé Community

**As the deer longs**

CD: *God's Eye is on the Sparrow*, Bob Hurd and Anawim, OCP Publications

**Eye has not seen**

CD: *Anthology I*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications

**Neither death nor life**

CD: *Gift of God*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications

**Kyrie**

CD: *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, Karl Jenkins, Virgin Records

**In God alone**

CD: *Light in Our Darkness*, Margaret Rizza, Kevin Mayhew

**Down ampney**

CD: *Sanctuary*, Christian Forshaw, Quartz Music

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*Console Me*, Eillean Dunne at Console service.

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*Grief’s Companion*, Christy Kenneally, Console, cont on page 9.

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Rogier van der Weyden, 'The Descent from the Cross'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> < [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Weyden,\\_Rogier\\_van\\_der\\_-\\_Descent\\_from\\_the\\_Cross\\_-\\_Detail\\_women\\_%28left%29.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Weyden,_Rogier_van_der_-_Descent_from_the_Cross_-_Detail_women_%28left%29.jpg) > (accessed 6 February 2014)

