

COMMON PRAYER

*Resources for
gospel-shaped
gatherings*

Final Draft for Synod 2012

Common Prayer 2012
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gospel-shaped
gatherings*

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www.commonprayer.org.au

Published 2012 by Anglican Press Australia
an imprint of Anglican Youthworks
PO Box A287, Sydney South NSW 1235
Australia

So at last we have arrived at the heart of Anglican Theology. Divine gracious love, constantly communicated by the Holy Spirit in the regular repetition of Scripture's promises through Word and Sacrament, is to inspire human love, drawing believers towards God and their fellow human beings in the pursuit of lifelong godliness.

Ashley Null,
writing on the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556),
the principal author of *The Book of Common Prayer*

FUNERAL SERVICE AND RESOURCES

A funeral is a time to give thanks for the life of the deceased, to comfort the grieving, to remind one another about human mortality and the brevity of life, and especially to turn to the God who raised Jesus from the dead for forgiveness and hope.

The form provided here is a development of the service in *An Australian Prayer Book*, with some alternatives for the funeral of an infant. The structure is this:

Gathering in God's name

Hearing God's word

Praying together

The Committal
Concluding prayers

Interment of the ashes

A FUNERAL SERVICE

For use in a church building, funeral chapel, or at home

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

1. *The minister greets the congregation and says one or more of these or other appropriate texts*

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. *John 11:25–26*

The Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. *Revelation 7:17*

The Lord God will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
he will carry them close to his heart. *Isaiah 40:11*

God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. *Psalms 46:1*

Jesus said: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am. *John 14:1–3*

I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither things present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:38–39*

What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived God has prepared for those who love him. *1 Corinthians 2:9*

If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. *Romans 14:8–9*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. *1 Peter 1:3*

We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. *1 Timothy 6:7; Job 1:21*

2. *The minister may say*

We have come together
to thank God for the life of N,
to mourn and honour *him/her*,
to lay to rest *his/her* mortal body,
and to support one another in grief.
We face the certainty of our own death and judgment.
Those who die in Christ
share eternal life with him.
Therefore in faith and hope we turn to God,
who created and sustains us all.

or at the funeral of a child

We gather today in the face of terrible loss.
We are overwhelmed by the mystery of life and death
that we have experienced in N.
We come together as family and friends
to support each other by our love and prayers.
We grieve over the ending of N's life so near its beginning.
Jesus encouraged us to bring our children to him
and taught that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.
He died and rose to make it possible for each of us
to receive the kingdom of God as a little child and enter it.
And so we celebrate God's mercy and love for us,
even in the face of death and disappointment of hope.

3. *The minister prays*

God our Father, you alone are holy.
Forgive us all our sins and failures.
Uphold us by your Spirit now.
Enable us to show your compassion.
Give us in our sorrow the calm of your peace.
Comfort us in our grief
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

or

Heavenly Father,
in your Son Jesus Christ
you have given us a true faith and a sure hope.
Help us to live as those who believe in
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
and the resurrection to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

or

Loving God,
you alone are the source of life.
May your life-giving Spirit flow through us
and fill us with compassion, one for another.
In our sorrow give us the calm of your peace.
Kindle our hope and let our grief give way to joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

4. *Members of the family or close friends may be invited to give brief words of appreciation about the deceased.*
5. *A hymn may be sung.*

HEARING GOD'S WORD

6. *Psalms 23, 46, 90, 121, or 130 may be said.*
7. *Suitable passages of Scripture such as John 14:1–6; 20:11–18; Romans 6:3–9; 1 Corinthians 15:20–58; 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:10; Philippians 3:10–16, 20–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; or Revelation 21:1–7 may be read.*
8. *A sermon may be given here.*

PRAYING TOGETHER

9. *The minister gives thanks for the deceased*

Holy and loving Father,
you gave us life when you created us,
and in your redeeming love
you have offered us new life
in your Son Jesus Christ.
We thank you for N [especially for . . .]
We entrust *him/her* to you,
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
who died and rose again to save us,
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
in glory for ever. **Amen.**

or, at the funeral of a child

Gracious Father,
your love for us is strong and enduring,
even when one so precious is taken from us.
We thank you for the gift of N [especially for . . .]
We entrust *him/her* to you,
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
who died and rose again to save us,
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
in glory for ever. **Amen.**

10. *Prayers for the bereaved are offered.*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort,
deal graciously, we pray, with those who mourn
[especially ...].
Casting all their care on you,
may they know the consolation of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

or

Loving God,
we pray for N's *family and friends*,

whose loss is so keen
[remembering especially . . .]
When we cannot understand what happens,
and are weighed down by grief and loneliness,
uphold us in your love.
Give us the assurance of your constant care
and presence with us,
that we may have courage for the days ahead,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

11. *The prayers may conclude in this way*

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the resurrection and the life
of all who believe in you.
You have taught us not to grieve as people without hope
for those who die trusting in you.
Raise us, we pray, from the death of sin
to the life of righteousness,
that when we depart this life,
we may rest in you,
as our hope is our *brother/sister* does,
and at the resurrection on the last day,
we may be found acceptable to you,
and receive the kingdom
prepared for all who love and fear you. **Amen.**

12. *A hymn may be sung.*

THE COMMITTAL

13. *At the place of burial or cremation the minister may say one or more of the appropriate texts at section 1.*

Then these words are said

We have but a short time to live.
Like a flower we blossom and then wither;
like a shadow we flee and never stay.

or

Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble.
He comes forth like a flower, and withers.
He passes like a shadow and does not stay.

Let us pray.
In the midst of life we are in death.
From whom may we seek for help, but from you, Lord God,
though you are justly displeased on account of our sins?
And yet, Lord God almighty, most holy and most merciful Saviour,
deliver us from the bitterness of eternal death.
You know the secrets of our hearts;
mercifully hear us, most worthy judge eternal;
keep us, at our last hour, in the consolation of your love.

or these words from Psalm 103:8, 13–17, may be read

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
Our life is like grass,
we flourish like a flower of the field;
the wind goes over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children.

14. *At a burial while earth is cast upon the body, or at a cremation while the body is removed, or at a burial at sea, the minister says*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you have given us a sure and certain hope

of the resurrection to eternal life.
In your keeping are all those who have departed in Christ.

We here commit the mortal body of N
(or your child N)
to be cremated/to be buried in the ground/to the deep:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died, and was buried, and rose again for us,
and who shall change our mortal body
that it may be like his glorious body.
Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

15. *The minister may say*

Scripture says, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord': 'they will rest from their labour'. *Revelation 14:13*

The minister may add

Let us say the Lord's Prayer together.

**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.
Forgiven us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

16. *The minister continues with one of these prayers*

Eternal Father,
God of all consolation,
in your unending love and mercy for us
you turn the darkness of death into the dawn of new life.
Be our refuge and strength in sorrow.
Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
conquered death by dying for us,
and opened the gate to eternal life by rising again.
Enable us to walk by faith,
so that after our life on earth,
we may share the life of your kingdom,
where every tear will be wiped away.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

17. *The minister concludes*

Now to him who is able to keep us from falling,
and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory
with everlasting joy,
to the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty, dominion and power,
both now and forever. **Amen.**

or

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

INTERMENT OF THE ASHES

1. *The minister reads one or more of the biblical texts listed in section 1, or one of the following*

Since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives he lives to God. *Romans 6:9-10*

We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. *1 Thessalonians 4:14*

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. *1 Corinthians 15:42-44*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

2. *As the ashes are interred, the minister says,*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you have given us a sure and certain hope
of the resurrection to eternal life.

In your keeping are all those who have departed in Christ.

We here commit the ashes of N
(or your child N) to their resting place,
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died, and was buried, and rose again for us,
and who shall change our mortal body
that it may be like his glorious body.
Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

3. *The minister prays*

Merciful God,
our maker and redeemer,
we pray for the coming of your kingdom,
that in the last day,
when you bring together all things in Christ,
we with all who have died in him
may enjoy the fulfilment of your promises;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

4. *The minister concludes*

Now may the Lord of peace himself
give you peace at all times and in every way.
The Lord be with you all. **Amen.**