**Worship Materials: Funeral Resources (William Wallace)**

**PREFACES**

 1 We have come in the midst of life to grieve for the death of \_\_\_\_,  to give thanks for *his/her* life and to bid *him/her* farewell.  Death and life are one in the purposes of love.  Jesus said ‘if you grieve with all your heart, you shall find healing’.

 2 Life is like a circle. We are bound together to each other and to the earth. To deny this interconnectedness is to do violence to ourselves and to all that is:

 We gather today to mourn the death of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 We are part of *him/her* and *he/she* is part of us

 We bid *him/her* farewell, give thanks for *his/her* life and remember

 that life and death are as one in the purposes of love.

 Jesus said “If you grieve with all your heart, you shall find healing,”

 3 We come to lace our grief with the humor of past days,

 to interweave our sorrows and our joys,

 to hold as one our thanksgiving and

 our mourning;

 for life and death are not enemies

 but rather part of the cycle,

 of this complex universe

 of which we are a small

 but significant part.

**HYMNS**

When the shadow of death. (can be sung as a solo)

<http://www.methodist.org.nz/resources/hymns/the_mystery_telling>

Through the rivers of our tears. (for a child’s funeral)

<http://www.methodist.org.nz/resources/hymns/the_mystery_telling>

May our friend. (STS1)

For all Christ’s friends. (STS1)

Though the earthly life. (Can be a solo with response)(STS2)

Through the love of God our Father. (STS2)

*Singing the Sacred* Vol 1 2011, Vol 2 2014 World Library Publications

**REFRAIN**

[In the letting go](http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/in-the-letting-go-we-find-life/). (sung as a solo)
http://progressivechristianity.org/resources/in-the-letting-go-we-find-life/

**READING**

It is not suffering which destroys the spirit of human beings, it is the way in which they react to it.

We may view it as unrelieved tragedy, or, on the other hand, we can allow the presence of suffering to enrich our lives and enlarge our faith (for the tears of our grief can water our spirit and enable it to grow).

(Note: can be used by itself or as part of Leslie Brandt’s paraphrase of 1 Peter 4 in “Living through Loving”. Insert between last paragraph of page 68 and first paragraph of page 69.)

**PRAYER OF APPROACH**

Let us be silent and reflect on our shock, pain and loss at the death of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In the mystery of love

**ALL: LIFE SPRINGS OUT OF DEATH**.

Let us remember that

Tears are for the washing away of grief,

hope is for the building of dreams

and love is the tender life-force which conquers death.

In the mystery of love

**ALL: LIFE SPRINGS OUT OF DEATH.**

There are many things in life which we cannot understand,

many things we must accept.

May the power of love

enable us not to succumb to bitterness

or pointless questioning,

but rather grow to live life

with more tenderness,

courage and purpose

than ever before.

May this be for us all,

for in the mystery of love

**ALL: LIFE SPRINGS OUT OF DEATH.**

**PRAYER OF REFLECTION, THANKSGIVING AND COMMITMENT**

Let us reflect on the pilgrimage of life; on how we all come from the earth

and all return to its womb.

In death as in life: **We are all family.**

Let us acknowledge that we share this experience with all living creatures

through the unity of nature.

In death as in life: **We are all family.**

Let us give thanks for the life of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

and for all the memories that *his/her* death brings to mind.

In death as in life: **We are all family.**

In the strength of (God’s) love let us determine

to keep alive in us those qualities which we admired in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For in death as in life: **We are all family.**

**LEAVE-TAKING**

(all standing, preferably with close relations holding hands around the coffin.)

 1 We take our leave of our *sister/brother* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 We acknowledge the great gap which *his/her* death leaves in the lives of those who mourn. We commit ourselves to helping each other work through the process of grieving, to new life beyond our shock, anger, guilt and tears.

 2 Alternative

 Good bye \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Thank you for sharing your life with us.

 We release you and send you on your way surrounded by love.

 Good bye.

 May healing flow from sorrow

 hope emerge from darkness and

 memories become even more precious

 so that past and present be as one

 in the mystery of (God’s) love.

**THE COMMITTAL**

In the presence of the living and the dead

We commit the body of our *sister/brother*

to be reunited with the ground/elements,

earth to earth/ashes to ashes,

dust to dust,

confident of the final victory of (God’s) love over suffering,

injustice, ugliness and death.

 **BENEDICTIONS**

 1 May the love which is stronger than death

 2 and which binds us together in the unity of life,

 3 energize our spirits with divine stillness,

 4 now and forever **AMEN**.

 5 May the stillness of God be in our minds,

 6 the warmth of God be in our hearts,

 7 and the wholeness of God surround our brother/sister and each of us forever more **AMEN**.



*LOGO NOTE: At the heart of the mystery all the separate boxes disappear and all is one, all is love.*

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