

The Burial of a Dog or Memorial Service for a Dog

Opening Anthem

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousands times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands,

Saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

And the four beasts said, “Amen.” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. (Rev. 5:11-14)

(In the prayers below, the Leader says the deceased dog’s name where the prayers say N., and changes the italicized pronouns as appropriate for the dog’s gender.)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our beloved dog and companion *N*. We thank you for giving *him* to us to be a friend and a source of love, affection and joy on our journey in this life. In Your compassion, comfort us in our grief. Give us faith to commit this beloved dog to Your care, as you gave *him* to us to care for during *his* life, and give us hope that we may one day be reunited around Your throne, for You live and reign for ever and ever. *Amen*.

The Liturgy of the Word

One or more of the following passages of scripture may be read. The Leader should choose appropriate passages before the service and if desired they may be read by anyone present.

Old Testament

Genesis 9:12-17

Isaiah 11:6-9

Tobit 5:21-6:2a (This is found in Catholic bibles or in the Apocrypha)

Psalm 104:25, 28-31 or 145:14-22

New Testament

Romans 8:19-25

Acts 2:16-17 KJV or RSV or NRSV

Gospel

Matthew 10:27-31

Mark 7:25-29

Mark 16:14-15 (KJV)

Sharing of Memories

At this time the Leader may invite those present to share their memories of the life of the deceased dog, remembering especially the courage, faithfulness, affection, and loyalty of the departed companion animal and its other good traits. And also invite those attending to share more difficult memories of the dog's faults, and humorous stories; for our beloved animal friends, unlike human beings, are morally innocent, but like us, they are imperfect.

When all have finished what they desire to say, the Leader says:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you gave to us the responsibility and blessing of the care of this dog during *his* earthly life. If in any way we failed in that responsibility, we ask for your pardon, and trust in Your mercy, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Creator of all, you gave us the rainbow as the sign of Your everlasting covenant with every living creature of all flesh: help us to trust in your covenant of faithfulness to *N.*, our faithful dog. *Amen.*

The Apostles Creed (optional)

Leader: For our companion, *N.*, let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Please respond after each petition, "Lord, hear us."

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; be close to us as we mourn for our canine friend, who loved and trusted us.

Lord, hear us.

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend, comfort us in our sorrow.

Lord, hear us.

You are the Lamb who was slain, yet you live forever; give us faith to commit *N.* to your loving and tender care.

Lord, hear us.

Father of all, as your servant Tobiah was accompanied on his journey by the Archangel Raphael, and by a dog, so we have also been blessed. May your holy angels lead *N.* into paradise.

Lord, hear us.

A period of silence may be kept.

Creator of the Universe, you love everything that you have made. We pray to you for *N.* and for all those whom we love but see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, by the mercy of God, rest in peace. *Amen.*

The service closes with the Peace, and with the singing of one or more hymns or songs, such as "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art," or, especially appropriate for children, "Somewhere over the Rainbow." At the discretion of the Leader, the service may be shortened, especially if small children are present.

Scripture Readings

Genesis 9:12-17 (RSV) And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

Isaiah 11:6-9 (RSV) The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Tobit 5:21-6:2a (NAB) Tobit reassured her: "Have no such thought. Our son will leave in good health and come back to us in good health. Your own eyes will see the day when he returns to you safe and sound. So, no such thought; do not worry about them, my love, for a good angel will go with him, his journey will be successful, and he will return unharmed." Then she stopped weeping. When the boy left home, accompanied by the angel, the dog followed Tobiah out of the house and went with him.

PSALM 104:25, 28-32 (BCP)

**O Lord, how manifold are your works!*
in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.**

**All of them look to you*
to give them their food in due season.**

**You give it to them; they gather it;*
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.**

**You hide your face, and they are terrified;*
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.**

**You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;*
and so you renew the face of the earth.**

**May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;*
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.**

PSALM 145:14-22 (BCP)

**The Lord is faithful in all his words*
and merciful in all his deeds.**

**The Lord upholds all those who fall;*
he lifts up those who are bowed down.**

**The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord,*
and you give them their food in due season.**

**You open wide your hand*
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.**

**The Lord is righteous in all his ways*
and loving in all his works.**

**The Lord is near to those who call upon him,*
to all who call upon him faithfully.**

**He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;*
he hears their cry and helps them.**

Romans 8:19-25 (NSRV) For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Acts 2:16-17 (NRSV) This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'

Matthew 10:27-31 (RSV) Jesus said, "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Mark 7:25-29 (NRSV) A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about Jesus, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go--the demon has left your daughter."

Mark 16:14-15 (KJV) Afterwards Jesus appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

This service is intended for use by families and friends of the deceased dog in communal prayer, in a private burial or memorial service. It has not been formally adopted by any denomination or church body, but the liturgist believes it to be in accord with Holy Scripture.