



Celebration of Life (A Memorial Service)

Note: The interactive homily includes a remembrance with lights. Try to provide a candle (electric or real) or a small flashlight for each participant. (If you're using the [memorial service video](#), it includes a pause to gather these items.)

[PRELUDE] [Tis So Sweet: Gospel Performance Video](#)

Hello, I'm *[name]*. I want to welcome you in the name of the Lord to this memorial service and celebration of life, as we gather to honor and mourn our loss *[OR name of person]*.

God has created us to share one another's burdens. People have always gathered for many reasons, including comfort at the time of death.

Today, I invite you to use this time together to celebrate the life and mourn the death of *[our loved ones / name]*. Listen to the stories and join in the music. Add your own memories in your heart. Send healing thoughts of love and sympathy as you share the grief of others.

Let us join our hearts and thoughts together as we begin with prayer.

[OPENING PRAYER]

Heavenly Father, today we may feel sadness and maybe even shock. We may be searching for answers, comfort, and peace. Help us as we acknowledge that the journey of grief is long. Help us in our confusion and pain. Help each of us to know your closeness – that you never leave us nor forsake us.¹

Lord, we look to you today to provide peace and comfort in our memories of *[our loved ones / those who have passed on / name]*. Fill us with the hope that is rooted in your promise of everlasting life for those who love you, a promise sealed by the power of Jesus' victory over death.

Be close to us now, dear Lord, as we remember and grieve together. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

[SONG] Abide with Me

Now let us pray the 23rd Psalm together:

¹ Hebrews 13:5

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads 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 You are with me.
Your rod and you staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[SONG] Be Still My Soul

[HOMILY] Light in the Darkness

The apostle John wrote this about Jesus: "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."²

Light is crucial to life. We use lamps to read, eat, and work. We use flashlights to help us walk and see in the dark. We light candles for birthdays, holidays, and prayer. And light always banishes darkness.

Right now, I invite you to pause the video and take a moment to find a candle, real or electric, or even a flashlight—whatever you have in your home that can break the darkness.

[pause]

Now let's light our lights together. We light these lights to create a sacred space of reflection and memories. We light them in thankfulness for *[our loved ones / those who have passed on / name]*.

As we sit with our lights, I want you to think of something about *[name / our loved ones]* that brought light to this world. Maybe it was their laughter, or their beautiful smile, or the way they quietly served the family, or any other quality that you'll always remember. That same light has been passed on to you to hold in your memory.

We also hold our lights to spread that warmth to each person grieving. And we pledge to support one another with our shared warmth when times feel dark. Most of all, as we go on, we look to Jesus to light our way.

[SONG] Be Thou My Vision

² John 1:4-5

[optional section:] Let's take some time to think and talk about remembrance. How could you honor and remember *[our loved ones / those who have passed on / name]*? There are so many ways; for example:

- Enjoy their favorite food, dessert, or drink.
- Plan a time to sit with your family and tell stories or look at photos.
- Take a walk, and watch the birds flying in freedom. Think of the freedom your loved one now enjoys.
- Bring to mind the feel of their embrace. Recall the scent of their perfume or cologne. Hold that feeling in your heart as you take a deep breath in ... and a deep breath out.
- Play or sing one of their favorite songs.
- Find something that reminds you of your loved one. Place it where you'll see it each day.

[If you like, pause here to discuss these ideas with your group.]

The Bible tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."³ We remember that *[name was / our loved were]* a precious gift from our Heavenly Father, and we are thankful for that gift in our lives.

[SONG] Amazing Grace

[CLOSING PRAYER]

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, as it is written, "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."⁴

Lord God, for *[name who has / our loved ones who have]* passed on, we are grateful.

For their example of love and spirit in this life, we are grateful.

For the time we had together, we are grateful.

For the strength of family and friends today, we are grateful.

And for the sure hope of glory in the life everlasting, we are grateful.

Be with us as we hold all of these memories and lessons. Use them to comfort us. Wrap us in your everlasting love, and remind us daily of the love of Jesus, who laid down his life for us that we might live with you forever.

We ask your help and strength as we pledge to walk alongside others, even from a distance, after today. And we look to you in hope. Amen.

³ James 1:17

⁴ Nehemiah 9:6

Go in peace, and may God bless you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

[SONG] [I'll Fly Away](#) **OR** [His Eye is On the Sparrow](#)