

The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio



In conducting a Masonic Funeral, a Lodge may use all or any part of one of the four approved funeral services herein published, or may use any other equally appropriate service.

Grand Secretary

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Masonic Funeral Services

For the assistance of those who may be called upon to conduct a Masonic Funeral Service, Sections 56 and 57 of the Code of the Grand Lodge of Ohio are herewith reproduced.

SECTION 56

Masonic Burial

Every Master Mason who, at the time of his death, is a member in good standing or who, being the holder of a dimit, has petitioned for affiliation within six months after the issuance of such dimit, shall be entitled to Masonic burial. It shall be the duty of a Lodge to bury any such deceased member or dimit holder who shall have so requested, or in whose behalf such request shall have been made by the person or persons standing in the nearest relation to him. In the absence of any such request, Masonic burial may be granted or withheld as the Master of the Lodge considers best.

A Lodge shall be under no obligation to pay expenses in burying the remains of a deceased Brother unless such expenses were

incurred at the instance or request of such Lodge, or of the Master thereof.

A Masonic funeral shall not be denied because of mental illness, suicide or any other kind of illness.

SECTION 57

Masonic Funeral Procedure

1. When a Lodge is requested to bury a deceased Brother, the Master shall summon his Lodge, open the same and repair to the designated place and perform the solemn rites, return to the Lodge, and in closing instruct the Secretary to make due record thereof. However, the Master, or such other officer or Past Master of the Lodge as he may designate, may proceed with other Brethren, to the place where the funeral service is to be held, declare the Lodge open in emergent meeting and declare it closed when the service is concluded. Such Brother shall make due report thereof at the next stated meeting of the Lodge. The Master shall cause a record thereof to be made on the minutes of the Lodge.

If found necessary, a Masonic funeral service may be held on Sunday.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

I. No brother can be interred with the formalities of the Order unless he has received the *Third Degree* in Masonry.

II. The Master of a Lodge being notified of the death of a brother, and of his request or the request of his near relatives, that he be buried with Masonic ceremonies, shall have all suitable arrangements made to that effect.

III. In the case of a sojourning brother it is always wise to obtain the approval of the Lodge of which the deceased was a member and of the arrangements planned, especially if an expenditure of funds is involved.

IV. If two or more Lodges attend, the ceremonies will be conducted by the Lodge of which the deceased was a member. In the case of a *stranger or sojourner*, the Master of the Senior Lodge present shall preside.

V. All the brethren who walk in procession should observe, as much as possible, a uniformity of dress. A proper badge of mourning around the left arm, with white gloves and aprons, are most suitable. It is recommended to avoid all ostentatious display of Masonic costume.

VI. The cushion on which the Holy Bible is placed should be covered with black; a piece of black crape should be tied around all the furniture carried in procession, around each Steward's rod, and on the musical instruments. The procession will immediately precede the corpse, and the brethren walk two and two, except such officers, as, from their station, are to walk otherwise.

VII. If the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master or Grand Wardens attend any funeral procession, they will take precedence, and preside over and conduct the ceremonies, unless they desire otherwise. Their place in the procession will be after the Master of the Lodge. Deacons, on the right and left, will attend a Grand Warden. When the Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master is present, the Deacons, with black rods, are placed on his right and left, on a line, seven feet apart. If a Past Grand Officer appears in procession, he will be recognized with the customary respect.

ORDER OF PROCESSION (Optional)

The following Order of Procession will be proper to be observed when a single Lodge conducts the ceremonies.

Tyler with drawn sword
 Stewards with white rods
 Musicians (if they are Masons; otherwise in advance
 of the Tyler)

Master Masons

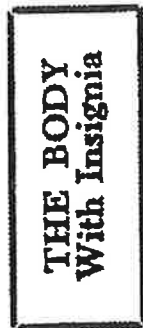
MARSHAL Senior and Junior Deacons
 Secretary and Treasurer
 Senior and Junior Wardens
 Past Masters of the Lodge

The Holy Writings, on a Cushion, carried by the
 oldest member of the Lodge present

The Master

Clergy

Pall Bearers



Pall Bearers

(The ceremony may be performed at any appropriate place—in the Lodge, the Church, the Home, or the Funeral Parlor. The Lodge may be opened merely upon the declaration of the Presiding Officer at the place where the ceremony is held. At the conclusion of the ceremony the Lodge is closed by declaration.

A record of the meeting must be made and recorded as a part of the minutes of the Lodge performing the ceremony, and in the case of a sojourner, his Lodge should be informed.)

SERVICE A

Master — Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. In the midst of life, we are in death. Of whom, then, may we seek for succor, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeased?

My brethren, where is the man that liveth that shall not see death?

Response — Man walketh in a vain shadow; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

Master — Can we offer any precious thing to redeem our brother?

Response — We have not a ransom. The place that once knew him shall know him no more forever.

Master — Shall his name then be lost upon the earth?

Response — We will treasure it in our memories; we will record it in our hearts.

Master — How then will it be known?

Response — It shall live in the exercise of his virtues.

Master — When our brother died did he carry nothing away with him?

Response — He fulfilled his destiny; naked he came into the world, and naked has departed out of it.

Master — Hear, then, the conclusion of the whole matter. It is the Lord only that can give, and it is the Lord that hath taken away.

Response — Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Master — I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me: "Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Response — Even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

[The roll, giving the name, age, and Masonic history of the deceased is taken, read, and returned to the casket.

Master, Chaplain or clergyman assisting, reads the following, or any suitable prayer:]

Most Glorious and merciful God, author of all good, and giver of every perfect gift, grant, we implore Thee, Thy blessing upon us. Under the solemnities of this hour, bind us yet closer together in the ties of brotherly love and affection. May this instance of mortality remind us of our approaching depar-

ture; and may it influence us and raise our attachment from the things of this transitory world, and fix our hope in Thee, the only sure refuge in time of need.

And at last, Great Parent of the Universe, when our journey shall be near its end; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken; in that moment of mortal extremity, may the "Lamp of Thy Love" dispel the gloom of the dark valley, and may we gain entrance into the celestial Lodge above, and in Thy Glorious Presence, amidst ineffable mysteries, enjoy a reunion with the souls of our departed friends, perfect as are the joys of Heaven and durable as Eternity. Amen.

Response — So mote it be.

[Then may be sung, or rehearsed by the Master, the following, or some other appropriate hymn:]

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be —
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Angels to beckon me,
In mercy given.

There let the way appear,
Steps unto Heaven;
All that Thou sendest me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Or if on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon and stars forgot,
Upward I fly;
Still all my song shall be —
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Master — My brethren: We are called upon by another admonition to regard the uncertainty of human life, the immutable certainty of death, and the vanity of earthly pursuits. Instability and change are written everywhere. Today we are strong; tomorrow we may fall. What a striking commentary lies before us, teaching by its example the uncertainty of every human pursuit. How touchingly, with what deep pathos, does it reiterate the sentiment of the great Preacher, who after sharing in all the pleasures and fascinations of this world, in its honors, in its wealth and in its intellectual en-

joyments, wrote for our continual warning: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

The last offices of respect and love that we pay to the dead are useless forms, except as they are lessons to the living. The lifeless form in the narrow house before us is alike insensible to our sorrows and our ceremonies. It matters not to our brother now, whether two or three gather around his body to conduct the funeral rite, or whether hundreds assemble with measured tread and sombre drapings, to lay it in its final resting place. It is of little moment how, or in what manner, his obsequies are performed; whether the wild winds chant his requiem, or whether it be accompanied with the minstrelsy of many voices. For *he* has gone to fulfill the destiny of our race; his *body* will return to earth, from which it came, and in the solitude of the grave his dust will mingle with its kindred dust.

Though our hearts are softened and saddened in the thought and presence of death which without hope is dark and gloomy, yet the ever-green and ever-living emblem of our faith strengthens our confidence and teaches us to look forward to a blessed immortality in the great hereafter.

What are all the externals of this world, the power of wealth, the dreams of ambition, the pride of intellect or the charms of beauty,

when in turn the debt to Nature's law is paid? The monarch of a hundred provinces, at whose bidding nations pay obedience, and the poor beggar who lingers at his gate, are *equals* in the house of death. The one must part with his sceptre and his crown; the other has no further use for his staff and his rags. Each in common is indebted to Mother Earth for his sepulcher. There all ranks are leveled and all distinctions are done away.

While the tears of sympathy and sorrow come unbidden at the departure of a brother, and the shadows of affliction are upon us, let us cast around his foibles the broad mantle of a Mason's charity; and let us withhold from his memory no just commendation. For the history of mankind teaches that the best of men may err, and the wisest go astray.

Our present gathering will be without profit unless it awakens serious reflections and strengthens us with resolutions for the future. Seeing then, my brothers, the uncertainty of life and the unsubstantial nature of all its pursuits, forget not that preparation which it is *wisdom* to make and *weakness* to defer. Let us embrace the present moment, and now while time and opportunity are ours, make sure the preparation for the coming

day, when the pleasures of this world will be as poisoned cups to our lips, and when the reflections consequent upon a well-spent life will alone afford us comfort and consolation. Let us here resolve to maintain with greater zeal the dignified character of our profession. May our *faith* be made manifest by a correct moral walk and deportment. May our *hope* be bright as the glorious mysteries that will be revealed hereafter, and our *charity* boundless as are the wants of humanity. Let us imitate the *good man* in his virtues and amiable conduct, in his unfeigned piety to God, in his inflexible fidelity to his trust, and may we learn that this death is but the messenger sent by the Great Master, to lead us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge above.

Having faithfully discharged the duties which we owe to God, to our neighbor and ourselves, when at last it shall please the Grand Master of the Universe to summon us unto His presence, may the trestle-board of our whole lives pass such inspection that it may be given unto each one to "eat of the hidden manna," and to receive the "white stone with the new name written thereon," that will insure perpetual happiness in the paradise of God.

Master—May we be true and faithful unto each other, and may we live and die in love.

Response—So mote it be.

Master—May we profess what is good, and always act according to our profession.

Response—So mote it be.

Master—May the God of our Fathers be our God, and may His Divine Will be our guide.

Response—So mote it be, now and forever.

[The brethren may join in the following prayer:]

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman:]

May the Lord bless us and keep us, and may the Lord be gracious unto us and all mankind.

Response — So mote it be.

Glory be to God in the highest; on earth, peace, good will toward men.

Response — So mote it be, now, henceforth and forever. Amen.

[The Apron is handed to the Master:]

HYMN

MUSIC — “Pleyel”

Solemn strikes the fun’ral chime,
Notes of our departing time;
As we journey here below,
Through a pilgrimage of woe!

Mortals, now indulge a tear,
For mortality is here!
See how wide her trophies wave
O’er the slumbers of the grave!

Here another guest we bring,
Seraphs of celestial wing,
To our fun’ral altar come,
Waft this friend and brother home.

Lord of all! below — above —
Fill our hearts with truth and love;
When dissolves our earthly tie,
Take us to Thy Lodge on high.

Master — The Lamb Skin or White Apron is an emblem of innocence, and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter. This emblem I now deposit with the body of our deceased Brother. We are thus reminded of the universal domination of death. The arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent his coming; the

wealth of the world cannot purchase our release; nor will the innocence of youth nor the charms of beauty propitiate his purpose. The mattock, the coffin and the grave admonish us of our mortality; and that sooner or later these frail, weak bodies must moulder in their parent dust.

[The Master, taking the evergreen in his hand, continues:]

This evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny beyond the "world of shadows," and that there dwells within our tabernacle of clay an imperishable, immortal spirit, over which the grave has no dominion and death no power.

[The service, if held at the house, church or Lodge room, may be completed there, or may be suspended at this point, and resumed at the grave, at the option of the Master.]

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman:]

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, *shall never die*.

For as much as it has pleased Almighty God, in His wise providence, to take out of the world the soul of our deceased Brother,

we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

[The Master drops a sprig
of evergreen on the casket.]

Master — We have committed the body of a Brother to its kindred dust. His soul, Almighty Father, we leave, with humble submission, in Thy hands.

Master — With the friends and relatives, who are deeply stricken at the loss which we have all sustained, we sincerely and most affectionately sympathize. We dare to say that He who “tempers the wind to the shorn lamb” looks down with infinite compassion upon the widow and the fatherless in their hour of desolation; and will fold the arms of His love and protection around those who put their trust and confidence in Him.

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman closes the service with the following or some suitable prayer:]

Almighty and most merciful God, before whom all must appear to render an account for the deeds done in the body, we do most earnestly beseech Thee, as we now surround the grave of a departed Brother, to impress deeply upon our minds the solemnities and lessons of this day. May we ever remember

that in the midst of life we are in death; and may we so live and act our several parts as we may wish that we had done, when the hour of our departure is at hand.

Gracious Father, vouchsafe unto us, we pray Thee, Thy divine assistance, to redeem our mis-spent time; and in the discharge of the duties Thou hast assigned us in the erection of our moral and spiritual edifice, may we have *wisdom* from on high to direct us, *strength* commensurate with our task to support us, and the beauty of *holiness* to render all our deeds acceptable in Thy sight. And at last when our work on earth is done, may we obtain a blessed and everlasting rest in that spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. Amen.

Response—So mote it be.

[The Chaplain or assisting clergyman may pronounce a benediction, or the Master may close with the following:]

Master — And now may the blessing of Heaven rest upon us and upon all mankind; may brotherly love prevail, and every social and moral virtue cement and strengthen us. Amen.

Response — So mote it be.

[The Lodge is declared closed by the Master.]

SERVICE B

Master or Chaplain — Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. In the midst of life, we are in death. Of whom, then, may we seek for succor, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeased?

Where is the man that liveth, that shall not see death?

Man walketh in a vain shadow; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

[The roll, giving the name, age, and Masonic history of the deceased is taken, read, and returned to the casket.

Master, Chaplain or clergyman assisting, reads the following, or any suitable prayer:]

Chaplain — Most glorious and merciful God, author of all good, and giver of every perfect gift, grant, we implore Thee, Thy blessing upon us. Under the solemnities of this hour, bind us yet closer together in the ties of brotherly love and affection. May this instance of mortality remind us of our approaching departure; and may it influence us and raise our attachment from the things of this transitory world, and fix our hope in Thee, the only sure refuge in time of need.

And at last, Great Parent of the Universe, when our journey shall be near its end; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken; in that moment of mortal extremity, may the "Lamp of Thy Love" dispel the gloom of the dark valley, and may we gain entrance into the celestial Lodge above, and in Thy Glorious Presence, amidst ineffable mysteries, enjoy a reunion with the souls of our departed friends, perfect as are the joys of Heaven and durable as Eternity. Amen.

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 Nearer to Thee;
 E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me;
 Still all my song shall be —
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee.

There let the way appear,
 Steps unto Heaven;
 All that Thou sendest me
 In mercy given.
 Angels to beckon me,
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee.

Or if on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon and stars forgot,
Upward I fly;
Still all my song shall be —
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Master — My brethren and friends. We are called upon by another admonition to regard the uncertainty of human life, the immutable certainty of death, and the vanity of earthly pursuits. Instability and change are written everywhere. Today we are strong, tomorrow we may fail. What a striking commentary lies before us, teaching by its example the uncertainty of every human pursuit.

The last offices of respect and love that we pay to the dead are useless forms, except as they are lessons to the living.

Though our hearts are softened and saddened in the thought and presence of death which without hope is dark and gloomy, yet the ever-green and ever-living emblem of our faith strengthens our confidence and teaches us to look forward to a blessed immortality in the great hereafter.

Our present gathering will be without profit unless it awakens serious reflections and strengthens us with resolutions for the future.

May our *faith* be made manifest by a correct moral walk and deportment. May our *hope* be bright as the glorious mysteries that will be revealed hereafter, and our *charity* boundless as are the wants of humanity. Let us imitate the *good man* in his virtues and amiable conduct, in his unfeigned piety to God, in his inflexible fidelity to his trust, and may we learn that death is but the messenger sent by the Great Master, to lead us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge above.

Having faithfully discharged the duties which we owe to God, to our neighbor and ourselves, when at last it shall please the Grand Master of the Universe to summon us into His presence, may the trestle-board of our whole lives pass such inspection that it may be given unto each one to "eat of the hidden manna," and to receive the "white stone with the new name written thereon," that will insure perpetual happiness in the paradise of God.

[The brethren join in the following prayer:]

Chaplain—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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into

temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman:]

May the Lord bless us and keep us, and may the Lord be gracious unto us and all mankind. Amen.

Response — So mote it be.

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman:]

Glory be to God in the highest on earth, peace, good will toward men.

[The service, if held at the house, church, Lodge room, or funeral home, may be completed there, or may be suspended at this point, and resumed at the grave at the option of the Master.

Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman:]

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, *shall never die*.

For as much as it has pleased Almighty God, in His wise providence, to take out of the world the soul of our deceased brother, we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

[The Apron is handed to the Master:]

HYMN

MUSIC — "*Pleyel*"

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Notes of our departing time;
As we journey here below,
Through a pilgrimage of woe!

Mortals, now indulge a tear,
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Seraphs of celestial wing,
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[The Master, taking the evergreen in his hand, continues:]

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[The Master drops a sprig
of evergreen on the casket.]

Master — We have committed the body of a brother to its kindred dust. His soul, Almighty Father, we leave, with humble submission, in Thy hands.

With the friends and relatives, who are deeply stricken at the loss which we have all sustained, we sincerely and most affectionately sympathize. We dare to say that He who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" looks down with infinite compassion upon the widow and the fatherless in their hour of desolation and will fold the arms of His love and protection around those who put their trust and confidence in Him.

[Master, Chaplain or assisting Clergyman closes the service with the following or some suitable prayer:]

Chaplain — Gracious Father, vouchsafe unto us, we pray Thee, Thy divine assistance, to redeem

our misspent time and in the discharge of the duties Thou hast assigned us in the erection of our moral and spiritual edifice, may we have *wisdom* from on high to direct us, *strength* commensurate with our task to support us, and the beauty of *holiness* to render all our deeds acceptable in Thy sight. And at last when our work on earth is done, may we obtain a blessed and everlasting rest in that spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Amen.

Response — So mote it be.

[The Chaplain or assisting clergyman may pronounce a benediction, or the Master may close with the following:]

Master — And now may the blessing of heaven rest upon us and upon all mankind; may brotherly love prevail, and every social and moral virtue cement and strengthen us. Amen.

Response — So mote it be.

[Lodge is declared closed by the Master.]

SERVICE C

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Let us pray.

Our heavenly Father, we give thee thanks for all those near and dear to us, who walked in thy light and in whose lives we have seen that light. Help us to rejoice in the memory of the life we have known and to look toward an eternal reunion. Give us comfort for the sorrow in our hearts, that, having faith in thy love and thy mercy, we might be led to trust in thy wisdom and in thy never-failing care. Draw us closer to one another that we might find consolation, and draw us closer to thee that we might know the light and the comfort of thy presence for the rest of our days. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

[One of the following Old Testament Readings should be read; two if desired. No more than two.]

Psalm 23

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 paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I 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 my enemies; thou anointest 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 forever.

Psalm 90

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

Thou dost sweep men away; they are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed, in the evening it fades and withers.

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Let thy work be manifest to thy servants, and thy glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does 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.

Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not smite 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 forth and for evermore.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice!

Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope of the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Isaiah 40

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, fear not;

Say to the cities of Judeah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, 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, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

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 to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they 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.

[One of the following New Testament readings should be read; two if desired.
No more than two.]

John 14

Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live; you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Corinthians

Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been

raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If in this life we who are in Christ have only hope, we are of all men most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order; Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, 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. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

So is it 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.

For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“O, death, where is thy victory?”

O, death, where is thy 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 brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Revelation

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sun was no more. And

I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

[Readings from the Scriptures as above to be followed by the following statement.]

Here in the words of God revealed to mankind we find both the evidence and the assurance of comfort and of immortality for us and for those we love.

MEDITATION

In our Masonic Fraternity we have labored together in the eternal search for divine truth, knowing that on this earth we cannot achieve its perfection, but being equally assured that as long as we labor we shall always find more and more of the knowledge of God. Our Brother, who labored with us in our daily lives, has gained the immortality in which he has found that for which we all so long have sought. While we are filled with a sense of sorrow at his parting from

us for a while, we rejoice in the victory he has gained. Our sorrow will, with the passage of time, become a deep remembrance of him and of his service to mankind; our loss will be replaced with a new feeling of closeness to his and to our God.

The change that takes place in us has gone on throughout our lifetime. Every experience has added to our knowledge of ourselves and of our eternal God.

In our searching of the Holy Bible we have found inspiring passages that have enabled us more nobly to live, and comforting passages that have enabled us with confidence to prepare for death.

In the worship of God we have found ourselves joined with others in the common uplifting of our hearts in praise and consecration.

In the lessons of our Masonic fraternity we have learned the truths of God's care and the assurances of immortality. In one of these lessons we are told: "If thou hast not overcome the fear of death, thou hast partially failed to live thy life, and hast little understood that bounteous gift of thy Creator. Thou canst not, then, be helper to thyself nor to thy fellow men. The secret and the mystery of death cannot be learned through fear, but through the surety that the ended life is the dawning of a glorious immortality. If in thy soul

is still the dread of death, then must thou seek, with all thy heart, and mind, and strength, for knowledge of this sure and steadfast faith. To him that hath this knowledge, life's duties are plain; for him death hath no terrors, and therein lie the greater mysteries."

As those who have overcome the fear of death through our knowledge of God and our faith in his eternal care, we rejoice in the life of our Brother and have assurance of his immortality.

[Following the Meditation may be inserted, if desired, a personal and Masonic history of the deceased, and any eulogy that may seem appropriate to be included.]

PRAYER

Eternal God, the Giver and Sustainer of life, we look to Thee in confidence and faith, knowing that knowledge of thy love will bring to us peace and comfort throughout our lives and even in our bereavement.

We thank Thee for the blessing of the life of our Brother, and for his love and inspiration to us throughout his days. We cannot help but be overcome with sorrow at our loss. Help us, though, to be filled more and more with the blessed assurance of immortality and of thy abiding love, that our sorrow may be tempered with thy presence

within our lives, and that our future may be made brighter with faith in thy eternal day.

In memory of him may we so live the days that are to be that we may reflect the virtues he prized and the brotherhood he practiced.

Grant us thy help in our living that we too may enter thy spiritual temple, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and receive thy blessing, and share the comfort of thy eternal presence with us.

Send thy comfort upon us now that without fear we may entrust our loved one to thy eternal care, and consecrate our lives to thy service and will. Amen.

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless thee and keep thee;

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

SERVICE D

Invocation: (Chaplain)

Gracious and merciful God,
We are gathered in your name,
And would be led by your Spirit.
Will you so harmonize and enrich
Our lives by your presence that,
As Freemasons, we may humbly
Reflect the order and beauty
Which reigns forever with you.
Amen.

Response:

So mote it be.

Scripture: (Master)

Let us hear the Word of God,
written for our admonition and our
comfort.

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?

(Psalm 27:1)

God is our refuge and our strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear.

(Psalm 46:1-2)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord
who made heaven and earth.
(Psalm 121:1-2)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
He makes me to lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I 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 my enemies;
Thou anointest 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
forever.
(Psalm 23)

Let not your hearts be troubled;
ye believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many rooms;
if it were not so, would I have told you
that I go to prepare a place for you?
Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled,
neither let them be afraid.
(John 14:1-3, 27)

Prayer: (Master or Chaplain)

Our heavenly Father, we thank you
for all those near and dear to us,
who walked in your light and in whose
lives we have seen that light.
Help us to rejoice
in the memory of the life we have known
and to look toward an eternal reunion.
Give us comfort for the sorrow in our
hearts, that, having faith in your love
and mercy, we might be led to trust in
your wisdom and never-failing care.
Draw us closer to one another
that we might find consolation,
and draw us closer to you
that we might know the light and comfort
of your presence for the rest of our days.
Amen.

Response:

So mote it be.

Poem: (Master or other)

(This or some other appropriate verse may be used.)

God has not promised
Skies always blue
Flower-strewn pathways
All our lives through;
God has not promised
Sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow
Peace without pain.

But God has promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for the labor,
Light for the way,
Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love.

The Meditation: (Master)

My brothers, we are gathered here
to pay the last offices of respect and love
to our departed Brother (Name)

We sincerely and affectionately sympathize with the friends and relatives who are deeply stricken at the loss which they have all sustained. May God look with infinite compassion upon this family in its hour of sorrow and loneliness; and may He fold the arms of His love and protection around those who put their trust and confidence in Him.

In our Masonic Fraternity we have labored together in the search for eternal truth. We know that on this earth we cannot achieve its perfection, but we are assured that so long as we seek so shall we find. Our brother, who labored with us, has gained immortality. He has found that for which we all seek. While we sorrow at his parting, we rejoice in the victory he has gained. May our loss serve to bring us nearer to God, the giver of life.

In the true spirit of our craft, let us surround the memory of our brother with the broad mantle of a Mason's charity; and may we not withhold from his memory any just praise. We rejoice in the life of our brother, and have assurance of his immortality. And now may the ever-green, the ever-living emblem of our faith

strengthen our confidence and teach us
to overcome any fear of death.

(A personal and Masonic history of the deceased,
and/or eulogy may be inserted here if deemed
appropriate.)

Let Us Pray:

Eternal God, the Giver and Sustainer of
life, we look to you in confidence and faith,
knowing that your love will bring peace
and comfort throughout our lives.

Help us to be true and faithful to each
other, so that we may live and die in love.

May God's divine will be our guide.

Amen.

Let us pray together.

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 trespasses, as we forgive

Those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but

Deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,

And the power and the glory forever
and ever.

Amen.

Benediction: (Master or Chaplain)

The Lord bless and keep us,
The Lord be gracious unto us
and all mankind.

Amen.

(End)

Note: The Masonic service normally concludes at this point. Should it be the desire of the family, however, that the service proceed at the graveside, the following may be given.

GRAVESIDE (Optional)

Master or Chaplain:

Draw near to God,
And He will draw near to you.
In returning and rest we shall be saved;
In quietness and confidence shall be
our strength.
They that wait upon the Lord
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles;
They shall run and not be weary;
And they shall walk and not faint.

Prayer: (Master or Chaplain)

Almighty God, we thank you for the life of
Our Brother and for his love and
Inspiration to us.

We cannot help but be saddened at our loss.
Help us to be filled more and more
With the assurance of immortality
And of your abiding love.

Grant us your help that we too may enter
Your spiritual temple and share the joy
of your eternal presence.

Send your comfort upon us now that
with unshaken

Faith we may entrust our loved one to
Your eternal care, and consecrate our lives
to your service.

Amen.

Response:

So mote it be.

Benediction: (Master)

The Lord bless us and keep us;
The Lord make his face to shine upon us
And be gracious unto us;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon us
And give us peace.
Amen.

Alternative
Masonic Funeral Service

Prepared by

THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF OHIO
Ritual Committee, Douglas O. Brenneman, PGM, Chairman
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Masonic Funeral Service

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. &A.M. of Ohio

Opening a Lodge for a Masonic Funeral Service

When the service is to be conducted at a Funeral Home, Church, Cemetery or some other appropriate place the Master should proceed as follows:

I now declare _____ Lodge # _____ open in emergent communication for the purpose of conducting Masonic Funeral Services for deceased Brother

_____.

1. This should be done prior to going into the place where the family will be assembled for the service. It can be done at the Lodge, the Funeral Home or etc.
2. It is highly recommended that all brethren taking part in the service whether he is an officer, GLO, present or past DDGM or any brethren who will be assembled for the service wear **(White Aprons)** either their Lambskin or a cloth one furnished by the Lodge.
3. After the Master has declared the Lodge open, the contingent will march into the room or appropriate place to conduct the service.
4. Two evenly numbered lines is the appropriate way, but depending on circumstances, you need to work out the best method with the Funeral Home Director.
5. **Don't be hesitant to tell the Director if he has you standing in front of the family and they can't see the service, as this is very rude.**
6. It is preferred that the service be given from memory by a brother or brothers who do an exemplary job. If you do not have someone in your Lodge that can, don't be hesitant to call on a brother from another Lodge as it is very important that it is presented in a near perfect manner. Reading of the Service is a last resort and, if you do this, make sure you have someone who can pronounce the words right and do a satisfactory job.
7. Remember Brethren, this is where we are in front of the public and perfection is what we want.
8. This is always counted as a Special meeting of the Lodge.

Masonic Funeral Service

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Ohio

Master. – Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. In the midst of life, we are in death. Of whom, then, may we seek for succor, but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeased? My brethren, where is the man that liveth, that shall not see death?

Man walketh in a vain shadow; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

Secretary. – (Masonic History of the Deceased Brother is read and placed in or on the casket or other appropriate place.)

Chaplain. - Let us pray

Most glorious and merciful God, author of all good, and giver of every perfect gift, grant, we implore Thee, Thy blessing upon us. Under the solemnities of this hour, bind us yet closer in the ties of brotherly love and affection. May this instance of mortality remind us of our approaching departure and may it influence us and raise our attachment from the things of this transitory world, and fix our hope in Thee, the only sure refuge in time of need. And at last, Great Parent of the Universe, when our journey shall be near its end; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken; in that moment of mortal extremity, may the “Lamp of Thy Love” dispel the gloom of the dark valley, and may we gain entrance into the celestial Lodge above, and in Thy Glorious Presence, amidst ineffable mysteries, enjoy a reunion with the souls of our departed friends, perfect as are the joys of Heaven and durable as Eternity. Amen.

Master. - My brethren and friends: We are called upon by another admonition to regard the uncertainty of human life, the immutable certainty of death, and the vanity of earthly pursuits. Instability and change are written everywhere. Today we are strong; tomorrow we may fall. What a striking commentary is before us, teaching by its example the uncertainty of every human pursuit. How touchingly, and with deep pathos, does it reiterate the sentiment of the great Preacher, who after sharing in all the pleasures and fascinations of this world, in its honors, in its wealth and in its intellectual enjoyments, wrote for our continual warning: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

The last offices of respect and love that we pay to our Brother are useless forms, except as they are lessons to the living. Our Brother is alike insensible to our sorrows and ceremonies. It matters not to him now, whether two or three gather around to conduct the funeral service or whether hundreds assemble with measured tread and somber drappings, to lay him in his final resting place. It is of little moment how, or in what manner, his obsequies are performed; whether the wild winds chant his requiem, or whether it be accompanied with the minstrelsy of many voices. For he has gone to fulfill the destiny of our race; his body (**or ashes**) will return to the earth, from which it (**or they**) came, and in the solitude of the grave his dust will mingle with its kindred dust.

Though our hearts are softened and saddened in the thought and presence of death, which without hope is dark and gloomy, yet the ever-green, an ever-living emblem of our faith, strengthens our confidence and teaches us to look forward to a blessed immortality in the great hereafter.

What are all the externals of this world, the power of wealth, the dreams of ambition, the pride of intellect or the charms of beauty, when in turn the debt to Nature's law is paid? The monarch of a hundred provinces, at whose bidding nations pay obedience, and the poor beggar who lingers at his gate, are equals in the house of death. The one must part with his scepter and his crown; the other has no further use for his staff and his rags. Each in common is indebted to Mother Earth for his sepulcher. There all ranks are leveled and all distinctions are done away.

While the tears of sympathy and sorrow come unbidden at the departure of a brother, and the shadows of affliction are upon us, let us cast around his foibles the broad mantle of a Mason's charity; and let us withhold from his memory no just commendation. For the history of mankind teaches that the best of men may err, and the wisest go astray.

Our present gathering will be without profit unless it awakens serious reflections and strengthens us with resolutions for the future. Seeing then, my brethren, the uncertainty of life and the unsubstantial nature of all its pursuits, forget not that preparation which is wisdom to make and weakness to defer. Let us embrace the present moment, and now while time and opportunity are ours, make sure the preparation for the coming day, when all the pleasures of this world will be as poisoned cups to our lips, and when the reflections consequent upon a well-spent life will alone afford us comfort and consolation. Let us here resolve to maintain with greater zeal the dignified character of our profession.

May our faith be made manifest by a correct moral walk and deportment. May our hope be bright as the glorious mysteries that will be revealed hereafter, and our charity boundless as are the wants of humanity. Let us imitate the good man in his virtues and amiable conduct, in his unfeigned piety to God, in his inflexible fidelity to his trust, and may we learn that death is but the messenger sent by the Great Master, to lead us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious and celestial Lodge above.

Having faithfully discharged the duties which we owe to God, to our neighbor and ourselves, when at last it shall please the Grand Master of the Universe to summon us unto His presence, may the trestle-board of our whole lives pass such inspection that it may be given unto each one to "eat of the hidden manna," and to receive the "white stone with the new name written thereon," that will insure perpetual happiness in the paradise of God.

Chaplain. - Would you please join me in the Lord's Prayer?

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Master. - The Lambskin or White Apron is an emblem of innocence, and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter. We are thus reminded of the universal domination of death. The arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent his coming; the wealth of the world cannot purchase our release; nor will the innocence of youth nor the charms of beauty propitiate his purpose. The mattock, the coffin and the grave admonish us of our mortality; and that sooner or later these frail, weak bodies must moulder in their parent dust.

[The Master, taking the evergreen in his hand, continues:]

This evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this, we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny beyond the "world of shadows," and that there dwells within our tabernacle of clay an imperishable, immortal spirit, over which the grave has no dominion and death no power.

[The Master and each brother in turn place a sprig of evergreen on the casket]
Or appropriate place.

Master. - With the friends and relatives, who are deeply stricken at the loss which we have all sustained, we sincerely and most affectionately sympathize. We dare to say that He who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" looks down with infinite compassion upon the survivors in their hour of desolation; and will fold the arms of His love and protection around those who put their trust and confidence in Him.

Chaplain. - Let us pray

Gracious Father, vouchsafe unto us, we pray Thee, Thy divine assistance, to redeem our misspent time and in the discharge of the duties Thou hast assigned us in the erection of our moral and spiritual edifice, may we have wisdom from on high to direct us, strength commensurate with our task to support us, and the beauty of holiness to render all our deeds acceptable in Thy sight. And at last when our work on earth is done, may we obtain a blessed and everlasting rest in that spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Amen.

Master. - And now, may the blessings of heaven rest upon us and upon all mankind; may brotherly love prevail, and every social and moral virtue cement and strengthen us. Amen.

I now declare _____ Lodge # _____ closed.