

## SCC Funeral Ceremony

The funeral ceremony will probably be the most frequently requested official ceremony. When preparing the ceremony, bear in mind that non-Spiritualists will also be attending and try to make their first impressions positive.

The request for a funeral ceremony may come from:

- The funeral director (who will give the minister the details known to him)
- A relative of the deceased (who will give the minister the name and telephone number of the funeral director so they can liaise regarding the arrangements). It is the family's responsibility to appoint and instruct the funeral director but the family will often ask the minister for advice and guidance.
- The church concerned (who will likely be able to provide the name and telephone number of next of kin)

The minister will contact and meet with the next of kin to:

- ❖ Obtain name and telephone number of the Funeral Home.
- ❖ Obtain full legal name of the deceased, and the name used by the family
- ❖ Age of the deceased, date of death
- ❖ Discuss the type of ceremony (cremation or burial)
- ❖ Ask where the ceremony will be held - in a church, at the Crematorium
- ❖ Ask about the layout of the church or other location, seating available, whether an organist is available, whether hymnbooks are available, what help will be available and get the name of the person in charge of the day's activities, ask if there is a time limit for the service, etc
- ❖ Discuss arrangements with the family regarding special requests, their choice of hymns and readings
- ❖ Get the deceased's life history, occupation, special interests, hobbies, social activities, church involvement, surviving family and their names, etc so the ceremony can be personalized

The minister and those taking an active part in the day need to arrive early to ensure that all is in order and to greet those arriving.

The minister stands at the entrance to the church or crematorium to meet and lead the funeral procession into the church/crematorium, standing to one side facing the coffin until the pallbearers have left.

When the ceremony is concluded:

Church – the coffin must be led out. While it is being placed in the hearse the minister will speak briefly to the family.

Crematorium – minister stands at the exit to shake each mourner's hand as they leave.

In the case of a burial, the coffin should be led to the burial plot, the minister standing at the head of the coffin for the service of committal. Instead of dropping earth onto the coffin, a flower could be substituted. After the committal the minister shakes hands with the immediate family then stands to one side to allow the family a few moments alone.

The minister may be asked back to the home. Acceptance of this invitation is a personal choice and his/her role would be to offer discreet support.

The funeral director will also wish to know the amount of fee - this is the non-conformist fee. It is entirely up to each individual concerned as to whether or not a fee is accepted and to what use it is put. Whether it is decided to keep or to donate, it must be remembered that if the fee recipient pays income tax then the fee will attract income tax.

On occasion, following a cremation, the minister may be asked to either bury or scatter the ashes - this request is usually made by either the next of kin or the Funeral Director.

The regulations governing this aspect are handled by the funeral director who will advise the time, date and place for the ceremony to take place.

A short ceremony is all that is required as usually only the immediate family will be present and should include a prayer, an appropriate reading and a few words concerning the deceased.

The minister will occasionally be asked to conduct a service for very difficult situations – such as the passing of a child or a suicide. The family is, quite naturally, devastated and angry and are looking not only for support but also for answers as to why such a situation has happened to them.

The service should be carefully worded so that it is uplifting, supportive and gives the family hope. Under no circumstances must it appear to be judgmental.

Following a funeral service a Memorial Service is occasionally required and this is usually held for a Church Member or Platform Worker and the initial approach is normally from the church concerned.

There is no set format for this service and it will depend upon the requirements of the church. Some churches prefer to include this in with their normal type of service while others prefer a separate occasion. In all cases it is necessary to prepare an appropriate address which should include a tribute to the deceased and should contain different aspects from the funeral service tribute to ensure that the families do not have to listen to a repeat of the funeral tribute.

## Sample Funeral Ceremony

### Read from Rostrum

(or meet the funeral procession (cortege) at the Church door and read slowly while walking to the platform)

Blessed are all who die in the knowledge of God; they rest awhile from labour, and their works follow them.

Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we have no fear; God is with us; His guidance and strength will comfort and sustain us to our journey's end.

We spend our years as a tale that is told; so soon the years pass away. But the Spirit endureth forever – from life, through death, to more abundant life, it wends its way through the many schools of God, to its eternal home in the Divine Presence.

God is our only refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.

### Hymn to be sung

#### Let us pray.

Eternal and ever present God – in whom we live and move and have our being, we come to Thee in this solemn hour for strength, for help, and for consolation.

We know that Thou art ever directing all things to the fulfillment of Thy purposes, and that Thy Love is manifesting through all the varied experiences of our life.

Grant to us, we pray Thee, that larger vision of Thy Love – that greater understanding of Thy purpose. Help us to realize, in very truth, that death is the gateway of Life.

We pray that Thou wilt send to our *brother* (sister) \_\_\_\_\_ (*name*)  
Thy Ministers of Light, to strengthen and encourage *him* (*her*) in the new life upon which *he* (*she*) is now entering.

May *he* (*she*) awaken among the smiling faces of friends who have gone before; and may that reunion be indeed a glad welcome to the Harvest Home of They Love,

Grant that the bonds of affection may be strengthened anew in that estate where partings need never separate. Together may they climb the heights of spiritual endeavour, until they gain the reward of spiritual attainment – Thy Light – Thy Love – Thy Power.

We send to *him* (*her*) our love, and may our thoughts help *him* (*her*) on the upward journey to the clearer atmosphere of Thy near Presence.

For those who have been bereaved, we ask that the knowledge of Spiritual verities which Thou hast given them may be a true and shining light in this dark hour. May they realize in very truth that their loss is his (*her*) gain, and in the realization of this may their sorrow be alleviated.

Knowing that the bonds of affection still unite them, may they not grieve as those without hope, but ever strengthen those bonds by thoughts of love and kindness.

May the knowledge that \_\_\_\_\_ (*name*) \_\_\_\_\_ is progressing be to each one a stimulus – that the passing years, bringing us all to The Great Adventure, may lift us and *him (her)* to the fuller realization of our Divine heritage.

Enable us all to make the most of each passing day; to sow those seeds of service and kindness which will help the establishment of Thy Kingdom on earth, and bring us that harvest of joy which alone can satisfy our soul through eternity.

We give Thee our grateful thanks for all blessings bestowed upon us; for the Light of Truth revealed to us; and for the Ministry of Spirits Thou hast send to help us in our pilgrimage.

To Thee would we render true worship and adoration, in Spirit and in Truth, now and for ever. AMEN

### **Short Hymn if requested**

#### **Address**

My friends – On such occasions as this, Spiritualists have much to be thankful for.

Instead of the vague hope of a far-distant resurrection, instead of doubts and fears of the Hereafter, or the still more depressing gloom which so many people associate with the grave, we have knowledge – not hope, but the certain knowledge, that our *brother/sister* is not here. *He/she* is risen.

A Father of Love who guides the destinies of nations, yet marks the sparrow's fall, has seen fit to call *him/her* within the veil to higher service, in a sphere of vaster opportunities than any that this world can offer.

Our heart-felt sympathies go out to \_\_\_\_\_ (*names*) \_\_\_\_\_

Who have been bereaved of *his/her* physical presence; but for *him/her* we need have no regrets.

We ardently wish *him/her* Godspeed, and we can but faintly realize the welcome home that will be *his/hers*.

**Personal Remarks to be made here**

But, for ourselves - what of the future?

We, in a few months – or years at most, shall pass, even as our *brothe/sister* has passed.

Facing the unknown; or anticipating the glorious reality?

That is for us, each one, to determine.

It need not be the unknown, if we will but take advantage of the possibilities of loving communion that have been provided by a God of Love who knows our spiritual needs.

We, who are Spiritualists, can glimpse the Reality; we know that it depends entirely upon ourselves, whether that Reality shall be glorious or otherwise.

In that solemn time when the physical form disintegrates, what of the individual will remain?

Thoughts – feelings – memories – and all intensified to a pitch we can now only faintly imagine.

And it is in those thoughts, feelings and memories that we shall find a very real Heaven or Hell.

We need to ask ourselves – shall those memories be bitter with regrets and remorse? Or full of the happy consciousness of helpful and kindly service well done?

Shall those feelings be of love, or of hate, to our fellows? Full of discontent? or full of satisfaction at having honestly tried to do our very best in the opportunities that have been ours?

Are those thoughts still to be centred on earthly things that in our new condition will be incapable of gratification?

Or will they be exercised in trying to fathom the wonderful Love and purpose of God manifesting in every experience of life, here or there?

We have to decide here and now, whether the reality shall be sad and sorrowful, or whether it shall bring us the peace and joy that alone can satisfy.

We have to work out our own salvation; and to realize that every day, and every waking hour that we live, provides opportunities for us to climb the ladder of spiritual unfoldment.

The kindly word, the helpful service, even the unspoken but uplifting thought, all tend to purify and enlighten that indestructible part of us which we shall take through the veil.

And then, having the knowledge of spiritual verities, we can face life or death fearless and unafraid, knowing that the encompassing arms of Divine Love are bearing us onward and upward to our eternal heritage in the joys prepared for all who love God.

May God so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

As *he/she* has been lifted up, may we be uplifted.

### **Hymn may be sung**

May the love and blessing of God, the Creator of All that is, be with us, now and evermore.

### **At the Graveside or Crematorium**

God has given, and has now taken into His care this loved one. His will be done on earth, in Heaven, and in the lives of each one of us.

*(for a crematorium service omit this line)* Now, to Mother Earth, we restore the garment she has sent.

To Thee, dear God, we resign the Spirit of our *brother/sister* that, progressing through the many mansions Thy Love has provided, *he/she* may ultimately attain the crown of Spiritual attainment.

To our arisen *brother/sister* we send our heartfelt congratulations.

Freed from the fetters of earthly limitations, may *h/shee* find in that larger life upon which *he/she* has now entered, those congenial labours and abiding joys that can fill *his/her* soul with bliss.

May the Peace of God, the knowledge of His Love, and the realization of His Presence, for which we render our heartfelt thanks, be ours now and evermore.

God be with you, till we meet again.

AMEN

## SAMPLE FUNERAL SERVICE

**OPENING SENTENCES** – *to be said slowly, and with pauses between, either on meeting the cortege at the Church or Crematorium entrance and whilst walking to the rostrum/lectern, or from the rostrum/lectern.*

All those who die in the knowledge of God are at peace. They have completed their time on earth. Their actions and efforts on earth will have assured their rightful place in the life to come.

Even as we all must move through the experience that man calls death, we know that our God is with, and within us, and that we have nothing to fear. There will be strength and guidance waiting to comfort and sustain us through this great adventure of life beyond life. We spend our life as a tale that is told; so soon they pass away and we move on, for the spirit endures forever – from life, through physical death, to even more abundant life. We pass through many stages of learning until, finally, we find our rightful place in eternal life, progressing ultimately into perfect union with that which we know as God. Our knowledge of the Great Spirit is a refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

We have come together to pay tribute to and give thanks for the life of *(name)*. Each one of us will have our personal memories of him/her according to our association with *(name)*. So now may we begin by singing together hymn number ....

Please be seated.

Since many of us have received early training as how we approach God it follows that each of us has a difference concept of this Power. Whatever you conceive your God to be, may I ask you to join with me in prayer.

Eternal and ever-present God, in whom we live and move and have our being, we come to you in prayer, seeking strength, help and consolation. We know that you are always directing all things to the fulfillment of your purposes; that your love is manifesting through all the varied experiences of our life, and yet we need to seek your strength when our faith is weak because our understanding of life is still imperfect.

May we come to realize, through a greater awareness of the Divine Spirit within each of us, that whether we live or whether we die we are your children. Help us, then to realize that death is the gateway to a continued life in the Spirit World.

We send our love to *(name)* and pray that your Ministers of Light will strengthen and encourage him/her in his/her new life. We know that he/she will be met by smiling faces of family and friends who have gone before and that their reunion will be a joyous

occasion. May the bonds of affection be strengthened anew in that estate where partings need never separate.

For those who have been bereaved (*make any special mentions here*) we ask that the knowledge of Spiritual truths will sustain them in their time of grieving. Knowing that the bonds of affection still unite them may they not grieve as those without hope but come to realize that their loss is (*name*)'s gain.

As our thoughts of love go to (*name*) may the knowledge that he/she is progressing be a stimulus so that we become more fully aware of our divine heritage.

We give you our grateful thanks for all blessings bestowed upon us, for the light of truth revealed to us, and for the spirit friends who walk, unseen, with us, to aid us in our pilgrimage.

To you we offer our love and praises in spirit and in truth, now and forever. AMEN

*Tribute – suggested introductory remarks:*

The understanding of life and death as accepted by Spiritualism is so often a support, but never more so than at a time like this. The physical presence of (*name*) will be missed by all present and also by many others who cannot be here but whose thoughts are with us (*any special members here*). They will be thinking of us as we hold this service in tribute to (*name*)'s life, and we all give thanks for the privilege of having known and shared with him/her.

*Personal Remarks/Tributes to be inserted here*

Those of us who are Spiritualists know that death is not final but is a continuation of life, just as in nature's seasons there is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

As we think of (*name*) in the days that lie ahead, so he/she will be thinking of us and may prove this in time by some form of communication.

Our philosophy gives us a clearer outlook and understanding of all phases of life. With this in mind let us dispense with sadness from our hearts, since (*name*) will already be experiencing joy and peace.

\* *Suitable reading and/or preferred hymn or song and/or silent thoughts/prayer whilst favourite piece of music is played.*

If the foregoing service has been held in a church, a closing prayer, followed by suitable remarks/instructions to those assembled is appropriate here, otherwise move to committal.



**Closing Prayer:**

Infinite Spirit, God of love and life, we ask that the hearts of each of us, saddened here by the transition of *(name)*, be reconciled to that which may seem to some strange – possibly even cruel. Enlarge our spiritual vision that we may be able to see with serene eyes of wisdom that condition which made it impossible for *(name)* to continue living here.

May the experience yield a bright harvest of spiritual blessing.

May we realize that *(name)* will blossom anew with a beauty earth cannot bestow. May we also realize that parting is but temporary and reunion is assured. Until then, may our knowledge and awareness grow in the certain understanding that your protective love will embrace and care for him/her.      **AMEN**

**PROCESSIONAL:**

**BLESSED** are all who die in the knowledge of **GOD**; they rest awhile from labour, and their works follow them.

We spend our years as a tale that is told; so soon they pass away, and we are gone. But the **SPIRIT** lives, enduring forever, from life, through death, to more abundant life, it's a way of through the many schools of **GOD**, to its eternal home in the **DIVINE PRESENCE**.

**GOD** is our only refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. We need just to call **HIS NAME**.

**LET US PRAY:**

**DIVINE SPIRIT**, ever present **GOD** – in whom we live and have our being, we come to you in this solemn time with heavy hearts full of sorrow and grief, asking for help, for strength and for consolation.

We know that you are directing all things to the fulfillment of your purposes, and that your **LOVE** is manifesting through all the varied experiences of our life; yet is our faith weak – our knowledge imperfect?

Grant to us, we pray, in spite of our sadness, that larger vision of your **LOVE**, that greater understanding of your purpose – which shall enable us to say “whether we live or whether we die, we are yours”. Help us to realize, in very truth that death is the gateway of life.

We pray that you will send to our **BROTHER/SISTER** \_\_\_\_\_ your Ministers of Light to strengthen and encourage him/her in the new-found life which he/she is now entering.

May he/she awaken among the smiling faces of friends who have gone before; and may that reunion be, indeed, a glad welcome to the home of your DIVINE LOVE.

Grant that the bonds of affection may be strengthened anew in that estate where partings need never separate. Together may they climb the heights of SPIRITUAL endeavour, until they gain the reward of SPIRITUAL attainment – your LIGHT – your LOVE – your POWER.

We give to him/her our love, and may our thoughts help him/her on the upward journey to the clearer atmosphere of your near presence. To those who have been bereaved, we ask that the knowledge of SPIRITUAL verities which you have given them may be a shining light in this dark hour. May they realize in truth that their loss is his/her gain, and in the realization of this may their sorrow be alleviated. Knowing that the bonds of affection still unite them, may they not grieve as those without hope but ever fortify those bonds with Love and Kindness.

May the knowledge that he/she is progressing, be a stimulus to each of us, – that the passing years, bringing us all to the “Great Adventure” may lift us, and him/her, to the fuller realization of your DIVINE HERITAGE.

We give you grateful thanks for all the Blessings bestowed upon us; for LIGHT of TRUTH revealed to us; for each passing day that we have been able to utilize in sewing seeds of service and kindness to one another and thereby helping to establish your KINGDOM here on earth, that you might bring us a harvest of joy and peace which alone can satisfy our SOULS through eternity; and for the Ministry of Spirits you have sent to help us through our pilgrimage.

To you we render true worship and adoration, in SPIRIT and in TRUTH now and evermore.        AMEN

Hymn if requested.

**ADDRESS:**

ROBERT FRITZ wrote, “Transcendence is the power to be born anew, to make a fresh start, to begin with a clean slate, to enter into a state of grace, to have a second chance.”

Transcendence makes no references to the past, whether the past has been overflowing with victories or filled with defeats. When we enter a state of transcendence we are able to create a new life, unburdened by both the victories and the defeats of the past.

Transcendence is more than just the accurate realization that the past is over. It is also a realignment of all dimensions of ourselves with the very source of our life, "THE SPIRIT".

We are here today to say farewell to our dear Brother/Sister, \_\_\_\_\_ who has made that "Transition", who has taken that journey into his/her future, the new experience in the higher side of Life Eternal, and to recognize that when our time shall come to cross that divide, he/she will be there to meet and greet us.

Spiritualists have much to be thankful for on occasions such as this for, instead of the vague hope of a far distant resurrection, instead of doubts and fears of the Hereafter, or the still more depressing gloom which so many people associate with the grave, we have knowledge – not hope, but a certain knowledge that our Brother/Sister is not here. HE/SHE is RISEN.

A FATHER of LOVE who guides the destinies of nations, yet marks the sparrow's fall, has seen fit to call him/her within the veil to higher service, in a sphere of vaster opportunities than any that this world could offer.

Our hearts go out to those who have been bereaved of his/her mortal presence; those who have survived him/her, (*List all the survivors of the deceased*), all of whom loved him/her dearly; but for him/her we have no regrets. We ardently wish all of whom loved him/her GODSPEED, and we can only faintly realize the welcome home that will be his/hers.

But for ourselves – what of the future? We, in due time, shall pass even as did \_\_\_\_\_; facing the unknown, or anticipating the glorious reality that is for each of us to determine.

We, as Spiritualists, know that it need not be the unknown, for we are aware that we can glimpse the reality; conscious of the fact that it depends entirely upon ourselves, whether the Reality shall be glorious or gloomy.

It is thoughts – feelings – memories – all intensified to a pitch we can now only faintly imagine, that we take with us from our physical existence, and it is from those intense thoughts, feelings and memories that we can find a very real Heaven. We need to ask ourselves, "Shall those memories be full of the happy consciousness of helpful and kindly service well done?" shall those feelings be of Love to our fellow beings? full of satisfaction at having honestly tried to do our very best in the opportunities that have been ours? Are those thoughts still to be centered on earthly things, that in our new condition will be incapable of gratification?, or will they be exercised in trying to fathom the wonderful Love and purpose of GOD manifesting in every experience of life, here and there? We have to decide here and now that the abundant Reality will bring us the Peace and Joy that alone can satisfy.

We have to work out our own salvation, and to realize that every day we live and every waking hour provides opportunities for us to climb the ladder of Spiritual unfoldment.

The kindly word, the helpful service, even the unspoken but uplifting thought, all tend to purify and enlighten that indestructible part of us which we shall take through the veil. Then, having the knowledge of Spiritual verities, we can face life or death fearless and unafraid, knowing that the encompassing arms of DIVINE LOVE are bearing us onward and upward to our eternal heritage in the joys prepared for all who love HIM. May GOD so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts and Spirit unto HIS Wisdom.

A EULOGY FOR THE DECEASED may be read at this point:

\* A POEM OR SPECIFIC READING here:

**BENEDICTION:**

**LET US PRAY:**

ETERNAL SPIRIT of LIGHT, TRUTH AND LOVE, look upon us now with your abundant grace that we might feel the power of your Love within and around us to strengthen and guide us in the paths of Truth, Peace and Eternal Joy in the knowledge that our loved ones have only passed from our mortal sight, to live on and manifest in another realm. Our praises and thanksgiving rises to meet you, for the joy we feel in having shared a moment of eternity with \_\_\_\_\_ and touched shoulders with him/her, for the memories that will linger in our hearts and minds. May we take your Divine Blessings with us and abide in your sweet peace now and evermore, may we remain in your eternal Love as we wend our way in obedient conduct of our lives.

SO NOW, Let us depart in peace! With deep thanksgiving  
Rendering as we homeward tread,  
Gracious service to the living,  
Tranquil memory to the dead.

**INTERMENT SERVICE:**

We are here to commit to Mother Earth the mortal remains of \_\_\_\_\_ who was loved by you his/her family and those of us, his/her friends. Though our hearts are heavy with the pain of grief as we look into this grave, we can feel indeed a greater sense of joy and expectations as we ponder the Truth that his/her arisen Spirit has ascended into the light of eternal life, to live on, to love as he/she loved before, and whenever the moment proves right, we hope to take a timely look forward to a communication that will prove his/her survival beyond death. But let his/her love for you and his/her sense of duty to life and family suffice to prove an inspiration to us all, to

quickly find the strength to overcome our grief, and to busy our souls in the right conduct of good living and loving. Let us bear with patience the temporary separation with the assurance of a happy reunion in future distant time, when we can sing with joy, "Oh grave where is thy victory, Oh Death where is thy sting?"

**PRAYER OF COMMITTAL:**

The one we love is not here. The Spirit of our departed loved one and friend dwells no more in this tenement of clay. This mortal form has served its purpose tenderly and reverently. We now commit it to be returned to Mother Earth from whom it was lent, in the sure knowledge that his/her life continues. So, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust, we give back to earth what she gave to us, but to you our FATHER GOD and to SPIRIT we commend, lovingly, his/her life to all eternity. AMEN

**BENEDICTION:**

DIVINE SPIRIT, FATHER GOD, may your blessed Angels guard us and guide us as we go our separate ways. May they lift the shadows from our souls and dispel every sorrow from our hearts. May we live in such a way as to gain the approbation of good conscience. May Peace and Love abide with us and the Light of Truth ever illumine our souls. AMEN