

Annual Cemetery Devotions

Order of Service

Sign of the Cross & Greeting

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

The grace and peace of God our Father, who raised Jesus from the dead, be always with you.

And with your spirit.

Word of Welcome

Opening Prayer

Almighty God,
through the death of your Son on the cross
You destroyed our death;
through his rest in the tomb
You hallowed the graves of all who believe in you;
and through his rising again
You restored us to eternal life.

God of the living and the dead
accept our prayers for those who have died in Christ
and are buried with him in the hope of rising again.
Since they were true to your name on earth,
let them praise you for ever in the joy of heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes (3:1-8)

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 to war and a time for peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Or

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10:34-36, 42-43)

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: ‘The truth I have now come to realise,; he said, ‘is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. ‘It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ—but Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.’

The Word of the Lord.

Psalm

**R./ The Lord is my Shepherd,
there is nothing I shall want.**

The Lord is my shepherd,
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. **R./**

He guides me along the right path,
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness,
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff,
with these you give me comfort. **R./**

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil,
my cup is overflowing. **R./**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the lord's own house shall I dwell,
for ever and ever. **R./**

Second Reading

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.

We want you to be quite certain, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever.

The word of the Lord.

Or

A Reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God; as scripture says: By my life—it is the Lord who speaks—every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself.

The word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

If we have died with Christ, then we shall live with him;

If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.

Alleluia!

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (23:33, 39-43)

When the soldiers reached the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left.

One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' but the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all? He said. 'you got the same sentence as he did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied, 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Or

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (12:23-26)

Jesus said to his disciples:
'Now the hour has come
For the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you, most solemnly,
Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
It remains only a single grain;
But if it dies,
It yields a rich harvest.
Anyone who loves their life loses it;
Anyone who hates their life in this world
Will keep it for the eternal life.
If anyone serves me, they must follow me,
Wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour them.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Prayers of the Faithful

God, the Almighty Father, raised his Son Jesus Christ from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save his people

1. We pray for those who have died since this time last year and who now sleep in the Lord. Give refreshment, rest and peace to all whose faith is known to you alone. **Lord, hear us.**
2. For all who mourn for the loss of their loved ones, that they will find courage in their loneliness and comfort in their sadness. **Lord, hear us.**
3. We pray for all young people: may they always value goodness, kindness and friendship. May they see the beauty of the gift of human life. May they come to know God the Father's love for each and every one of them. **Lord, hear us.**
4. As we pray that all buried here in this cemetery will find eternal peace, we pray that the peace that is in heaven will touch the troubled parts of our world, our country, our parish, our homes and our hearts. **Lord, hear us.**
5. We pray for all whose lives are dedicated to caring for the sick and the dying. We remember those who have accompanied and supported our families during time of illness; may God reward their goodness and kindness. **Lord, hear us.**
6. For ourselves and our community, who have assembled here to worship in faith, that we may be reunited one day with all whom we love, when every tear will be wiped away. **Lord, hear us.**

Lord God, giver of peace and healer of souls,
hear the voices of your people,
who remember with love and mourn with sadness the loss of their loved ones.
We ask these prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Blessing Over Graves

Lord,

*You have made your people a pilgrim church,
to be welcomed by you into its eternal home.*

*By your own three days in the tomb,
you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you
and so made the grave a sign of hope that promises resurrection.*

Never cease to remind us

*of the life that we are to share in Christ,
who will transform our earthly bodies to be like his in glory.*

*May this cemetery be a place of comfort to the living
and a sign of our hope for unending life.*

*May your holy angels continue to watch over these graves
until we are united with you and our loved ones for ever in heaven.*

*We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen***

(Priest sprinkles each of the graves according to local custom.)

Our true home is in heaven, so with longing for the coming of God's kingdom we pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,.....

Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our day;
that by the help of your mercy
we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress
as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

People: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:
I leave you peace, my peace I give you.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live for ever and ever.

People: Amen

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And with your spirit.

Let us offer to one another the sign of peace.

Final Prayer & Blessing

Lord, God,
whose days are without end
and whose mercies beyond counting,
keep us mindful
that life is short and the hour of death unknown.
Let your Spirit guide our days on earth
in the ways of holiness and justice,
that we may serve you
sure in faith, strong in hope and perfect in love.
And when our earthly journey is ended,
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen**

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

In his great love,
The God of all consolation gave us the gift of life.
May he bless you with faith in the resurrection of his Son,
and with the hope of rising to new life. **Amen**

To us who are alive
may he grant forgiveness
and to all who have died
a place of light and peace. **Amen**

As you believe that Jesus rose from the dead,
so may you live with him for ever in joy. **Amen**

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**