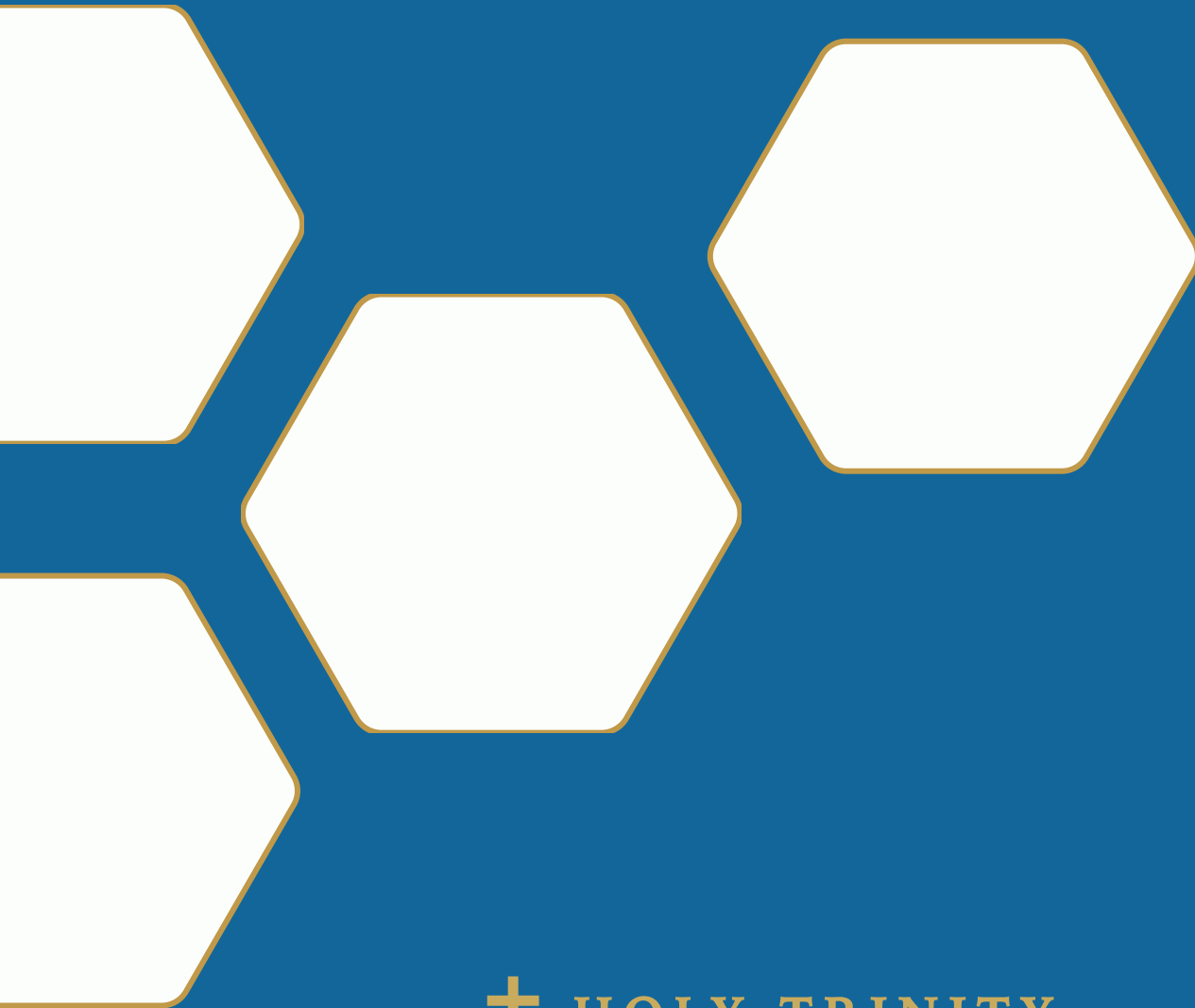


Living and Dying Well: *The Gospel Way*

Let's talk...



Dear Friends,

On October 20th and 21st, 2023, Holy Trinity Anglican Church held a conference entitled “Living and Dying Well—the Gospel Way.” Over 150 people attended that Friday evening and Saturday morning. The conference was recorded, so that those of us who were unable to attend (I was one of them, due to a prior commitment!) could still listen to the talks and follow along in the workbook that had been created for the weekend.

Unfortunately, the recordings were accidentally deleted before they were able to be posted. Fortunately for you and me, the speakers at the event have graciously taken the time to expand the workbook so that it can stand on its own, without the need for any accompanying audio. What you now hold in your hands (or on the screen of device or computer) is the revised and expanded version of that workbook.

This new workbook, like the conference itself, is aimed at filling a need expressed by many members of this congregation, the desire to stimulate helpful conversations among family members on topics that are sometimes hard to bring up or are simply set aside in the busyness of life. Topics about our shared mortality.

There are four specific frameworks for engaging in these conversations:

- The wisdom of Scripture on living well, as members of the Body of Christ
- The ancient wisdom of the *ars moriendi*, the art of dying
- Consideration of the complex medical decisions we must make when life is in the balance
- Choices often taken for granted regarding caring for the body of a loved one and the services available to us in memorializing them

This workbook does *not* address all questions that could be raised about end-of-life matters. It does not, for example, talk of wills and estates, about life insurance, or the challenges of identifying all internet accounts, making sure passwords are known by family, and so on. These are all important questions, many of which will be the subject of follow-up sessions hosted by Holy Trinity’s 60+ Ministry.

The goal, instead, is to focus on topics that are too often met with delay, denial or resistance—the fundamental reality of the transience of life, and the implications of that reality. Often, despite our initial reluctance to talk about death and dying, these topics, when raised, quickly engage the attention of people of all ages. They are topics that lead to reassessing our priorities, cause us to be more grateful for the many blessings God has given us, and make it possible to go through even profound trials with ever-deepening faith.

Our prayer in assembling these materials is that you will be able to use them to begin or continue conversations with loved ones—family and trusted friends—on your hopes and fears, desires and commitments, such that in the years ahead we all both live and die well, reflecting the gospel to all around us.

Yours in Christ,
John Yates
Rector

Living and Dying Well—The Gospel Way

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Reviving the Lost Art of Dying

By Lydia S. Dugdale, MD, and John Alsdorf

Introduction: There Was a Time...

When you drive across America on the byways rather than the highways, through rural rather than urban areas, by the few remaining small farms rather than factories and warehouses, you'll see, in every small town, graveyards next to the town's churches. The graveyard was a weekly, if not daily, reminder of mortality, *memento mori*. Townspeople knew where their siblings, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts were buried. They were reminded that they, too, one day would lie next to the departed, awaiting the Lord's return.

In those early small town years family members participated in the dying of loved ones. They visited bedsides, prayed and held the hands of loved ones as they breathed their last. Some helped prepare the body for burial. The body of the deceased would often be placed in a simple pine coffin in the family parlor during days of visitation and shared grieving. The whole community attended the funeral and burial. "One of us has died," they said to themselves, "and each of us, in turn, will go through the process of dying; each of us will be buried here too."

With those frequent reminders, with the memories created by those events, people lived daily in greater awareness of their own mortality. Dying was recognized as a part of the natural order of things, not as originally intended by God in his created order, but the consequence of sin and rebellion. Death and dying were accepted as inevitable. Not always a pleasant experience, sometimes tragic, frequently accompanied by extreme suffering, but a reality that faced every person. In churches and synagogues, pastors and rabbis would sometimes describe their primary responsibility as helping members of their congregations prepare for death. Ministry centered on helping people to live in light of their mortality, to live well so as to die well.

Life in general was different in those days. In pre-industrial, primarily rural and agricultural days, people were more unavoidably interdependent for the basics of life. Neighbors pitched in to help one another put up a barn, harvest crops. Social life was a shared experience in the town. People knew one another. The shop-keepers knew their customers; the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker exchanged products and services with one another. Life was often harder than it is now, so we mustn't romanticize it. Yet, although harder, life in all of its stages and challenges was a shared experience.

Things Have Changed

The last 100-150 years have brought major changes to how we live. My great grandfather had a buggy shop. When Henry Ford introduced the Model T, he changed his business, opening the Ford dealership in their small Indiana town. The automobile was a wonderful alternative to the horse and buggy. An improvement. But it changed the way we live. The factories that made those cars—and the candlesticks, and the other stuff of life—in quantity, all part of the

rise of Industrialization, have changed the way we work—along with whole new categories of professional workers, managers and administrators—and where we live, as more and more people moved to cities. In those earlier years, people by and large lived their whole lives close to where they were born. Families now are increasingly dispersed as jobs and interest, wealth and leisure interests enable far greater mobility.

In those earlier years, those who could afford it owned a piano or other instrument: families and friends would gather and sing together. Books constituted entertainment and newspapers delivered the news, a day or two after the events themselves. Neil Postman, in the mid-1980s, wrote *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, describing the subtle and unintended negative consequences associated with entertainment delivered by the few channels of network television available at the time. Entertainment has continued to expand; we've gone from print and radio into ubiquitous screens with their constant distractions.

These changes all have undeniable benefits. They also come with costs, generally unanticipated, sometimes serious. We are still as interdependent as we were 150 years ago—could you, for example, make the chair you're sitting on as you read this?—but it's so easy to buy the goods and services on which we depend without seeing the work that went into them, to say nothing of the people who worked to create or deliver them, that we can fool ourselves with the notion that we're self-made men and women. We are just less involved with one another's lives. In fact, we are so much less connected with one another that the U.S. Surgeon General issued a report early in 2023 entitled *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*.¹ The report, rather chillingly, states that “The lack of social connection poses a significant risk for individual health and longevity. Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk for premature death by 26% and 29% respectively.”²

Health Care Changed Too

Of particular relevance to the topic of living and dying well, the last half century has seen the introduction of medicines that cure many formerly incurable diseases as well as amazing technologies that extend life. Hospitals, which began as places of care for the needy—wealthier homeowners could expect doctors to make house calls—exploded in number as medicines and methods proliferated, as medical specialization expanded.

The blessings of these medicines and technologies, however, come with their own side-effects: today, any one of us, at any age, may be faced with profound choices that simply weren't available to prior generations. For the elderly in particular, those whose bodies and minds may already be failing in other ways, the decision to install a cardiac pacemaker—the proven technology for arrhythmia—is categorically different from that same decision for a young person with the same symptoms. Yet once a patient enters these more technologically advanced hospitals, regardless of the reason for entry, there is always another specialist available, and another procedure to pursue. As Atul Gawande puts it, “we have allowed our

¹<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

² Surgeon General's Report, pg 8

fates to be controlled by the imperatives of medicine, technology, and strangers.”³ The end of life is already in sight, but once you’re on “the medical conveyor belt,”⁴ why would anybody ever decline this “routine treatment”?

As a result of the profusion of available healthcare delivery systems, we in the West are increasingly able to live as though death were optional—or at least largely avoidable. The recent COVID-19 pandemic, with its high mortality rates especially in the early months, challenged this notion. COVID put into sharp relief the threat of mortality in a way that few living Americans had previously experienced it. But now that COVID has largely faded into recent history, are we once again ignoring our mortality?

The Lost Art of Dying⁵

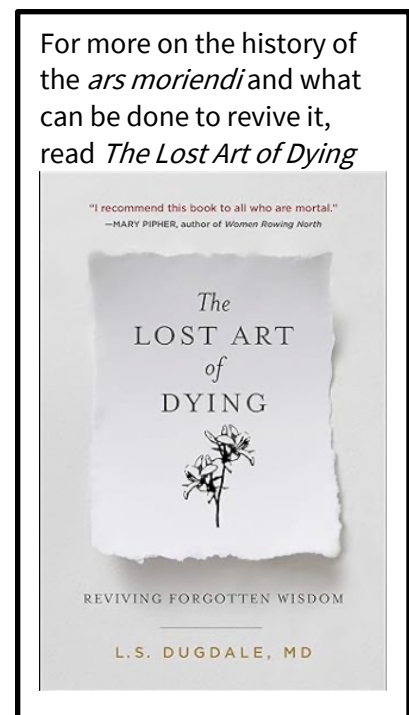
People who want to die well must be willing to confront their finitude. We do not have to accept death, invite it, or wish for it. But we must be prepared to say, “Yes, I am human and therefore mortal. One day I will die.” We cannot both cling to the indefinite extension of life and effectively prepare for death.

If we know we must eat next week, we don’t wait until we’re starving to purchase groceries. If we hope to retire one day, it’s foolish to wait until we’re jobless to save for retirement. How might we similarly anticipate our mortality? History gives us a tool.

That tool is called the *ars moriendi*, Latin for the “art of dying.” The *ars moriendi* was a body of literature that developed in the aftermath of the mid-14th century outbreak of bubonic plague that ravaged Western Europe. Its earliest iterations consisted of handbooks on how to prepare for death by living well. They contained advice, prayers, and protocols for both the living and the dying. The genre grew enormously popular, and its many variations circulated for half a millennium.

Why should we expect medieval handbooks to help? The answer, in part, has to do with the fundamental orientation of the *ars moriendi*. The handbooks understood death as a fact of life. If it weren’t a recurrence of bubonic plague, then famine or war could signal human finitude. People were thus advised to prepare well for death, because death would surely come. This sort of thinking could benefit all of us whether another epidemic emerges or we just come more to grips with the inevitable.

According to the *ars moriendi*, preparing for death was an art that was meant to be exercised over a lifetime. Practicing the art meant living intentionally



³ Gawande, *Being Mortal*, pg 9

⁴ Dugdale, *Lost Art*, kindle location 182

⁵ Portions of this section are derived from copyrighted publications by L.S. Dugdale

and wisely. It required taking stock of and attending to relationships, possessions, anxieties and spiritual beliefs. People of the late Middle Ages wanted to die well and thus strove to live well, measuring the tasks, goals, and behaviors of any day against mortality itself. “If we are going to die, how then should we live?” they asked one another.

People who were dying commonly faced, then as now, five temptations: disbelief, despair, impatience, pride and avarice. These were to be countered by developing—over a lifetime—the virtues of faith, hope, patience, humility and generosity, or less obsession with one’s possessions. The art of dying involved learning to live well, to cultivate virtues, from an early age.

The *ars moriendi* recommended—as does the recent report on loneliness issued by the Surgeon General—very intentional cultivation of robust community connections. One’s community in this sense starts with foundational connections of family and close friends, but extends to societal communities, associations of common interest and organizations which provide various forms of support, and so on.

Not to be overlooked, cultivating human connection necessarily includes working to have and maintain relationships that themselves are healthy. People approaching death often ask to be forgiven by family and friends they’ve hurt; and let’s not forget that estranged sibling, child or neighbor who wants to avoid the regret of letting the other die without having been reconciled. This practice of forgiving and being forgiven, of keeping accounts short is, like the virtues, a matter of habits to be established early in life.

Books in the *ars moriendi* genre continued to be popular well into the 1900s. But the many changes in the decades since—societal, technological, medical—have caused the art of dying to fade from the popular consciousness. These days, rather than asking, “If we are going to die, how should we live?” we tend to prefer the question, “To avoid death, how should we live?” Rather than anticipate death, we often live as if we can avoid it. How often have you heard a friend casually speak of “living in denial”? The latter is a completely different orientation—not wrong per se, but not helpful for the long game.

To be clear, acknowledging human finitude does not mean we wish to die. Nor should a recognition of our mortality imply we behave cavalierly. We still wear seatbelts in cars, and we still wash our hands. But we also can re-discover the art of dying through living well, with the end in view.

Biblical Wisdom: From Law to Gospel

The Biblical narrative served as the foundation documents for the clergy who created the original *ars moriendi* documents. That foundation is with us today, providing clear support for the virtues and behaviors advocated six centuries ago in those original volumes.

Because of sin, as the narrative from Genesis 3 onward makes clear, the wonderful relationship with God that was so briefly enjoyed by Adam and Eve has been broken. In addition to that healthy vertical relationship, the horizontal relationships among humans has

also been shattered, as is evident in the experience of shame, deception, envy and, yes, death.

The Law—the Ten Commandments—given through Moses after God graciously led the people out of slavery in Egypt, provides a set of principles that describe what living well *could* look like, principles that describe the right ways to relate to God, and the right ways to live with one another. The Law alone, however, even while giving guidance on how to live, also convicts us all for falling short. “For,” as Paul says, “by works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20).

The gospel, the good news of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, serves as the enabling power to live well and, thankfully, to die well. Where the Law fails to bring the fullness of life it points to, the gospel enables it. That enabling is itself entirely a gift of grace, received by faith, so that no one can boast.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. Rom. 3:21-27

The Good News

The gospel is a proclamation of historic facts, as Paul reminded the Corinthians, it’s the good news “*that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*” (1 Cor. 15:3). These things happened, and they happened in human history. The gospel, in addition to being a simple message, is also an affront—theologians speak of the “scandal of the cross”—because it is utterly contrary to “normal” expectations. The claim that God acted to redeem his people through sending his Son to die on a cross is, well, “foolishness”:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”*

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 1 Cor. 1:18-21

In Second Corinthians, Paul, very concisely explains the significance of these “foolish” events:

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

The first of the broken relationships has been repaired: in Christ, God repaired the vertical relationship between the people of faith and himself.

A New Identity in the Gospel

To understand how the gospel enables us to live well on the horizontal level, with one another, with other people of all nations, races, backgrounds, we’re going to be using Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. Take the time to read all six chapters in one sitting. The first three describe the new identity of people of faith; the last three prescribe the heart, the life, the actions, that should flow from that identity. It’s not a matter of “do this and you will live.” Rather, it’s “you’ve been given a new life, a new identity, so live in line with it.” (This is a pattern worth noticing: how, in his letters, Paul generally puts the indicatives ahead of any imperatives, the descriptions ahead of the demands.)

Let’s look first at the indicatives in the first two chapters of Ephesians.

Who You Are!

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he **chose** us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and blameless** before him. In love he **predestined** us for **adoption to himself as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him **we have redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

*In him **we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Eph. 1:3-14 [emphases added]*

Who You Were!

And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind. Eph. 2:1-3 [emphases added]

But God!

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved— and **raised us up with him** and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For **by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Eph. 2:4-9 [emphases added]

Living Out the Gospel Identity

The work of salvation has been accomplished. We have been reconciled with God by God the Father, through Christ's death on the cross. Those passages in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians describe a *fait accompli*. By the working of the Holy Spirit, those who have placed their faith in Christ's reconciling work on the cross have a new identity, an identity that has been given, not earned; boasting is out of the question.

Emphasizing the transition from indicative to imperative, Paul begins chapter 4 with "I **therefore**..."

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling** to which you have been called, with all **humility** and **gentleness**, with **patience**, **bearing with** one another in love, eager to **maintain the unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
Eph. 4:1-3 [emphases added]

For extra clarity, he immediately contrasts that walk with an admonition to cease walking as the Gentiles do, alienated from the life of God due to their hardness of heart (Eph 4: 17-18).

He continues with a call to "put off that old self" and "to be renewed in the spirit of your minds," putting on "the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

Chapter 4 concludes with these ringing descriptions of how believers are to act.

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you **speak the truth with his neighbor**, for **we are members one of another**. **Be angry and do not sin**; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, **doing honest work** with his own hands, so that he may have something to **share** with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but **only such as is good for building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may give*

*grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.** Ephesians 4:25-31 [emphases added]*

Verse 32 brings us back to the gospel foundation that undergirds all the preceding: “*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*” The core gospel truth is this forgiveness, the redemption and reconciliation with God accomplished by Christ’s death on the cross. Paul calls us to respond to that fundamental truth by being kind and tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave us.

Hard-Hearted vs Tenderhearted

Do not pass too lightly over the contrast between the description of the Gentiles in Eph. 4:17, people “alienated from God due to their hardness of heart” and the expectation that those with a new gospel identity are to be tenderhearted. The Bible speaks in numerous places in both Old and New Testaments of hard hearts, hearts growing calloused, consciences being seared, and the like. One of the most striking descriptions is in Zechariah:

*And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. **They made their hearts diamond-hard** lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Zech. 7:8-12a [emphasis added]*

In Ephesians, Paul tells his readers to “put off” those parts of our old selves. In other letters he talks of “putting to death” the flesh. These phrases—put off, put to death—are ways of saying “Repent!” What is it that makes that possible? Paul, writing to the Colossians this time, gives some additional descriptions of the source of believers’ new identity:

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. Col. 2:11-14

Just as the people of Israel were called to remember how God had delivered them from bondage in Israel, to fear (worship and trust) and obey, Christians are called to remember our identity in Christ, baptized into his death and raised to a new identity. Doing this involves daily putting off—putting to death—the things of the flesh, that is to say, living a life of daily repentance and trust. Repentance of course includes turning from “bad” or sinful behaviors

and thoughts. Repentance also, significantly, includes repenting of any Pharisaical or “elder brother”⁶ notions that our “good” behaviors are the basis for salvation.

Recalling the price of our redemption, meditating regularly on Christ’s death on the cross, will—over time—result in hearts growing more tender. As we realize daily the size of our debt that was nailed to the cross, we are enabled more and more to forgive one another as in Christ God forgave us.

Tenderhearted vs Softhearted

The ESV’s use of the word “tenderhearted” is distinctive. Many other contemporary English translations render the Greek word as “compassionate.” In either case, it needs to be emphasized that when the Bible talks of living with a compassionate or tender heart, it does *NOT* mean being “soft on sin.” Consider:

- In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, as noted above, Paul exhorts his readers to speak the truth in love; he also talks of being angry but making sure the anger is dealt with before the sun goes down.
- In Galatians 6, Paul addresses the importance of discipline and restoration: *“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”* Gal. 6:1

And consider the following examples of actions commanded by Jesus, actions often involving awkward and difficult—but important—confrontations and confessions:

- *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”* Matt. 5:23, 24
- *“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”*

Matt. 18:15-17

Being tenderhearted and compassionate means, as those references confirm, as captured in the title of a book well worth reading, *Caring Enough to Confront*.⁷ Far from being soft-hearted, or offering cheap grace, being tenderhearted includes a range of difficult, confrontational behaviors that we too often shy away from with rationalizations. “Who am I to say something? I don’t want to hurt their feelings.” Speaking the truth in love includes saying things that might hurt (or being willing to hear things that might hurt), with the goal *always* being to build one another up in Christ.

⁶ Read and reflect on Luke 15 to see how important it is to repent of self-generated righteousness.

⁷ Augsburg, David. *Caring Enough to Confront*, revised edition 1981. Herald Press.

Living Well in Light of the Gospel

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:18-21

- In Christ, God repaired the broken relationship between himself and people of faith
- In our new identify as ambassadors of Christ, entrusted with the message of reconciliation, we are called and enabled to
 - Restore broken one-on-one relationships by
 - Confessing wrongs and seeking forgiveness
 - Confronting wrongs and offering forgiveness and restoration
 - Live as members of Christ’s body, the church, serving in ways that
 - Bear one another’s burdens
 - Rejoice with those who rejoice
 - Weep with those who weep
 - Live in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, seeking mercy and justice for all

This is not the life of a weak, flabby, fearful person. It is, however, distinctive. To the extent we can live this way—live in line with the Gospel—we will live well and die with no regrets. We will die well.

Bringing Back the Art of Dying⁸

With that scriptural foundation laid, let’s review how a revived “art of dying” might help us live well in order to die well. There are many ways, but let’s highlight three—the relational, the physical, and the spiritual.

Relationships: First, the *ars moriendi* emphasized that living well to die well was meant to be practiced within the context of community. The very people with whom we live, work, and play are the same ones with whom we need to be engaging life’s biggest questions. We know that people die best in the context of a nurturing community; indeed, dying has always been a community affair. Why, then, do we believe that we can go it alone throughout life salvaging relational bonds just before we die? Instead, we must work to cultivate our relationships throughout life so that we both live and die better.

We’ve already referred to the recent Surgeon General’s Report documenting an “epidemic of loneliness,” a malady the *ars moriendi* addressed directly centuries ago. Family and friends

⁸ Portions of this section are derived from copyrighted publications by L.S. Dugdale

were to gather at the bedside and broach the uncomfortable subject of death; no one was allowed to offer false hope about recovery from illness. Community members were to encourage the dying to repent of sin. In fact, so the logic went, it was better for the dying to fear for their physical well-being and turn to God than to believe that they are healed and ignore their souls. Community members were exhorted to pray for and read religious texts to the dying. Even if you weren't particularly close to the person who was dying, the *ars moriendi* suggested, you had a role to play. Dying in the fifteenth century was truly a community affair.

The physical body: The rise of modern medicine is partly responsible for the fall of *ars moriendi* literature in the last century. Cardiac resuscitation, organ transplantation, and cures for cancer drove death from view. But such technology—wonderful as it is—has complicated dying such that many people die highly medicalized deaths, the very kinds of deaths most of us say we would never want.

An updated “art of dying” will include reckoning with medical technology. We must ask ourselves and our doctors what various interventions and treatments mean for our health now and our dying longer term. Decisions about whether or not to forgo chemotherapy, intubation or resuscitation—addressed later in this workbook—are part of preparing well for death.

Spiritual questions: In addition to nurturing relationships and making practical decisions about health care at the end of life, we must also give thought to life's so-called “big questions” prior to the end. Indeed, attending to the spiritual side of living and dying is every bit as important—if not more so—than attending to the physical. If we don't think about death, we likely won't consider questions of why we exist, what life is for and what happens when we die. Dying well requires living well, and part of living well means wrestling with these questions before the end.

Spiritual questions were deeply embedded in the earliest iterations of the *ars moriendi*, where, as already mentioned, five temptations were described, temptations that commonly afflict the dying: impatience, despair, pride, greed and doubt. Going to the grave in abject despair or miserly greed not only threatened to disrupt the art of dying well, but such a person also failed at the art of living well.

The five temptations, then, needed to be mitigated. Early versions of the *ars moriendi* offered guidance on cultivating virtues both as individuals and as communities in order to combat habituation to a life of vice. For example, to counteract impatience over the slowness of the dying process, people needed to develop the habit of patience. To protect against despair, communities needed hope. The virtue of generosity mitigated greed; humility counteracted pride; and faith remedied doubt.

Cultivating the virtues wasn't a simple exercise to be carried out as death drew near. Rather, patience, hope, generosity, humility and faith were meant to be nurtured in communities over a lifetime. As younger or healthier community members gathered at a deathbed, they rehearsed the same virtues that the dying elder herself had spent a lifetime developing.

The Role of the Church

The Church—the universal Body of Christ, and the local congregation—has a massive role to play. Previous pages have concentrated on the Gospel as the foundation for reconciliation in our individual relationships with God and one another. The Church—universal and local—has always been, at its best, a counter-cultural institution. If we are to fully restore the arts of living well and dying well, we need to face the reality that being counter-cultural today involves swimming against many powerful and pervasive currents.

- Against the tide of secularism—including the “spiritual but not religious”—members of the Church regularly proclaim their faith in God; not an impersonal “Force,” but the triune and living God, the Creator of all that is, the Son who entered history as a man and died to reconcile the world to himself, the Spirit who comforts and convicts, by grace granting faith and new life to the born again.
- Against a stream of expressive individualism, designing one’s own identity, choosing one’s own values, the Church calls us to humbly confess sin, repent and obey God.
- Against independence, the Church speaks of being more fully, intentionally inter-dependent, of bearing one another’s burdens. A healthy church has well-established ministries to ensure that burdens are shared, burdens of living in a broken world as well as burdens of dying.
- Against the pressures that threaten to divide us, create factions, the Church calls its members to be one, in love overcoming all the superficial distinctions that can separate.

It is no accident that Ephesians 4:32 reads as it does, basing tenderheartedness on remembering that God in Christ forgave us, letting that constant awareness motivate us to forgive. It’s in that spirit that we are to confront and correct for the purpose of building up, reconciling and restoring. Churches generally do well in encouraging positive behavior. Where we all can improve is in admonishing, confessing, disciplining—all with the humility and tenderheartedness that comes from having received forgiveness for our own sins.

Living well so as to die well does not involve a set of practices to begin late in life, but rather habits of devotion to God and commitment to one another, habits to establish early and develop through mutual encouragement. Who better to live out these ideals than members of the Church, the body of Christ?

Let's Talk About Dying ...—Conversation Starters

It's often easiest to begin talking of our own mortality by first sharing experiences we may have had being with somebody during their last weeks, days or hours. With that in mind, share some memories of spending time with a close friend or loved one during some of their final days.

- What happened?
- What did you say to them?
- What did they say to you?
- Are there things you wish you had said? Or wish you hadn't said?
- Things you wished they had said, or not said?

Reflecting back on any of those experiences, or on what you hear from others, how would you want to shape—to the extent you are able—your own final weeks or days?

- Where would you want to be?
- Are there some specific people you would want to see?
- What would you want to say to them?
- What would you want to hear from them?

Are you reluctant to talk about mortality? Then have a conversation about that very reluctance:

- What lies underneath it? Worry? Fear? Anxiety?
- Describe those concerns, whatever they might be.

Then turn those reasons around and describe the corresponding hopes, wishes or desires. If you're afraid of some aspect of dying or death, talk about what you'd want to happen that would lessen or eliminate that fear.

Prompts for Private Reflection and Action

Reflect on Psalm 90:12—*Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may gain a heart of wisdom.*

- How many days have I lived?
- How many could be left?
- What are some of the things in my life that distract me from acknowledging my mortality?
- How could I make a habit of increasing my awareness of the “number of my days?”

Read and reflect on these verses:

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”
James 4:13-15

- How does realizing that my days are numbered affect some of the plans and choices facing me now, regardless of age?

Which of the following types of wise living do I especially need to cultivate?

- Daily worship
- Attitude of gratitude
- Less fretting about tomorrow, next week, next month
- Holding possessions more loosely
- Living at peace, reconciled with others
- Caring for others, bearing their burdens with them, rejoicing with them

Who do I know that especially embodies the “heart of wisdom?” What are the character qualities or behaviors that display wisdom? What disciplines or habits would help me grow in that direction?

Paul, in Gal. 5:16-24, contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh very clearly are descriptive of a heart in the process of developing calluses, growing harder; the fruit of the Spirit reflects a heart being made more tender through the Spirit's reminding us of God's love made evident on the cross.

- Where do I see myself in those lists?
- Pray: Lord, open my eyes, enable me to confess my sins, to repent and believe in your promises fulfilled in Christ.

Who are the people with whom I need to be reconciled?

Read Matt. 5:23-24 and Matt. 18:15-35. Forgiveness is hard. What's easy, though, is to forget how much we've been forgiven. Remind yourself of that fact and consider:

- Are there people whom I have injured or alienated? Who are those people? What steps could I take to reach out and ask for forgiveness?

Confronting sin or wrongdoing is also hard, especially if you're the one who's been injured. Yet it's clearly called for. The Matthew 18 passage above is one reference; Galatians 6:1-5 also bears witness to this. Being tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32) includes loving our brothers and sisters enough to confront and seek to restore fellowship.

- Are there people with whom I could begin to heal the relationship through loving confrontation and forgiveness? Who? What steps can I take to reconcile those relationships?

There's no reason at all to wait until we or our loved ones are elderly. Whatever our current ages, let's more frequently, with family and friends:

- Tell people we love them, and why
- Pray for them
- Once or twice a year bless them (i.e., speak words of encouragement, what you wish for their lives, their character)
- Express gratitude
- Seek reconciliation when there's been hurt
- Share time and resources generously

Whenever families get together—holidays and family reunions, in particular—make it a practice to remember those who have passed on, and

- Light a candle for each loved one
- Tell stories, share memories
- Sing their favorite songs

Consider disciplines you can continue or begin to practice to deepen your relationship with the Lord and bring your life more in line with the gospel:

- Regular time reading scripture, ideally extended passages
- Use well-written devotional materials, including the *Book of Common Prayer*

Medical Decision-Making: Practical Wisdom

By Crystal Pressley, MD, and John Alsdorf

Introduction

Up until recent times, as described in the previous section, most people—accidents and trauma aside—died at home. It was natural; it was part of a normal experience. Family, neighbors and community members all played a part in someone’s dying at home.

Death occurred when disease or old age led to the inevitable decline and cessation of the life supporting functioning of one or more of the remarkable organ systems of the human body:

- Respiratory
- Circulatory
- Digestive
- Nervous

Such dramatic medical advances have been made in the last half of the 20th century that we have changed how we think about death and dying. It is possible now, through some of these technologies, to sustain life in ways previously unthinkable to many of our parents and grandparents. The growth of hospitals, coupled with the advances in medical technology, has led to what some physicians have called the “medicalization” or even “industrialization” of death.

Death and dying, once experienced as natural, something that happened at home surrounded by loved ones, is now quite different. One text describes it thus:

The vast majority of people die in places where inert tones provide the palette, disinfectant the aroma, alarm bells the soundtrack, and open-back johnnies the wardrobe. At no time in our history has death been farther from home than in the last few decades.⁹

In this setting, we and our loved ones find ourselves needing to make choices that our parents and grandparents never had to consider. Physicians will ask patients being transferred from the ER, faced with emergency surgery after trauma or brought into the hospital needing intensive care for any number of critical conditions, “Do you have advance directives?” “Have you designated a health care proxy?”

Unfortunately, far too many people answer these questions in the negative. The reality is that we need to give thought to these decisions *before* we need to answer them. Just as we need to start the habits of “living well” as young people, we need to face the very real possibility that a medical emergency can strike us in our ‘teens, twenties and thirties, as well as in our sixties, seventies and eighties. Equally important, we need to talk with our family, or trusted friends, before the need arises, so that in the event we are unconscious, they can act knowing our desires, our wishes. The pages that follow provide an overview on advanced medical

⁹ Warraich, Haider. *Modern Death: How Medicine Changed the End of Life* (kindle edition), p. 40

technologies, along with some biblical principles to help make wise decisions when thinking about the end of our lives.

Life Support vs Remediation

A distinction needs to be made at the very start of this discussion, the distinction between

- the curing or remediation of short-term health problems, and
- the technologies that can keep the body functioning for the length of time required for the cure to take effect.

For example, during the early days of the recent COVID epidemic, many people found themselves in an ICU on both medications to help the body fight the virus and a machine (a ventilator) providing assistance in breathing. Mechanical support was necessary, given their weakened state, to give the body time to recover from the virus. The mechanical assistance in breathing had no curative effect in itself, but gave time for the cure to be effected.

The same can be true of a person who's undergone major surgery. The body needs time to heal, and one or more of the medical technologies may be needed to support normal functioning of temporarily weakened organ systems. Those life support systems—it bears repeating—are not curative in themselves, although they are extraordinarily useful in enabling the body to heal.

As a generalization, the modern medical miracles available in hospitals are undeniably helpful and appropriate to use, to allow for the healing or the cure of a temporary critical medical crisis. They can be misused, however, if employed solely or primarily to delay the natural process of dying. It is important, therefore, to consider the very positive reasons and circumstances under which each technology is useful, as well as the limitations and risks of each.

Assistance in Breathing

Several methods, with varying levels of invasiveness, can be used to assure the body has the oxygen needed to sustain the life of every organ system that keeps the body functioning. These include simple oxygen through a nasal cannula, a tube that goes over the face, or intubation, the insertion of a tube into the airway. As is the case with the other technologies we will overview, this can be very useful for up to a week or two, possibly more, to give the body time to heal from an infection or disease or other insult to the body.

Those benefits are not without their limitations. In addition to sometimes extreme physical or emotional distress, intubation can cause damage to vocal cords and increase susceptibility to pneumonia, especially during prolonged use.

Nutritional Support

As the title implies, when a patient is unable to eat or drink independently, there are methods to ensure that the body receives necessary nutrition. At the most basic level, a tube can be inserted through the nose, extended into the stomach and used to deliver nutrients. If that is

not possible, then nutrients can be delivered directly into the body through the circulatory system by means of intravenous access.

As is the case with respiratory support, these methods do create discomfort. They also can lead to infections. More seriously, through extensive use they can lead to organ dysfunction.

Kidney Function Support

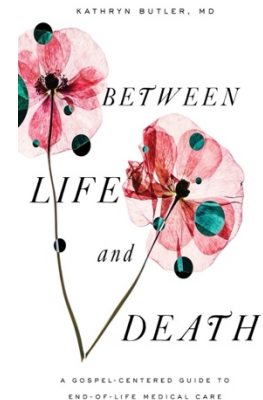
Another main life support system is dialysis, used when the kidneys are failing. There are people who rely on intermittent dialysis as out-patients, by going into facilities to have their blood filtered, but who otherwise carry on normal lives. In the hospital, if the kidneys are failing, dialysis can be administered on a daily or continuous basis (24 hours a day). Like the foregoing methods, this incurs the risks of infection and may be required long-term, depending on the ability of the kidneys to recover.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Defibrillation

Perhaps the most dramatic, certainly one of the most widely known of modern medical miracles, is CPR (CardioPulmonary Resuscitation), a method to re-start a heart that has stopped. CPR has been credited, rightly, with saving lives. This method was first developed in the early 1960s, in the lifetime of many reading this. It is also the subject of a fair amount of controversy. We have all seen (or heard of) dramatic scenes in which a person's life is restored after a heart has stopped. The reality is that it is successful in restoring life to a relatively small percentage of people, and those people primarily were young and healthy at the time when they needed CPR.¹⁰

Adding It All Up

It is not possible in the space we have here to detail all the pros and cons of each each medical technology that can prolong life. Books have been written in recent years, as the technology has spread, precisely for the purpose of educating the medical lay person. Kathryn Butler's *Between Life and Death* is an excellent example. From her time as an ICU doctor, she describes each of the above methods in detail, with examples from actual patients.



Our goal in this section of this workbook has been to emphasize the importance of giving thought to what you want in the way of life-support if you ever end up in a hospital needing such support. The next page outlines the forms of documentation that comprise what are often called “advance directives,” instructions written out to deal with that possible ER or ICU hospitalization. We highly recommend educating yourself on the technologies, starting conversations with your primary care doctor (or specialist), with whom you can ask any questions you may have. You should also talk with your loved one and friends. Based what you learn you would do well to document your wishes, using one of the legally recognized formats, and designating a health care proxy to represent you.

¹⁰ See, for example, “The Hidden Harms of CPR,” *The New Yorker* Weekend Essay, Aug 5, 2023.

Documenting Medical Decisions or Directions

There is a range of documents—both formal and legal—that can be used to guide decisions regarding medical care in the event a person becomes incapacitated. These include:

- Living Wills
- Advance Directives (an example is provided on page 22)
- Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders
- Health Care Proxies (Health Care Power of Attorney)
- Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

At the bare minimum we recommend that every adult designate a trusted friend or family member as Health Care Proxy, also known as Health Care Power of Attorney. The office of the Secretary of State for North Carolina provides an extensive on-line resource that includes:

- A message from the Secretary of State
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Various forms for downloading
- Links and information on Hospice Care and Organ Donation

Access the resources provided by North Carolina using this web address:

https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/advance_healthcare_directives

Q. Who should have documents like these? At what age?

A. Every adult, beginning when you are old enough to vote; certainly no later than when beginning to live independently. Even young and healthy people experience severe medical crises, whether due to sudden organ failure, disease, or an accident while, for example, bicycling or hiking.

The legal form designating a Health Care Proxy is the minimum every adult should have. To ensure that your proxy knows and can represent your wishes, however, we also recommend that you have in-depth conversations, perhaps supplemented by written Advance Directives such as the sample included in this workbook on page 22. Since not every specific emergency can be predicted, be sure to place the emphasis on helping your proxy understand the underlying principles governing your desired levels of health care.

Experience also shows that, in addition to talking with legally designated health care proxies, it is wise to ensure that any and all family members understand your wishes concerning medical treatment alternatives in the event you are unconscious or otherwise unable to speak for yourself. These conversations can be difficult, but when handled well they result in family unity, even during emotionally trying circumstances when a loved one is incapacitated and potentially near end of life.

Finally, make it a practice to update your stated wishes every few years as you age or, in consultation with your medical care providers, as you develop specific health conditions.

Biblical Principles for Decisions on End-of-Life Medical Care¹¹

Kathryn Butler’s book we referred to earlier carries the subtitle, “A Gospel-Centered Guide to End-of-Life Medical Care.” As hinted by that subtitle, the book includes biblical principles intended to help arrive at wise choices when faced with these complex decisions. With her permission, we’re including summaries of those principles below. In reading them, be aware that these principles work together, in a creative tension with one another.

For example, Scriptures clearly teach the sanctity of human life; it is also clear that God exercises sovereignty over life and death. Taken together, these two encourage the prudent use of whatever methods are available to give the body time to heal; that use, though, needs to be undertaken with full awareness that death is inevitable, so that we can give glory to God up to the end. Ultimately, our hope is in Christ and the promise of bodily resurrection when he returns. Nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God.

Sanctity of Mortal Life

- God’s image bearers (Gen. 1:26)
- Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- You shall not kill. (Ex. 20:13)
- When faced with complex end-of-life care alternatives, definitely consider/employ those treatments that enable healing, cure.
- Human life has inherent value; that value should always be respected.

God’s Sovereignty over Life and Death

- Life is fleeting in nature. (Is. 40:6-8; Ecc. 9:1-6)
- Life is sacred, but death is inevitable in this life, and even death cannot separate us from God. (Rom. 8:28-39)
- Death is the wages of sin. (Rom. 5:12, 6:23)
- Allow for God to be glorified even through death.

Mercy and Compassion

- Love our neighbors as ourselves. (Mark 12:29-31)
- Extend mercy and compassion to the powerless, the poor, the weak. (Is. 58)
- Use extreme measures when likely to bring healing, but avoid or minimize when futile (merely prolonging dying).
- Recognize individual tolerance levels for suffering, discomfort.



Hope in Christ

- Nothing—not even death—can separate us from the love of God. (Rom. 8:38, 39)
- “Behold, I tell you a mystery...the dead will be raised imperishable.” (1 Cor. 15:51f)
- The promise of bodily resurrection in Christ (1 Thess. 4:14)
- Embrace the hope we have in Christ, even in the face of death.

¹¹ Adapted, with permission, from the work of Kathryn Butler, MD.

A Sample Advance Directive

The final directives below are presented solely as an example of

- The kinds of issues that should be addressed
- Points that could guide a conversation with a health care proxy

These were written by a senior citizen (65+) in good health. That individual makes it a point to review and revise them every year or two, as conditions change, to make them reflective of current health conditions and age. Importantly, they are also reviewed periodically with family members, including the health care proxy.

1. When death comes, I want to be at home, if at all possible, surrounded by family. Not in an ICU or ER. If there has been a recent bout with some medical condition, some life-threatening illness, or an accident, such that hospitalization was required, I would like—in keeping with the directives mentioned below—to be discharged so as to live my final days (or even, should it come to that, hours) at home.
2. I am currently in extremely good health. Therefore, if my heart were to stop now (as in a heart attack), I want everything that could appropriately be done, be done. That includes full CPR, defibrillators and whatever invasive (surgical) procedures are indicated.
3. Were intubation to become necessary on an interim basis—to give my body time to recover from a serious infection, for example—I give my permission. But (given my fear of the feeling of suffocation) I would want to be totally anesthetized for the duration of the time of intubation.
4. Similarly, artificial feeding or ICU dialysis (and any other comparable temporary life support system) is acceptable on an interim basis—to give my body time to recover from a serious infection or other temporary condition—but not to go beyond two weeks or whatever relatively short period is deemed necessary for that temporary condition to be resolved.
5. I am willing to become disabled if still able to relate to people around me, to engage in worship and play with others, to read or listen to books and music. Disabilities could include being blind or deaf, becoming wheelchair bound, having a limb amputated. I want to be able to relate to others, though, not just to be an object to be cared for; I want to do some caring of others as well.
6. If I suffer from a stroke (or other intracranial event, such as a massive hemorrhage, a ruptured aneurysm, or the like), such that I am unable to participate in decisions concerning my own care, I hereby empower my medical proxy to make all decisions, keeping in mind the description of disability/ability outlined above.
7. As a general principle, I'm willing for any of the various life support systems to be used if they contribute to a reasonable chance of curing or repair of the organ system that is failing; I am not willing for life supports to be used when realistically all they're doing is prolonging dying.
8. My family medical history is pretty good, so it's not unrealistic to expect to live well into my 90s. Once there, though, it will be the case that my body—no matter how wonderful and resilient it has been for so many decades—will be *old*, and all systems will have lost resilience; I will be frail. As I age—I say this now in advance—the time will come when I will choose DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) status, in recognition of that reality.
9. The general principle underlying all of the foregoing is this: I wish to take advantage of medical science within reason, but I also accept the fact that death is inevitable and even welcome. When multiple systems are in acute failure, it's time to go; I do not wish to fight God's timing.

Caring for the Deceased

Introduction

The preceding sections have all dealt with behaviors and decisions to be developed and thought about throughout life, with a focus on acknowledging our mortality, our finitude, and living well in light of the gospel, so as to die well. The goal was to prepare ourselves—as well as family members and close friends—for our deaths. Implicit in that goal was a desire to facilitate conversations. Experience shows that once the door to these conversations has been opened, they can be very healing. These are conversations that can lead to healing of relationships, as we clarify both fears and hopes, and express mutual concern and love.

This next and final section opens a different door, one intended especially to help you prepare those same family members and close friends for the hours, days, weeks and months approaching, and then immediately after your death. We will talk about:

- How can we be lovingly present in the final weeks and days of life, as a loved one is dying?
- What happens—some immediate choices—immediately after death?
- What happens—with still more choices—in care for the body?
- What happens—choices again—regarding burial or cremation?
- What plans can be made for a funeral or memorial service?

In every one of those main areas of discussion—again, topics for conversation between you and family and close friends—our goal will be to introduce considerations or choices that are available but often overlooked or not known, ways to personalize or humanize, to bring honor to the deceased person and, in the process, to God. Although Funeral Directors and other professionals in the field are aware of these options, they often will leave it to you or the bereaved to raise a topic or ask a question regarding any requests or accommodations that might fall outside of the ‘normal’ processes of funeral preparations.

Caring for Your Dying Loved One

As we discussed in the first section, among the *ars moriendi*, loved ones and friends were encouraged to visit the person dying, to spend time speaking quietly, lovingly. Reading psalms or other scriptures that the dying person is fond of can be a wonderful ministry. Make sure the room is softly lit, and that family pictures and other mementos are present—do this, to the extent possible, even if the person is hospitalized; it will make the setting more personal, less institutional.

With the loved one’s permission, make sure their minister or pastor knows that your loved one is nearing death. Many Christian denominations have a brief service (series of prayers) which can be offered at the bedside of a dying member. Your loved one does not need to be conscious for this service to take place. *The Anglican Book of Common Prayer 2019* offers

such a service,¹² beginning on page 237, which may be led by anyone - ordained or not. Invite family members/close friends who are in town to join you.

In the Immediate Aftermath of a Death

When somebody dies, there can often be a period of shock, even if the death has been expected. The more we can put plans in place—and talk about them—plans for what to do, the better. Who to call first, for example. What do we do with the body?

If the death occurs in a private home, after the initial contact or notification to the appropriate medical professional (hospice/EMT), there need be no urgency in calling the funeral home. Instead, calls to family members who are not present—especially those who might want to visit and pay respects, even see their deceased loved one, say a prayer—should be a priority. Within 24 hours of your loved one's death, call his/her minister to arrange for a time to discuss your loved one's funeral service. Generally, the minister will come to your home for this discussion and will also offer prayer for those who are grieving.

Some people find it comforting to engage in some tender caring for the body of their loved one, or in sitting by the bedside in prayer. While by no means obligatory, those who have spent some quiet time with their departed loved one often describe such a time as very significant, allowing for private grieving, a personal time of final farewell.

It is important to acknowledge the magnitude of such a moment as being with a loved one who has just died and no longer with us. The next several days will be filled with decisions, grief, friends and relatives to host, arrangements to be made—all of which can be so overwhelming that those initial precious and intimate moments of quiet goodbye can be robbed from a family once routine funeral home procedures begin.

If the death occurs in a nursing home, a hospice facility, or hospital, the staff of these institutions are generally very willing to give family members time alone and in quiet to grieve. There are times when family may be asked if they'd want to help wash the body of the loved one. As noted above, engaging in tenderly helping prepare the body can bring unexpected blessings.

Caring for the Body of the Deceased

As the funeral home industry has grown over the last century, we have tended to assume it was always thus—that a funeral director came and carefully took the body of the now deceased family member and prepared it for burial. That preparation often takes the form of cleaning and embalming, then dressing the body, and arranging for a time of visitation at the funeral home, followed by a funeral or memorial service and traditional burial.

That assumed sequence of steps is still a valid sequence. But there are variations to be considered in each step of that scenario. For example, family members can be involved to varying degrees in cleaning and dressing the body of, for example, their mother or grandfather. We know of instances where teenage granddaughters have lovingly given their

¹² The Appendix to this workbook contains a copy of this short service.

grandmother “a last spa treatment,” cleaning and polishing nails, brushing hair, and so on. Others may just want to help in dressing their departed dad in a favorite suit—perhaps a hunting or fishing outfit. Funeral directors, experienced in accommodating such desires, can assist in ensuring that they’re carried out with respect and dignity. And, as noted above, such involvement with caring for the body of a loved one creates wonderful memories for those so engaged.

It's entirely understandable that many people will not be comfortable with a hands-on approach to caring for their dead. There is no need for guilt or shame. There are other ways to pay tribute and participate in preparations in personal and honoring ways. Clergy or funeral directors would gladly offer suggestions.

For example, for someone who isn't comfortable with dressing their loved one, they might be able to accompany the body on the journey to the funeral home; or spend time in the room with the body of their loved one after it has been prepared for burial.

Choices regarding visitation or viewing

We are all familiar with the practice of visiting hours at a funeral home. Although that may have become something of a norm, there are other ways to enable extended families and friends to pay last respects prior to burial.

In some Christian denominations, a time for visitation may be offered in the church, instead of a funeral home. The coffin or urn can be brought to the church the day before the funeral service so the immediate family could hold a visitation for extended family and friends in a large room in the church. The Book of Common Prayer, on page 243, offers a short service, Prayers for a Vigil¹³, that could be done with the family right before the visitation, or as part of the visitation.

Choices for Burial or Cremation

Recent decades have brought some changes in how bodies are buried. For example, the Jewish practice of burial within 24 hours of death is now a practice that has been adapted by some devout Christians. The use of a simple pine coffin is also possible. The trend to think of ecological impact has given rise to what are called “green” or “natural” burial. The choice of cremation has been a growing trend in recent years, a trend that is projected to continue. There is, in short, a wide and growing range of choices, and the more thought given in advance to what you would desire, the fewer the decisions that your family members need to debate.

For that reason alone, early planning in this aspect of death and dying—in the form of visits to funeral homes, as well as conversations with family—is a good way for us to love one another.

¹³ The Appendix to this workbook contains a copy of this short Vigil service.

Writing Your Own Obituary

In addition to planning your funeral service, consider writing your own obituary. Writing your obituary while you are still in good health and of sound mind will accomplish several things. First, it will make you aware of God's provision and blessing as you reflect upon your life. Second, it will spare your family the burden of composing an obituary for you immediately following your death. Third, it will give you an opportunity to involve your family in the process of writing your obituary, which may lead to discussions and insights about your life together that may prove valuable.

Here is some basic information to cover when writing your obituary:

1. Begin with your full name, date of birth and leave space for the date of your death.
2. Reflect upon the story of your life and write about the highlights and memorable events. What do you want people to remember about you?
3. List family members.
4. Add information concerning charitable contributions, if applicable.
5. Select a photo of yourself.
6. Incorporate a paragraph for service information to be announced (dates/times will of course be plugged in when necessary), usually at the top or bottom of the obituary.
7. Ask someone who knows you well to read over what you wrote and ask for their suggestions about how to improve it.
8. Share the final version with a few family members and/or keep it with other important documents.

Keep in mind that an obituary printed in a newspaper can cost hundreds of dollars, the final cost a function of length. Most funeral homes will host obituaries online at no cost, and there are other online obituary sites (e.g., www.Legacy.com) which may preserve the obituary, sometimes charging a fee for the service.

About the Authors

Lydia S. Dugdale, MD



Lydia Dugdale MD, MAR, is the Dorothy L. and Daniel H. Silberberg Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for Clinical Medical Ethics at Columbia University. Prior to her 2019 move to Columbia, she was Associate Director of the Program for Biomedical Ethics and founding Co-Director of the Program for Medicine, Spirituality, and Religion at Yale School of Medicine. She is an internal medicine primary care doctor and medical ethicist. Her first book, *Dying in the Twenty-First Century* (MIT Press, 2015), provided the theoretical grounding for *The Lost Art of Dying: Reviving Forgotten Wisdom*. She lives with her husband and daughters in New York City. <http://lydiadugdale.com>

John Alsdorf



Since retiring from his corporate career in 2002, John has been active in a variety of teaching and leadership roles in church programs. Here in Raleigh, from 2016 through 2018, he partnered with his wife, Katherine, in establishing Holy Trinity Anglican Church's [New City Fellows](#) program. He currently is active as part of a team in New York City developing a curriculum to help adults of all ages to live more joyfully and wisely in light of our shared mortality. Over the years he has taught numerous adult classes aimed at deepening understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith. He recently completed eight years as Trustee for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a national campus ministry.

Crystal Pressley, MD



Dr. Pressley is a board-certified general surgeon with certification in critical care. She serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at UNC and Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and is also the surgery clerkship director at WakeMed for CUSOM. Crystal is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, is published in the American Journal of Surgery and is an alumna of the New City Fellows program class of 2022. Born and raised in Cary, NC, she is dedicated to community outreach and assisting those in need. Currently, Crystal is practicing general surgery, trauma and critical care at WakeMed in Raleigh, NC.

Justin N. Barfield



Justin is a licensed funeral director, embalmer and assisting management associate with Bryan-Lee Funeral Homes in Raleigh, with affiliate locations in Garner and Angier, NC. A first-generation funeral director, Justin began his career in funeral service at 15 years old with the local funeral establishment in his hometown of Tarboro, NC. Having experienced the deaths of three grandparents in less than a year, Justin found the role of the funeral director to be quiet and comforting, which led him to pursue that same calling of providing families with care and guidance during their time of need. Justin is a member of the North Carolina Funeral Directors Association and Order of the Golden Rule, and an alumnus of the New City Fellows program class of 2022. He and his wife, Donna Lynn, live in Raleigh where they are active members of Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

The Rev. Claudia Greggs



Claudia grew up in Detroit, went to college in Boston and after moving to New York City, she heard the good news of the gospel and turned in faith to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. She attended the Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, graduating in 1987, and was ordained the following year to the priesthood. In 1994, she married the Rev. Dr. Gil Greggs and moved to North Carolina, finding at last her true home. Claudia served in a number of churches before joining the staff of Holy Trinity Anglican in 2014 as clergy associate for Christian Formation. Helping people find abundant life in Jesus Christ is her passion in ministry. She and Gil have two children, Caleb and Emily, a son-in-law, Andrew and two grandchildren.

For Further Reading

Books by Christian Authors

- **Boers, Arthur** *Living into Focus: Choosing What Matters in an Age of Distractions* Eugene Peterson writes of his friend's book that its usefulness is "in its witness, the actual practices that develop into a coherent way of life, practices that engage with things local...practices that nurture personal friendships."
- **Butler, Kathryn, MD** *Between Life and Death: A Gospel-Centered Guide to End-of-Life Medical Care* An excellent overview of how to assess the true usefulness of modern medical miracles (ventilation, artificial feeding, etc.), and when their use should be questioned, all in a context of biblical principles.
- **Crouch, Andy** *The Life We're Looking For: Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World.* Crouch takes the reader through what we need to do to be more personally connected with one another, and why it's so important.
- **Davis, Bill** *Departing in Peace: Biblical Decision-Making at the End of Life* A more philosophical companion to the above, with connections to model "advance directives" or health care proxies, again from a biblical and pastoral perspective.
- **Dugdale, L.S., MD** *The Lost Art of Dying: Reviving Forgotten Wisdom* Excellent and comprehensive overview of not just the final stages of life, but all of the practices preceding and surrounding death and dying, from family and community (religious and secular) involvement to individual preparation.
- **Moll, Rob** *The Art of Dying: Living Fully into the Life to Come* Moll, a journalist, recounts his own life journey, as he discovers the blessings of numbering his days, ministering (as hospice volunteer) to those dying, growing in faith throughout. Included is a very poignant epilogue by Clarissa Moll underscoring the vital importance of living one's whole life in light of mortality. A decade after completing his book, Rob Moll, age 41, died in a climbing accident.
- **Morgan, Edward** *The Patient's Survival Guide: Seven Key Questions for Navigating the Medical Maze* Morgan makes a strong case for patients assuming active, engaged responsibility for the decisions involving their own care, raising awareness of the sometimes devastating side-effects of well-intentioned care.

Secular Authors

- **Hebb, Michael** *Let's Talk about Death (Over Dinner)* An easy and engaging read, suggesting strategies for dinners where the topic of conversation (included in the invitation) focuses on human mortality, thoughts of what matters in both life and death.
- **Nuland, Sherwin** *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter* Updated version; a classic from the 1990s by a Yale physician on the wonders of the body and how it breaks down as we age. Well written and thought-provoking.
- **Gawande, Atul** *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* A contemporary reflection, incorporating an account of the dying of his father, on both the wonders and the limitations of medicine and how it is practiced in the early 21st Century.



HOLY TRINITY
ANGLICAN CHURCH

Proclaim. Exalt. Serve.

FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE

The burial of a Christian is an occasion of both sorrow and joy—our sorrow in the face of death, and our joy in Jesus’ promise of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

The Christian burial liturgy looks forward to eternal life rather than backward to past events. It does not primarily focus on the achievements or failures of the deceased; rather, it calls us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and his triumph over death, even as we celebrate the life and witness of the deceased.

The readings should be drawn from the Bible, and the prayers and music from Christian tradition. A visitation preceding the service and a reception following the service are appropriate places for personal remembrances. Where possible, the burial liturgy is conducted in a church, and may be celebrated within the context of Communion.

The Book of Common Prayer has always admonished Christians to be mindful of their mortality...It is important while in health to provide direction for one’s own funeral arrangements, place of burial, and the Scripture readings and hymns of the burial liturgy, and to make them known to the minister.

Anglican Church in North America: Book of Common Prayer 2019

How to use this planning guide

Planning a funeral service can be complicated! We have tried to make this guide as user-friendly as possible, but a basic introduction is necessary. What you will see over the next few pages is a mock-up of a funeral bulletin. All of the printed text in the service that follows is standard to a funeral, such as the opening anthem, the collect, the creed, and prayers. Throughout the service there will be places where you can choose scripture passages or hymns. You do not need to have a scripture reading or hymn for every spot. It will be important, however, to have at least one scripture reading (preferably a gospel reading). If you would prefer not to have music that is acceptable.

It is typical for the funeral to take place in the church building prior to burial in a cemetery or inurnment of ashes. Occasionally, funeral and burial will be reversed in order which will lead to a few minor alterations in both liturgies. A member of our clergy team will walk you through those. It is also possible to include a personal remembrance (a eulogy) in the funeral service, but before you make plans for this we would like to discuss it with you.

If you are uncertain about anything please don’t hesitate to contact us.

(COVER PAGE)

A Service Celebrating The Life of

FULL Name and Date of Birth _____

(you can pick an appropriate verse from the suggested readings
or one you prefer, subject to clergy approval.)

Example:

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ~ 1 John 3:1-2

Preferred Scripture for Cover Page: _____

FAMILY ENTRANCE - DO YOU WANT TO PROCESS IN OR BE SEATED IN THE SANCTUARY BEFORE THE SERVICE? (CIRCLE ONE)

(The order of service)

PRELUDE

THE OPENING ANTHEM

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. *JOHN 11:25*

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *JOB 19:25-27*

For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. *ROMANS 14:7-9*

For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. *1 TIMOTHY 6:7; JOB 1:21*

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; Even so, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors. *REVELATION 14:13*

THE COLLECT

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that your servant **Name**, being raised with Christ, may know the strength of his presence and rejoice in his eternal glory; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

POSSIBLE HYMN (*Suggested hymns are listed on page 14*)

WRITE NAME OF HYMN (If applicable)

THE LESSONS (*suggested readings for funerals are on page 15*)

Old Testament Reading: _____

Reader: _____
WRITE NAME OF READER

A suitable psalm may follow, if desired.

Psalm: _____

Reader: _____
WRITE NAME OF READER

New Testament Reading: _____

Reader: _____
WRITE NAME OF READER

A suitable psalm may follow, if desired.

Psalm: _____

Reader: _____
WRITE NAME OF READER

POSSIBLE HYMN (*see page 14*)

WRITE NAME OF HYMN (If applicable)

The Gospel Reading: _____

HOMILY

POSSIBLE HYMN (*see page 14*)

WRITE NAME OF HYMN (If applicable)

THE APOSTLES' CREED (*said by all professing Christians*)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

Officiant and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,

**and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Let us pray, saying, "Hear our prayer."

Almighty God, you knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we pray, to your whole Church in heaven and on earth, your light and peace.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life, that through the grave and gate of death we may pass with him to our joyful resurrection.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that your Holy Spirit may lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you in faithful obedience.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant to all who mourn a sure confidence in your fatherly care, that, casting their grief on you, they may know the consolation of your love.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant us grace to entrust **Name** to your never-failing love; receive him/her into the arms of your mercy, and remember him/her according to the favor which you show to all your people.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of you, he/she may go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service in your heavenly kingdom.

Reader: Lord, in your mercy

People: Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, grant us, with all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, the fullness of life in your eternal and ever-lasting glory, and, with all your saints, to receive the crown of life promised to all who share in the victory of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE COMMENDATION

Officiant: Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,

All: Where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Officiant: You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you decree, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Officiant: Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,

All: Where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant **Name**. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**

THE DISMISSAL

Officiant: Alleluia, alleluia. Let us go forth in the Name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

CLOSING HYMN *(see page 14)*

WRITE NAME OF HYMN (If applicable)

POSTLUDE

The funeral service may be followed by the Committal, a series of prayers at the graveside before the coffin or urn is placed in the ground. The Committal begins on the next page.

At The Cemetery (please circle if applicable)

Under certain circumstances, the actual funeral service may be held at the cemetery, please let us know if that is what you would like and we will provide a different template.

THE COMMITTAL

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. *John 6:37*

He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give new life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells within us.

Romans 8:11

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope. *Psalm 16:10*

You shall show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy, and at your right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

Psalm 16:12

Then, while earth is cast upon the coffin, the Celebrant says these words

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our brother/sister **Name**, and we commit his/her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless him/her and keep him/her, the Lord make his face to shine upon him/her and be gracious unto him/her, the Lord lift up his countenance upon him/her and give him/her peace.
Amen.

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

PRAYERS

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,**

thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, set your passion, cross, and death, between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living, pardon and rest to the dead, to your holy Church peace and concord, and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Officiant: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend your servant **Name**, our dear brother/sister, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and most merciful Savior, beseeching you that he/she may be precious in your sight. Wash him/her, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that, whatsoever defilements he/she may have contracted in the midst of this earthly life being purged and done away, he/she may be presented pure and without spot before you; through the merits of Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord. **Amen.**

All: Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of all comfort: Deal graciously, we pray thee, with all those who mourn, that casting every care on thee, we may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Officiant: Rest eternal grant to him/her, O Lord:

People: **And let light perpetual shine upon him/her.**

Officiant: May his/her soul, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God,

People: **Rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen**

NECESSARY INFORMATION

Full Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Death: _____

Family Members to Contact:

_____ Phone _____ Email _____

_____ Phone _____ Email _____

Funeral Home: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____

Where will service be held: _____

Where will the burial/inurnment take place: _____

Which member of the clergy would you like to lead the service:

Which member of the clergy would you like to preach:

Would you like to have a family member or friend share a word of remembrance during the service?

Soloists or Special Musicians: *(there may be a fee for this)* _____

Reception in lower lobby following service? _____

Caterer: _____ Phone: _____

Florist: _____ Phone: _____

Number of seats to reserve for the family: _____

Anticipated attendance (for bulletin prep): _____

Would you like us to arrange a livestream/video recording? *(there is a \$350 fee for this)*

Additional/Special Arrangements: _____

Suggested Hymns for Funerals

General Praise:

- *Holy, holy, holy*
- *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*
- *Praise to the Lord, the almighty*
- *All hail the power of Jesus's name*
- *O God, beyond all praising*
- *Love divine, all loves excelling*
- *A mighty fortress*
- *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah*

Traditional Hymns for Funerals:

- *O God, our help in ages past (para. Ps. 90)*
- *How firm a foundation*
- *For all the saints*
- *My shepherd will supply my need*
- *The King of love my shepherd is (and other Ps. 23 settings) Amazing grace, how sweet the sound*
- *Ye holy angels bright*
- *Abide with me*
- *Rock of ages*

Suggested Readings for Funerals

Old Testament:

- *ISAIAH 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever)*
- *ISAIAH 61:1-3 (To comfort all who mourn)*
- *LAMENTATIONS 3:22-26,31-33 (The Lord is good to those who wait)*
- *JOB 19:21-27A (I know that my Redeemer lives)*

Psalms: *A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow.*

The following Psalms are appropriate: 39, 42:1-7, 46, 90:1-12, 121, 130, 139:1-11.

New Testament:

- *ROMANS 8:14-19,34-39 (The glory that is to be revealed)*
- *1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-26,35-38,42-44,53-58 (The imperishable body)*
- *2 CORINTHIANS 4:16—5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal)*
- *1 JOHN 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)*
- *REVELATION 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)*
- *REVELATION 21:2-7 (Behold, I am making all things new)*

Psalm: *A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow. (please circle one)*

The following Psalms are appropriate: 23, 27, 106:1-5, 116.

The Gospel:

- *JOHN 5:24-27 (Whoever believes has eternal life)*
- *JOHN 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will come to me)*
- *JOHN 10:11-16 (I am the good shepherd)*
- *JOHN 11:21-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)*
- *JOHN 14:1-6 (In my Father's house are many rooms)*

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy.
The service finds all its meaning in the resurrection.
Jesus Christ lived the perfect life and died the perfect death on the cross
to pay for our sin and offer us full access to God the Father forever.
Therefore, we who trust Christ to present us before the Father
“without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22)
shall be raised with Him to be with God forever.
This is the good news of the Gospel that we proclaim today.

The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty
that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present,
nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from
the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 8: 38 - 39

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian.
The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow
when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend.
So, while we rejoice that the one we love
has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord,
we sorrow with Christ in sympathy with those who mourn.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church
549 North Blount St., Raleigh, NC 27604
(919) 833-4202
Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9-5; Fri 9-4

For calendar, ministry info, and other
resources visit:
www.htcraleigh.org
www.facebook.com/htcraleigh

The Rev. Dr. John W. Yates III, Rector
The Rev. Claudia Greggs, The Rev. Caleb Burr, The Rev. Jason Palacio. The Rev. Tripp Gordon

**Holy Trinity is a member of the Anglican Church in North America,
Diocese of the Carolinas.**

MINISTRY *to the* DYING

The Officiant begins

Peace be to this house [*or place*], and to all who dwell in it.

LUKE 10:5^T

The Officiant continues with the following prayer

Almighty God, look on this your servant, lying in great weakness, and comfort *him* with the promise of life everlasting, given in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LITANY AT THE TIME OF DEATH

The following may be said. When possible, it is desirable that those present join in the responses.

O God the Father,
Have mercy on your servant.

O God the Son,
Have mercy on your servant.

O God the Holy Spirit,
Have mercy on your servant.

O Holy Trinity, one God,
Have mercy on your servant.

Lord Jesus Christ, deliver your servant from all evil, sin, and tribulation;

Good Lord, deliver *him*.

By your holy Incarnation, by your Cross and Passion, by your precious Death and Burial,

Good Lord, deliver *him*.

By your glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the Coming of the Holy Spirit,

Good Lord, deliver *him*.

We sinners beseech you to hear us, Lord Christ: That it may please you to deliver the soul of your servant from the power of evil, and from eternal death,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you mercifully to pardon all *his* sins,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you to give *him* joy and gladness in your kingdom, with your saints in light,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you to raise *him* up at the last day,

We beseech you to hear us, good Lord.

The following or some other suitable anthem may be sung or said

Son of God, we beseech you to hear us.

Son of God, we beseech you to hear us.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

Have mercy upon *him*.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy upon *him*.

O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Grant *him* your peace.

O Christ, hear us
O Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.		Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy upon us.	<i>or</i>	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy upon us.		Lord, have mercy.

Officiant and People say together

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Officiant O Lord, show your mercy upon us;

People As we put our trust in you.

The Officiant prays

Let us pray.

O Sovereign Lord Christ, deliver your servant, *N.*, from all evil, and set *him* free from every bond; that *he* may rest with all your saints in the eternal habitations; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Officiant may invite those present to offer words of thanksgiving, reconciliation, or farewell. The Officiant may conclude with words of comfort.

COMMENDATION AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Here a Priest may anoint the dying person with oil.

The Priest says

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world;
In the Name of God the Father Almighty who created you;
In the Name of Jesus Christ who redeemed you;
In the Name of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you.
May your rest be this day in peace, and your dwelling place in the Paradise of God.

A COMMENDATORY PRAYER

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant *N.* Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive *him* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**

The Officiant and People may say

NUNC DIMITTIS
The Song of Simeon

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, *
according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, *
which you have prepared before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *
and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

LUKE 2:29-32

CLOSING PRAYER

The Officiant prays

May *his* soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through
the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

This rite is designed to be flexible in length. It may be adjusted according to the circumstances and condition of the dying person. Different portions of the rite may be used at different times, provided the order of the various elements is retained. In cases of great urgency, the Commendation at the Time of Death may be used alone. In the absence of a member of the clergy, this service may be led by any Christian.

The minister may inquire of the dying person as to his or her desire to be reconciled to both God and neighbor. If the dying person feels troubled in conscience with any matter, the minister should offer the rite

of Reconciliation of a Penitent. On evidence of repentance, the minister shall give assurance of God's mercy and forgiveness.

If desired, Holy Communion may be administered using the rite for Communion of the Sick. It is appropriate for others present to receive the Sacrament as well. If the dying person cannot receive both the consecrated bread and wine, it is suitable to administer the Sacrament in one kind only. If he or she desires to receive, but by reason of extreme sickness is unable to consume either element, the minister is to assure the person that all the benefits of Holy Communion are conveyed, even though the elements are not received with the mouth.

PRAYERS *for a* VIGIL

It is appropriate that family and friends come together prior to a funeral. This rite may be used on such an occasion, whether at the church, a funeral home, or elsewhere.

The Minister says

Dear Friends: It was our Lord Jesus himself who said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Let us pray, then, for our *brother N.*, that *he* may rest from *his* labors, and enter into God's eternal Sabbath rest.

A psalm may be prayed. Psalms 23 and 121 are particularly appropriate.

One or more of the following Lessons is read.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-15

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it 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 again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. JOHN 14:2-3

The following and other additional prayers may be said. The Litany at the Time of Death (pages 237-239) may also be used.

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that your servant N., being raised with Christ, may know the strength of his presence and rejoice in his eternal glory; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: deal graciously with those who mourn [especially _____]. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Minister says

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray

Minister and People say together

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

The Minister says

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing
through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ROMANS 15:13

The Minister may say

May *his* soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through
the mercy of God, rest in peace.

People And may light perpetual shine upon them. Amen.