

Funeral

Rites

Abbreviated for use during the COVID-19 outbreak

Notes

During the coronavirus outbreak, funerals must be conducted with certain severe constraints, whether the death is linked to COVID-19 or not.

Pastoral care of the dying and bereaved is restricted by the rules of social distancing. The assurances offered through personal contact with a priest, including the possibility of Confession and Absolution, and of Viaticum, are no longer available. Such prayers and counsel as are possible must be communicated by telephone.

It is not permitted for funerals to take place in church buildings. Therefore, Reception of the Body into the Church, and celebration of the Eucharist, are not possible. Funeral services are taking place either at the graveside or at a crematorium. The numbers allowed to attend the funeral are restricted and social distancing is being enforced. These are all factors that we need to recognise will add to the trauma of the bereaved — factors which, alas, clergy can do little to mitigate.

Inclement weather may impose time constraints on outdoor funerals. The rigid schedules to which crematoria adhere, combined with additional hygiene measures between funerals, may reduce the period for which the chapel is available. We should also bear in mind that fear of infection among the mourners may give rise to discomfort: this could be eased by the prompt conduct of the service.

The Commemoration of All Souls this year may provide the opportunity for the special remembering in a congregation of those who have died during the period of restriction. Clergy could also talk to families about the possibilities of a future memorial service or 'Requiem', when church buildings are re-opened for public worship, and freedom of movement and assembly are restored. For the present, we shall have to explain that eulogies, recitation of poetry, or musical presentations by family and friends, will probably not be possible at funeral services, but could be included in later memorial services.

At a very practical level, clergy should also expect crematorium vestries to be closed – either come robed or robe at the back of the chapel.

The rite which follows, which is abbreviated from *Funeral Rites 1987*, is offered to help clergy conduct funerals with dignity in circumstances where time is limited.

The text of four scriptural readings is provided in the rite. The full list of suggested readings is to be found in *Funeral Rites 1987*, p. 21.

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MUSIC to come into as we gather – Jesus Joy of man’s desiring

Sentences

Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.
Therefore encourage one another with these words.

(1 *Thessalonians* 4. 14,18)

Introduction

These or other suitable words may be used.

We have gathered to commend our *brother Alexander Stirling Bruce*. to God’s loving care, to give thanks for *his/her* life, and to comfort one another in our grief. We do this at a time when our nation and communities are in crisis, and loved ones have not been able to gather to grieve or to share precious memories. We nonetheless gather now, to commit *Alex’s* body to be *buried*, in this act of Christian worship that gives expression to our faith and affirms our hope of resurrection to life in God’s eternal presence.

Collect

God our maker,
your creative will gives life to all that is:
your quickening power brings us to birth
and raises us from death.
Take this your *son Alex*. into your keeping
and give *him* the new life
that is promised in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who once was dead and lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Scriptural reading

John 14:1-6 Good News Translation

Jesus the Way to the Father

14 "Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe[a] in God and believe also in me. 2 There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so.[b] 3 And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. 4 You know the way that leads to the place where I am going."

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?"

6 Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.

Eulogy – read by Teeny

Music as we remember – Bring him home (Les Miserables)

Intercession

Prayer for the Mourners

God of the living and the dead,
when you raised Jesus from the tomb
you gave new hope to his desolate disciples.
Cleanse, restore and heal us in our time of sorrow.
May we go forward in his strength upon our pilgrimage,
sharing the fellowship of the redeemed,
both living and departed.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Prayer of Faith

Father,
you are from everlasting,
your compassion knows no bounds:
Though we are dust and to dust shall return,
we trust in your power to fashion us anew
in the likeness of your Son, who endured the cross
to become the firstborn in your new creation;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we 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.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are
yours, now and for ever.
Amen.

As our Saviour Christ has commanded
and taught us, we are bold to say:

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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE COMMENDATION

Father,
we commend to your care our *brother Alexander Stirling Bruce*
giving thanks for all that *he* brought us.
Though now taken from us,
let *him* not be parted from you.
May your servant, set free from the bondage of earth,
be changed into your likeness, from glory to glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints:
where sorrow and pain are no more;
neither sighing, but life everlasting. **Amen.**

Go forth upon your journey from this world,
dear child of God,
into the hands of the Father who made you,
to find life in Christ who redeemed you,
to rejoice in the Spirit who renews you.
May the heavenly host sustain you
and the company of the redeemed enfold you;
may peace be yours this day,
and the heavenly city your home.

**Music to go out of church - The Folks Who Live On The Hill
by Peggy Lee**

At the grave side

THE COMMITTAL

At a burial:

We have entrusted
our *brother Alex*
to God's merciful keeping;
we now commit *his* body
to the ground,
earth to earth,
ashes to ashes,
dust to dust;
in sure and certain hope of the
resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died, was buried
and rose again for us.
To him be glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and for ever.

(*Jude 24, 25*)

Amen.

May the souls of the faithful depart,
through the mercy of God,
Rest in peace. **And rise in Glory.**