

Photo montages playing as people gather

Gathering Music – The Lord’s My Shepherd (Crimond) Sung as a solo by Thora Ker

Words of Introduction and Opening Prayer

We come today to remember friends and loved ones, faithful members of this congregation. Sadly, due to the pandemic, none of these people were able to have the church service they would have wanted, and so we come together in witness and faith to give thanks for their lives, to honour their parting and bear witness to the resurrection to life eternal, for we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God – not “death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation.”

Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Loving God, Lord of life and death, we praise you that all people are made in your image and held under your care. And so, we come today to remember:

Nancy Spinks (4 Sept. 1931 - 26 April 2020)
Marie Moore (5 March 1929 - 6 May 2020)
Beryl (Betty) Lane (28 Feb. 1922 - 21 May 2020)
Stella Irene Livermore (16 June 1934 - 5 July 2020)
Ernest Henry Lane (2 May 1918 - 13 Dec. 2020)
Alan Bearman (2 April 1923 - 21 Dec. 2020)
Barbara Jean Burrell (1 Nov. 1945 - 5 May 2021)

Give your continuing love and care to their families and friends and grant your unending love and peace to them in Jesus’ name.

Merciful God, trusting your compassion bears all our burdens and gives us strength beyond ourselves, we place this time of thanksgiving and remembrance before you. We give thanks for lives well lived in the assurance of your never ending love and peace.

As we remember again, in music, word and pictures, your faithful servants may we know your gifts of grace: hope for our sorrow, light for our darkness, peace for our troubled hearts, and faith for our future, in the name of Jesus. Amen

Hymn Nearer my God to thee (Congregational Praise 480)

Prayers: Steve J or me

O God, the Creator of all things, you have made this new day.

I take its light and its new life from you.

Help me to make of it something worthwhile

Help me to keep my mind pure and clear.

Help me to keep my words kind and good.

Use me this day to make the world a better place,

And in so doing, make me a better person, more like your Son,

Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

from the Boys’ Brigade Hymn Book – used with permission
(said at Marie Moore’s funeral)

Nancy's prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God
You have come into our darkness to be with us forever,
so that the light never leaves our eyes
and hope never leaves our hearts.
Do not let your joy die in us,
but let it be renewed constantly like the rising sun,
so that we may come at last with you
into the presence of our Father
where we may share his love with all mankind forever. Amen

Bible Readings: Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 **Jean**
Psalm 121 **Jean**

Hymn Amazing Grace (Rejoice and Sing 92)

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 13 (read at Nancy, Stella, and Barbara's funerals) **Jenny**

Reflection on Christian Hope

"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

A theme in many of the funeral services I took, was that the loved one who had died did not want us to be sad. At least three people specifically requested happy music to be played at the end, and the same three people chose as their Bible reading chapter 13 of the 1st letter to the Corinthians – a passage more commonly read at weddings because it speaks about love. Though in many respects that is a misuse of the passage, as it does not speak of romantic love, but Christian, platonic love – God's love. Our Christian faith is shaped by the concept of death overcome by resurrection. The empty tomb – a burial place abandoned because it is not necessary – must surely be about the victory of love over all that would threaten it. Love has the victory. This is not naïve or sentimental - love is big, generous and brave. Or, in the words we heard from Romans at the start of this service, it 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.' And that big, generous bravery is given its fullest, its ultimate expression, in that wondrous image of a tomb emptied, of a shroud abandoned. Love doesn't need a grave because love isn't dead.

The people who chose this passage about love were Christians and church members of long standing. They all had a strong faith, and that faith included, and includes, a belief that death is not the end. We do not know what comes afterwards. I imagine everyone of us has a different vision of what heaven is, if we even use that term for it, peopled by our own specific group of loved ones who have gone before us. But as people of faith, we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even death. In fact, in death we move to a realm surrounded by God's love. Perhaps that is why Nancy, Stella and Barbara chose this passage about love – because they knew that was what they were entering into. It is of course always sad, when we lose a family member or friend, especially if they don't live to a ripe old age, or suffer unnecessarily, but we can draw comfort from the love and grace of God – a God who holds us in the palm of his hand in birth, life and death.

Hymn In Heavenly love abiding (Rejoice and Sing 590)

The Bright Field by R.S.Thomas **Birgit**

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

'Afterglow' Anon **Birgit**

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,
of happy times and laughing time and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry up before the sun
of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

Hymn How great thou art (Rejoice and Sing 117)

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Eternal God, we thank you for the light that has come into the world
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
and for his promise that whoever follows him will have the light of life.
Hear us as we remember and give thanks for the lives of
Nancy, Marie, Betty, Ernie, Stella, Alan and Barbara
For everything they have meant to us and
for everything they achieved by your grace.
We pray for their families and friends, gathered here today and those unable to be here,
Comfort them and grant them your continued peace.
We pray for all those who are bereaved, especially those who have lost loved ones
during the pandemic.
We pray with the sick and the infirm, in body and mind, and those who care for them.
We pray for the whole world, for your wonderful creation so damaged by our carelessness,
for the poor, homeless and marginalized. Give us strength and wisdom to bring your light
into situations of despair, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us when we
pray to say: Our Father...

The Lord's Prayer

The Celtic Blessing **Tom**

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.
May the road rise to meet you;
May the wind be always at your back;
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
May the rains fall softly upon your fields.
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

Closing Hymn And all the trees of the field will clap their hands

You shall go out with joy
And be led forth with peace
The mountains and the hills
Will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy
And all the trees of the field
Will clap, will clap their hands

And all the trees of the field
Will clap their hands
The trees of the field
Will clap their hands
The trees of the field
Will clap their hands
While you go out with joy