

If you feel that you would like to pray, but do not know what to say, you may find the following prayer helpful:

*Dear God,
Death has takenfrom us;
Our faith in life is shaken;
Our minds keep on asking – why?
Why does joy end in sorrow?
Why has our loving ended in tears?*

*Father, please help us to face our grief.
Give us grace to accept the mystery of life.
Give us wisdom to understand that –
Even if our questions were answered,
Even if we did know why –
The pain would be no less,
The loneliness would remain,
And our hearts would still be aching.
Father, please help us to live with our grief.*

*Give us comfort,
That we may endure;
Give us new strength,
That we may walk by faith
Towards the promise of tomorrow;
Give us fresh courage,
That we may turn back to life
With love and deeds that will bless the living.
Father, please help us,
and transform our grief., Amen.*



For further information please contact the
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This is an adaptation of a leaflet that has been produced and published by the Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly Working Group on Worship. Permission is given to reproduce this leaflet for wider distribution.

The Funeral Service



When we lose someone we love

Ballarat Central Uniting Church
103 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat

When someone we love dies, we can experience many different reactions and emotions:

- things can seem quite unreal
- we may find what has happened really hard to accept
- we may feel angry, or desperately sad, or lost and confused
- sometimes we find that doing everyday things actually helps, and sometimes we feel unable to do anything
- sometimes we want other people close by, and sometimes we wish they would go away

It helps if we understand that all of this is quite normal. Bereavement throws our world into turmoil. Inevitably, we struggle to make sense of what has happened.

At times like this, our thoughts may turn to God. We may feel angry and want to blame God for what has happened. Or, we may feel a need to ask God to help us cope with our grief and loss. Both of these responses are also natural.

God understands and accepts how we feel in all situations. God's love for us and desire to help us are described in the Bible. Here are some verses that offer encouragement and hope in difficult times.

***Jesus said, '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)**

***(Jesus said) 'Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'* (Matthew 11:28)**

***(Jesus said) '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)**

If you have a Bible, you might like to look also at:

Psalm 23,
John 14:1-6, 18-19,
Romans 8: 31-35,37-39

You, or someone close to you, have probably contacted a Funeral Director already and made a time for a visit to go through arrangements for the funeral. Funeral Directors are professional people who will carefully assist and advise you as you make all the necessary arrangements and decisions.

Uniting Church ministers are willing to conduct funeral services for anyone regardless of whether they have been a member of the Uniting Church.

If you decide to ask a minister to conduct the service, they will make a time to come and visit you. They will talk with you, and other family members, about the person who has died, and explain for you the nature and purpose of the funeral service. This is best understood through the words with which the service begins:

We are here today to give thanks to God for the life ofand to affirm the Christian conviction that while death is the end of mortal life, it marks a new beginning in our relationship with God. We are also here to share the sorrow of those who mourn, and to offer them our love and support.

The funeral service will include prayers, readings from the Bible, Hymns or other music and a short reflection by the minister. There will also be opportunity to remember, and give thanks for the life of the person who has died. Some people choose to use a **pall*** to signify the person's identity as a Christian. You can talk freely with the minister about any special requests you may have.

The service would usually take place in a church, but may also be held in a Funeral Director's chapel. The service is normally followed by a short act of committal at a crematorium or graveside. It is important to have the coffin present in the service. If there are any items of personal memorabilia, they could be placed on a small table nearby.

With your consent, the minister will arrange to visit you again after the funeral and will be available to offer ongoing support as you pick up the patterns of daily life once again.

In preparing for the Funeral Service you might like to consider the following:

- If you are planning your own funeral make sure you write down and communicate your wishes clearly to family members.
- Did your loved one have particular wishes as to where the service should be held?
- If they were a member of the church, did they have particular hymns or bible readings that were significant for them?
- Gathering together the memories and details of your loved one's life in preparation for the Words of Remembrance [eulogy]
- Deciding if a family member or friend might compose and/or deliver the Words of Remembrance.
- Are there family members who would like to do the readings?
- Will there be refreshments afterwards, and if so, where will they be?

Are there costs involved?

- There is no cost involved for the use of Ballarat Central Uniting Church, and if there are no special requirements, the congregation will also provide flowers in the church.
- If the service is held at the church an audio-visual technician will be needed to look after the sound system and any audio-visual requirements. The cost for this service is \$80
- If the person has been a member of the church, there is no clergy fee
- If an organist is required, the cost is \$125

** Pall- a pall is a simple white embroidered cloth which is placed over the coffin to signify baptism and as a reminder of the resurrection of Christ.*