## A simple religious funeralfrom *Deeply Connected, 2015,* Dorothy McRae-McMahon

## Opening

Friends,
we have come together
because we loved *(name)*as *(mother, brother, family, friend etc)*.
Here we will mourn *her/him* leaving us,
honour *her/his* life and death,
reverently farewell *her/his* body;
and comfort each other.

We have come believing that all human life is valuable,
that the truth and integrity and hopefulness
which resides in each life, lives on.
We come, believing that *(name)*’s life
which we celebrate today
and for which we now experience great loss,
is joined in the eternal continuum of human endeavour
stretching into the past and into the future.
*Her/his* life was lived in its uniqueness with us
and has now passed into the ultimate community
of human existence.
The gifts and graces which *she/he* offered are never lost to us.
The creativity which *she/he* brought to us
in *her/his* life and relationships
lies now within our own lives
and travels into the future with us.
*(If appropriate)* Our lives are more beautiful because we live with *her/him*.

## Four Candles

**The first candle represents our grief –**

The pain of losing you *(name)* is with us
and the flame of light will shine on our tears
and warm us as we honour your life.

**The second candle represents courage –**

That which lay in your life
and the strength which we will give to each other in our loss

**The third candle we light for memories –**

It celebrates your human journey with us,
the times when we laughed and cried together,
the gifts which you gave to us
and those we gave to you,
the hard times and the good
and the life which your life invited in us all.

**The fourth candle celebrates love –**

It shines fort in joy
as we know that love never dies.
It goes on from person to person,
from moment to moment in every age
and adds to the life of the universe in delight.
Thanks be to you, whose love still surrounds us
and thanks be to God.

## PrayerOr Silent Reflection

O God, at this moment,
as we come face to face with death
and our own mortality
we have many feelings
as well as grief,
and possibly fear for the future.
Please come close to us with your love,
travel with us into this serious moment
and open our hearts to each other.
We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ
who faced his own death and the death of a friend.
Amen.

## The Lord’s Prayer

*(not included in the original)*

## Readings

Traditional *and/or* contemporary

## Reflection

*Concluding with:*

None of us knows the whole truth about what lies beyond death.

Christians believe that as we journey between life and death,
we are safe in the hands of an infinitely gracious God.

We believe that death invites us into total awareness and to know with truth whether what we have valued in ourselves has eternal value.

The God who stands with us at the moment is the same God who was prepared to die in love for all humankind, a God who has entered every struggle of our life with us and who deeply understands the choices we have made.

## Tributes

*(The things we would like to remember about the person)*

*The Minister moves to the casket and placing a hand on it says:*

*(Name)* all these things and more you have given to us.
We respect your journey through life,
with all of its realities.
We pray that you will travel safely
in this next part of your journey.
Our love goes with you.
Let us pray or reflect in silence on this life and what it has meant to us:

*(Silent prayer or reflection)*

Thanks be to God for the gifts we have received in this person.
Thanks be to God for a life lived with *(courage, honesty, grace, determination – as appropriate)*

*If a burial*We will now accompany you to your final resting place.

*(The casket is carried to the grave)*

## Farewell

As we come to the moment of farewell,
part of our grief may be regret
for things done or left undone,
words said, or never said,
or moments that never happened.
This is the time to lay aside all those regrets
and to honour the spirit of *(name)* *herself/himself*who would never want them carried into our future.
Let us receive that gift of generosity from *(name)*and the forgiveness of God.

*(silent reflection)*

To love someone is to risk the pain of parting.
Not to love is never to have lived.
The grief which we now experience is the honouring of our love.

Let us now in a quiet moment
make our farewell to *(name)*

*(silence)*

## Sending Out

Go in peace, *(name)*.
Fly free into the universal life,
held safe in the hollow of God’s hand
Soar with joy on the winds of heaven
and celebrate with lightness of being
all that has been and all that is to come.
Dance in delight among those who have gone before
and who will greet you with joy.
Then hover low over those who have love you
and touch our lives kindly with your gentle hear.
Go in in grace
and carry our love and thankfulness with you.
Amen

## Committal

*If a burial*And now let us commit her/his body to the earth
which is welcoming to us at the time of our death.
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
In the cycle of life and death the earth is replenished
and life is eternally renewed.

*If a cremation*And now let us commit her/his body to the elements
which are gentle to us at the time of our death.
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
In the cycle of life and death the earth is replenished
and life is eternally renewed.

Go in peace, *(name)*.
Travel safely with our love
into the hands of God.
Amen.

## Blessing and Dismissal

Even as we grieve this loss,
let us commit ourselves to the comfort of those who miss her/him most,
especially, *(names)*.
Let us surround them with our love
and pray for the comfort of God.
And now let us go into the world,
glad that we have loved,
free to weep for the one we have lost,
free to hold each other in our human frailty,
empowered to live life to the full
*(If appropriate)* as did *(name)*and to affirm the hope of human existence.
And may God be our company,
Christ Jesus walk before us
and the Spirit surround us with a cloud of grace. Amen.