ORDER FOR CHRISTIAN BURIAL:
A SERVICE OF WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION

The Order for Christian Burial should be conducted in the church among the gathered people of God. The casket should be closed before the service and thereafter remain closed. It may be covered with a white pall, a baptismal symbol recalling the robe of righteousness that covers the redeemed who stand before God (Revelation 7:9). The use of a pall is also a reminder that all are equal before God.

The minister begins with the votum and continues with one or more sentences.

VOTUM

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen.

Psalm 124:8

Or

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SENTENCES

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:28-29

Or

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26
Or

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.

Romans 14:7-8

Or

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Job 1:21

Or

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.

John 14:27

Or

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.

Psalm 34:18

Or

The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Psalm 34:22

Or

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 91:1-2
Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

*Romans 6:3-5*

**SALUTATION**

Grace be to you and peace, from [God] who is and who was and who is to come… and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and ruler of the kings of the earth.

*Revelation 1:4-5*

Or

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.  

*2 Peter 1:2*

A psalm or hymn of praise may be said or sung.

**The minister continues:**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The minister may make a statement of purpose in these or similar words:

We are gathered here to praise God, to witness to our faith, and to give thanks for the life of our *sister/brother N________.*

We come together in grief, acknowledging our loss. May God grant us grace...
that in pain—we may find comfort,
in sorrow—hope,
and in death—resurrection.
Dying, Christ destroyed our death.
Rising, Christ restores our life.
In baptism, N____ was sealed by the Holy Spirit
and marked as Christ’s own forever.

Or

We gather in God’s presence
to remember and give thanks for the life of N____,
to affirm God’s love for us,
and to support one another in a time of need.
Let us acknowledge our grief
and be open in our love,
affirming the meaning and mystery of life,
confident in the hope of the resurrection
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER FOR COMFORT AND ILLUMINATION

Let us pray:

Most merciful God,
the consolation of the sorrowful
and the support of the weary,
who does not willingly grieve your children,
look down in tender love and pity,
we pray, on these your servants,
whose joy is turned into mourning.
According to the multitude of your mercies,
uphold, strengthen, and comfort them,
that they may not faint under this trial,
but find strength and a refuge in you.

Almighty God,
illumine us now through your Word,
so that hearing your promises,
we may be lifted out of darkness and distress
into the light and peace of your presence,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Or

God our Comforter,
you are our refuge and strength,
a helper close at hand in times of distress.
You forgive what we have done
and what we have left undone;
your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.
Help us so to hear the words of our faith
that our fear is dispelled,
our loneliness eased, and our hope reawakened.
May your Holy Spirit lift us
above our natural sorrow,
to the peace and light of your constant love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALTER READINGS

One or more of the following selections of the Psalms may be read:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.
Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.
For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.
I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!

Psalm 27:1-5, 13-14

Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.
You have made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight.
Surely everyone stands as a mere breath.
Surely everyone goes about like a shadow.
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;
they heap up, and do not know who will gather.
And now, O Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in you.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry;
do not hold your peace at my tears.

Psalm 39:4-7, 12a

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.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 46
For God alone my soul waits in silence;  
from him comes my salvation.  
He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress;  
I shall never be shaken.

Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.  

Psalm 62:1-2, 8

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!  
My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.  
Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may lay her young, at your altars,  
O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.  
Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.  
Happy are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.  
As they go through the valley of Baca  
they make it a place of springs;  
the early rain also covers it with pools.  
They go from strength to strength;  
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.  
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
give ear, O God of Jacob!  
Behold our shield, O God;  
look on the face of your anointed.  
For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than live in the tents of wickedness.  
For the Lord God is a sun and shield;  
he bestows favor and honor.  
No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.  
O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.  

Psalm 84

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.  
You turn us back to dust, and say, “Turn back, you mortals.”  
For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past,  
or like a watch in the night.
You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. Who considers the power of your anger? Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

Psalm 90:1-6, 10-12

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits— who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children’s children,  
to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

_Psalm 103:1-5, 8-18_

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

_Psalm 121_

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.  
Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!  
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord,  
who could stand?  
But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the Lord!  
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.  
It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

_Psalm 130_

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
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.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

The Gloria Patri or other ascription of praise shall be sung or said.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.
OTHER OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.
What gain have the workers from their toil?
I have seen the business that God has
given to everyone to be busy with.

He has made everything suitable for its time;
moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds,
yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy
and enjoy themselves as long as they live;
moreover, it is God's gift
that all should eat and drink
and take pleasure in all their toil.
I know that whatever God does
endures forever;
nothing can be added to it,
nor anything taken from it;
God has done this, so that all
should stand in awe before him.
That which is, already has been;
that which is to be, already is;
and God seeks out what has gone by.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

On this mountain the Lord of hosts
will make for all peoples a feast of rich food,
a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow,  
of well-aged wines strained clear.  
And he will destroy on this mountain  
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,  
the sheet that is spread over all nations;  
he will swallow up death forever.  
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,  
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the Lord has spoken.  
It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God;  
we have waited for him, so that he might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.  

Isaiah 25:6-9

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.  
A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”  
A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.  
Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem,  
herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”  
See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.  
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 40:1-11, 28-31

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 Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—and their descendants as well. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Isaiah 65:17-25
See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.” For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

*Jeremiah 31:8-13*

**EPISTLE AND APOCALYPTIC READINGS**

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
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.

*Romans 8:18, 28, 31-39*

And as for what you sow,
you do not sow the body that is to be,
but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
But God gives it a body as he has chosen,
and to each kind of seed its own body.
So it is with the resurrection of the dead.
What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.
It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.
It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.
If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

Listen, I will tell you a mystery!
We will not all die, but we will all be changed,
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.
For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable,
and we will be changed.
For this perishable body must put on imperishability,
and this mortal body must put on immortality.
When this perishable body puts on imperishability,
and this mortal body puts on immortality,
then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:
“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”
“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God,
who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable,
always excelling in the work of the Lord,
because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

*1 Corinthians 15:37-38, 42-44a, 51-58*
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—‘I believed, and so I spoke’—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:8-18

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited, but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-11

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,
about those who have died,
so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.
For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.
For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord,
that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord,
will by no means precede those who have died.
For the Lord himself, with a cry of command,
with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet,
will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
Then we who are alive, who are left,
will be caught up in the clouds together with them
to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.
Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Therefore, since we are surrounded
by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us also lay aside every weight
and the sin that clings so closely,
and let us run with perseverance
the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,
who for the sake of the joy that was set before him
dured the cross,
disregarding its shame,
and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1, 2

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God
through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while
you have had to suffer various trials,
so that the genuineness of your faith—
being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—
may be found to result in praise and glory and honor
when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him;
and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him
and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
for you are receiving the outcome of your faith,
the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:3-9

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count,
from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,
standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white,
with palm branches in their hands.
They cried out in a loud voice, saying,
“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
And all the angels stood around the throne
and around the elders and the four living creatures,
and they fell on their faces before the throne
and worshipped God, singing, “Amen!
Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”
Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,
“Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?”
I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.”
Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal;
they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 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.”

Revelation 7:9-17

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.”

Revelation 21:1-4

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 22:1-5
“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life,  
what you will eat or what you will drink,  
or about your body, what you will wear.  
Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?  
Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns,  
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.  
Are you not of more value than they?  
And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?  
And why do you worry about clothing?  
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,  
yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.  
But if God so clothes the grass of the field,  
which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,  
will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?  
Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’  
or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’  
For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things;  
and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.  
But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:25-33

When the sabbath was over,  
Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices,  
so that they might go and anoint him.  
And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen,  
they went to the tomb.  
They had been saying to one another,  
“Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”  
When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large,  
had already been rolled back.  
As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man,  
dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side;  
and they were alarmed.  
But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking  
for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.  
He has been raised; he is not here.  
Look, there is the place they laid him.  
But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee;  
there you will see him, just as he told you.”

Mark 16:1-7
But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. 

Luke 24:1-9, 36-43

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,
who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man, but of God.
And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

*John 1:1-5, 9-14*

Then Jesus said to them,
“Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven,
but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.
For the bread of God is that which
comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”
Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.
Everything that the Father gives me will come to me,
and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away;
for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will,
but the will of him who sent me.
And this is the will of him who sent me,
that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me,
but raise it up on the last day.
This is indeed the will of my Father,
that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life;
and I will raise them up on the last day.
Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.
I am the bread of life.
Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.
This is the bread that comes down from heaven,
so that one may eat of it and not die.
I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

*John 6:32-40, 47-51*

“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.
And you know the way to the place where I am going.”
Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”
Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:1-6

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 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. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

John 14:15-20

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 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.”

John 14:25-27

“Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

John 17:24

“This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

John 6:40
At the death of a child:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Matthew 18:1-5, 10-14

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

Mark 10:13-16

At the conclusion of the reading of the Gospel the minister may say:

Believe this Gospel and live in peace.
A brief sermon shall be preached.

Following the sermon a psalm or hymn may be said or sung.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Or

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost, 
the holy catholic Church, 
the communion of saints, 
the forgiveness of sins, 
the resurrection of the body, 
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong —body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. Christ has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

_Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 1_

Or

God saves the world through Jesus. Those who call on that name will have life. Christ’s hand reaches out beyond those who say “Lord” to the infants who live in the atmosphere of faith, even to the farthest stars and planets—all creation. The boundaries of God’s love are not known, the Spirit works at the ends of the world before the church has there spoken a word.

God will renew the world through Jesus, who will put all unrighteousness out, purify the works of human hands, and perfect their fellowship in divine love. Christ will wipe away every tear;
death shall be no more.
There will be a new heaven and a new earth,
and all creation will be filled with God’s glory.

Come, Lord Jesus:
We are open to your Spirit.
We await your full presence.
Our world finds rest in you alone.

Our Song of Hope, VII

REMEMBRANCE

The minister or friend/s or member/s of the family of the deceased may offer thanksgiving for the one who has died if this has not been included in the sermon.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Let us pray.

O God,
before whom generations rise and pass away,
we praise you for all your servants
who, having lived this life in faith,
now live eternally with you.

Especially we thank you for your servant N_____.
We praise you for the gift of his/her life,
for all in him/her that was good and kind and faithful.
We thank you for the grace you gave him/her,
that kindled in him/her a love for you,
and enabled him/her to serve you faithfully.

Here mention may be made of the person’s characteristics or service.

We thank you that for N_____ death is past and pain ended,
and that he/she has now entered the joy you have prepared;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
in whose name we are bold to pray:

Or
Eternal and ever-merciful God,
whose blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord
has triumphed over sin and death and the grave,
we praise and bless your name
for the life and immortality
that have been brought to light in the gospel.
We glorify you, that he,
having destroyed the power of death,
opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers,
and that, because he lives, we shall live also.
Even now, having peace with you through him,
we rejoice in the hope of your glory.
Thanks be to you, O God, who gives us the victory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
look in tender love and compassion on your sorrowing servants.
Enable them to find in you their refuge and strength,
a very present help in time of trouble;
and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.
Grant them faith and hope in him who by death has conquered death,
and by rising opened the gates of eternal life.

Ever-blessed God,
we give you thanks for all the generations of the faithful,
who, having served you here in godliness and love,
are now with you in glory.
We praise you especially for him/her
whom you have now taken to yourself,
this pilgrim now come to the heavenly city.
For all your loving kindness toward him/her
throughout his/her earthly life we give you thanks;
for all that he/she was, by nature and by grace,
to those who loved him/her and to the church of your dear Son.
We thank you that his/her trials and temptations being ended,
sickness and death being passed,
he/she has now entered into the rest that remains for your people.
Seeing that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
enable us, O God,
to lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely,
and to run with perseverance the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.
Keep us in unbroken fellowship with the church in heaven;
enrich our souls in those things
over which darkness and death
no longer have any dominion;
and bring us at last, with all the faithful in Christ,
to the eternal peace and joy of your presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

O God,
from the dawn of the first day you have cared for your people.
By your hand we were created;
in your hand we live;
and to your hand we return again.
You have revealed yourself in many ways,
until, in the fullness of time,
your word was made flesh and dwelt among us
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
In his life, death, and resurrection
we find our calling in this world
and our hope for the world to come.

We give you thanks for your servants,
who, having lived this life in faith,
will live eternally with you.
We especially thank you for N_____.
for the gift of his/her life,
for the grace you have given him/her,
for all in him/her that was good and kind and faithful.

Here mention may be made of attributes or service.

We thank you that for N_____ death is past, pain is ended,
and he/she has entered the joy you have prepared
in the company of all the saints.

Give us faith to look beyond touch and sight,
and in seeing that we are surrounded
by so great a cloud of witnesses,
enable us to run with perseverance the race
that is set before us,
looking to Jesus,
the author and finisher of our faith.
Bring us at last to your eternal peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we are bold to pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

Or

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever. Amen.

COMMENDATION

The minister, after moving to the head of the casket, continues, facing the body:

Let us pray.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant N________.
Acknowledge, we pray,
a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock,
a sinner of your own redeeming.
Receive him/her into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

If the service concludes here, a hymn may be sung and the benediction pronounced.

If the body is to be committed for burial, the service shall continue at the graveside.

THE ORDER FOR COMMITTAL

LESSON

I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me,
even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me
will never die.

John 11:25-26

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 121
We do not live to ourselves,
and we do not die to ourselves.
If we live, we live to the Lord,
and if we die, we die to the Lord;
so then, whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord’s.
For to this end Christ died and lived again,
so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Romans 14:7-9

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 as their God;
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.”

Revelation 21:1-4

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

COMMITTAL

In sure and certain hope
of the resurrection to eternal life,
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
we commend to almighty God our brother/sister N______,
and we commit his/her body
to the ground/the deep/the elements/
this resting place/be cremated,
earth to earth,
asashes to ashes,
dust to dust.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit.
They rest from their labors,
and their works follow them.

Revelation 14:13, adapted

PRAYER

The minister continues:

Let us pray.

O God,
in the beginning you formed us from the dust of the earth
and breathed into us the breath of life.
So also, in the last days,
you have promised to raise us from the dust,
so we might assume a new body
at the coming of your Son.
For as in Adam all die,
so in Christ shall all be made alive.
We thank you for this hope,
that N______, who has died,
will be raised to life imperishable.
Look down upon us with tender pity and compassion,
grant each of us the comfort of your Spirit.
Renew within us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you

Or

God of boundless compassion,
our only sure comfort in life and in death:
Look tenderly upon your children
overwhelmed by loss and sorrow.
Lighten our darkness with your presence
and assure us of your love.
Enable us to see beyond this place and time
to your eternal kingdom,
promised to all who love you,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or

Almighty God,
by the death of your son Jesus Christ,
you destroyed death;
by his rest in the tomb,
you sanctified the graves of the saints;
and by his glorious resurrection
you brought life and immortality to light.

Receive, we pray, our thanks for that victory over death,
which Jesus obtained for us,
and for all who rest in him.
Keep us in eternal fellowship
with all who wait for you on earth
and with all who surround you in heaven;
in union with Christ,
who is the resurrection and the life,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. Amen.
At the committal of a child:

Loving God,  
your Son our Savior  
put his arms around the children and blessed them.  
Give us grace to entrust N________  
to your never-failing care and love,  
and bring us all to your heavenly kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Loving God,  
give us faith to believe,  
though this child has died,  
that you will welcome him/her,  
and will care for him/her,  
until by your mercy  
we are together again in the joy of your promised kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

BENEDICTION

Now may the God of peace,  
who brought from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
the great Shepherd of the sheep,  
by the blood of the eternal covenant,  
make you complete in everything good  
so that you may do his will,  
working among us that which is pleasing in his sight,  
through Jesus Christ,  
to whom be glory forever and ever.  

Hebrews 13:20, 21

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be and abide with you always. Amen.

Or
The peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
guard your hearts and your minds
in Christ Jesus. Amen.