



HANDBOOK

FOR

MASONIC

MEMORIAL

SERVICES

## Prelude

*“Evidence That We Love Him And Remember Him In Scenes The World Knows Not Of.”*

*Familiar Words To Many Who Will Read This Collection Of Masonic Memorial Services, And That, Indeed, Is The Primary Purpose Of This Collection.*

*A Masonic Memorial Service Is One Of The Three Major Vehicles Whereby The Non-masonic Public Witnesses A Favorable And Lasting Impression Of The Principles Promoted Within The Temple Walls. The Offerings In The Pages Of This Book Are Examples Of Time Honored Masonic Funeral Services Rendered By Knowledgeable, Willing And Loving Brothers Of The Fraternity.*

*They Are Not Meant To Be Used Verbatim. Instead, We Hope They Will Serve As An Example And Guide To Seeking Brothers, Brothers Willing To Dedicate A Small Portion Of Their Masonic Lives To The Worthy Effort Of Paying That Last Respect To A Deceased Brother.*

*Each Offering Is A Reflection Of The Heart Felt Emotions Of The Author. It Is Not A Dictation But A Love Gift, Written And Thereafter Spoken From The Heart. If You Use These Examples, Use Them Only As A Guide To Your Own Feelings Concerning Life, Death, And Life Ever After Within The Teachings Of The Masonic Brotherhood.*

*Herb Davison*

## Preface

*There Are Three (3) Masonic Funeral Situations That Need To Be Addressed: Grave Site, Church Service, And Funeral Home Gatherings. The Grave Site Criteria Is Amply Addressed In The Opening Pages Of This Handbook. The Funeral Home Gathering Is Normally Rather Simple - The Brothers Gather; The Orator (Acting For The Worshipful Master) Gives A Few Instructions, And The Service Is Conducted.*

*The Church Service Needs Expanded Comments.*

*Remember That You Are A Guest At This Ceremony. Check With The Presiding Clerical Authority As To The Normal Or Desired Sequence Of The Program, Suggested Length Of Your Portion And Participation Of The Assembled Brethren.*

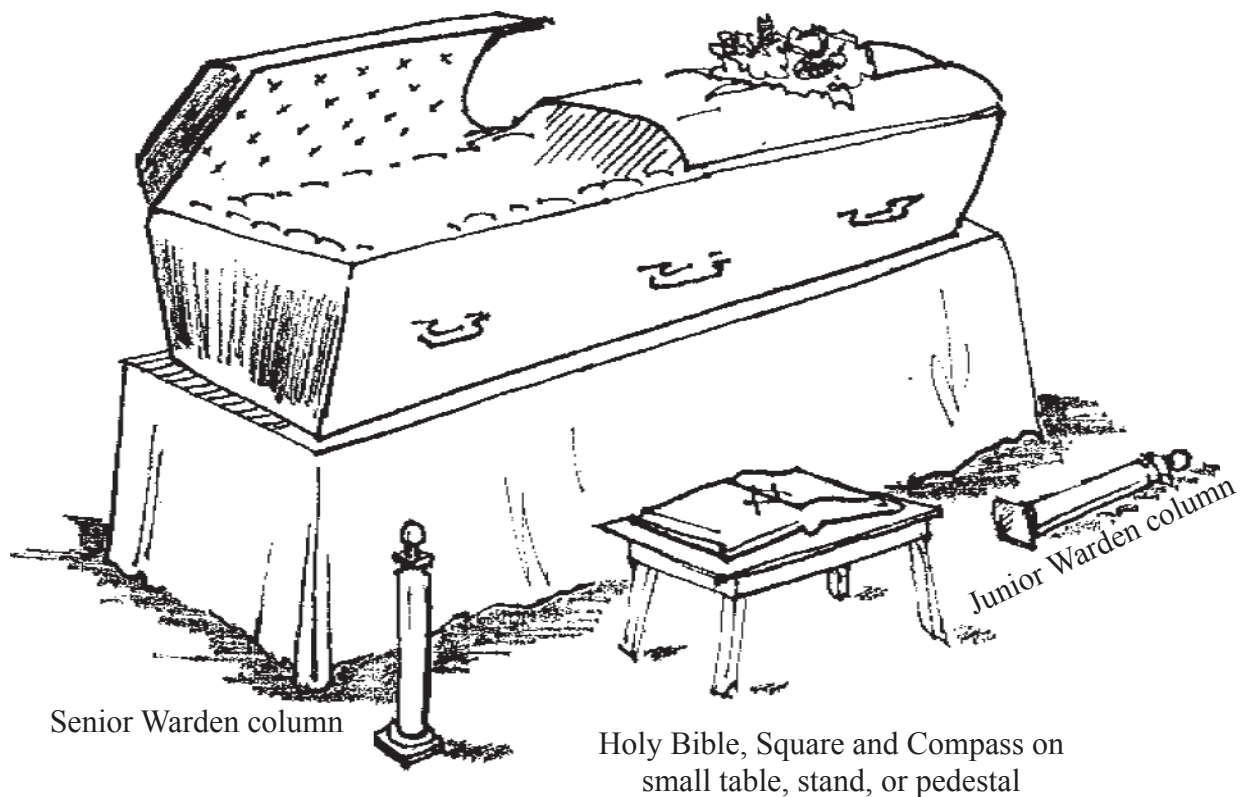
*You Will Normally Follow The Religious Service. Keep In Mind That It May Be Best To "Deposit The Evergreen" On Behalf Of The Brethren, I.e., You Alone Perform This Act. A Church Is Not Always The Best Setting To Demonstrate Our Masonic Procession.*

*Finally, Tailor Your Presentation, In Each Of The Three Situations, For Solace Of The Family. The Deceased Was Your Brother, But In Truth, You May Not Have Known Him Personally. The Family Did. Keep Them Ever Uppermost In Your Mind.*

## *Suggested Pre-service Preparation*

It is the practice of some lodges to display the Three Great Lights and the two columns at Masonic Memorial Services. While this practice is not required, certain guidelines should be followed if such displays are used.

The Holy Bible should be opened to Ecclesiastes 12:1, with the Square and Compass displayed in the Third Degree mode. Columns, when used, are displayed with the Senior Warden column erect at the head of the casket. The Junior Warden column



is retired (lying down) at the foot of the casket.

Placement of the Greenery: Consider placing the greenery on a small table rather than on the casket or on the floral arrangement which may adorn the casket. This saves the mortician unnecessary clean up.

## *Comments On Masonic Memorial Service*

When a Masonic husband, father, or brother dies a Masonic Funeral becomes an important part of the grieving process. It reminds the family members, as well as the Masonic brothers, of the important characteristic of the individual's life; his morals, ethics, and his commitment to God. Even though Freemasonry is not a religion, and has no plan of salvation, it offers eternal truths of friendship, morality, and brotherly love. As Masons, we believe God is in control of his world, and He has provided a life beyond the grave which is symbolized by the evergreen.

A proper Masonic service can bring comfort to the family. It will enhance and not take away from any religious funeral service. It is important to note however, that Masonic services should be done only at the family's request. Most of the time this is handled by the funeral director. It is their job to see to it that the family's wishes are carried out. Family members usually know how important the Masonic Lodge has been to their loved one.

**A word of caution!** Not all religious leaders, clergy, rabbis, and priests are receptive to having a Masonic Service, especially in their facility. Therefore, this matter must be handled very carefully. Perhaps it should not take place at all, if there is going to be a problem over this issue. It is better for us as Masons to be gracious, preventing any discord, rather than insisting that a Masonic service be held. It harms our Fraternity by offending anyone over this matter.

Most religious leaders do not mind having the Masonic Services the night before at the funeral home. I find this to be a special time when Masonic brothers can convey their sympathy to the family members. The Masonic Funeral can be a very meaningful worship service during the visitation hour.

If this is not possible, I then prefer to have it at the cemetery after the committal service. Again, this adds another new dimension to the religious service. I have had Masonic services after the religious service in the funeral home as well as in the church. However, sometimes this may not sit well with the membership of that church. Here again, **a word of caution!** Be sure the communication lines between the Worshipful Master and the Religious Leader remain open.

It is proper and necessary for the Worshipful Master to contact the family regardless of whether or not a Masonic Service will take place. The brother will be missed by his lodge members, and the membership is grateful for his contribution to the Fraternity. Remember, the grieving family members need to receive as much comfort as possible during their loss. Whether or not the Fraternity cares about one of their members does make a difference. This act of kindness leaves a lasting impression of Freemasonry.

Peter J. Peterson, Worshipful Master, Grace Lodge No. 519  
Pastor of the Laurens United Methodist Church

## *Masonic Memorial Service*

*The services herein arranged for the Burial of the Dead, are adapted for all the purposes for which ceremonies of that character may be required. The arrangement is such that any portion of the service -- each part being complete -- may be used as occasion requires. In the main the funeral service is understood to be a committal service, and given at the grave. Occasionally, however, there are circumstances that make a grave site service difficult, if not impossible. To meet such a contingency, a service suitable for chapel is included.*

### **Who May Receive Masonic Burial**

Any Master Mason who is a member of an Iowa lodge is entitled to a Masonic burial. He is not deprived of this right because of his failure to pass the proficiency examination of the Third Degree nor to pay his current lodge dues.

At the discretion of the Master, Masonic services may be accorded a former member of the lodge who holds a demit, a brother who for non-payment of dues has been dropped from the roll during the past 12 months, or for a brother of another recognized jurisdiction, when requested to do so by his family and with the consent of his lodge. (If at all possible, a request to conduct a Masonic funeral service for a brother whose membership is in another jurisdiction should be routed through the Grand Secretary's Office.) None but Master Masons may receive Masonic burial nor may an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft be admitted to the procession.

### **Called Communication**

The communication of a lodge for funeral purposes should be recorded as "called." The lodge should be opened on the Third Degree and remain open until the service has been completed and the brethren have returned to the lodge room. The Secretary should see that an obituary record of the deceased brother is prepared on which should be inscribed his name, dates of birth, death, initiation, passing, and raising, and if affiliated, or affiliation; the fact that the funeral ceremonies were performed by the lodge, and any matter which may be deemed appropriate or of special interest. After the lodge is opened this record should be read by the Secretary and made a part of the records of the lodge.

The Marshal should see that the jewels and other paraphernalia are in readiness, that every brother is provided with apron, gloves, crepe, and evergreen, give the necessary instruction for forming the procession, and specify the line of march. He should also, if necessary, provide a "lambskin" for use in the ceremony.

Before the procession is formed, the Master will give full instruction as to the giving of the funeral honors, the circumambulation of the grave, the deposit of the evergreen, etc.

### **Conveyances**

The pallbearers should ride next in advance of the hearse; the Marshal should ride in the front carriage. If the brethren ride, they should alight within a suitable distance of the grave, reform the procession, and march to the grave where the services will take place.

### **Abbreviations of Ceremony**

Portions of the ceremony not essential may be omitted at the discretion of the Master. Essentials are: Prayer, deposit of apron, deposit of evergreen, funeral honors, and benediction or closing prayer. (The benediction or closing prayer may be given by a minister.)

### Proceedings in the Lodge Room

The lodge will be opened on the Third Degree. The Master will then announce the object of the meeting. The obituary record may be read and any brother may make remarks upon the life and character of the deceased.

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** We will now proceed to \_\_\_\_\_ where the service will be conducted.

The Master then orders the Marshal to form the procession which, under his direction, proceeds to the place designated.

### ORDER OF PROCESSION

TYLER	MARSHAL
JUNIOR STEWARD	SENIOR STEWARD
MASTER MASONS	MASTER MASONS
PAST MASTERS	PAST MASTERS
JUNIOR DEACON	SENIOR DEACON
SECRETARY	TREASURER
JUNIOR WARDEN	SENIOR WARDEN

### GREAT LIGHTS

Carried by Aged Member

### WORSHIPFUL MASTER

If a Chaplain is used, he should walk on the left hand of the Master. If the Master appoints another brother to conduct the service, the officiating brother should carry the gavel, and the Master may march on his left, in which case the Chaplain, if used, should walk behind the one who carried the Great Lights.

When the head of the procession arrives near the entrance to the funeral home or church, it should halt, and open to the right and left, forming two parallel lines, about six or eight feet apart, facing inward. The Marshal then passes down through the lines and escorts the Master up through them into the building, the brethren closing in and following, thus reversing the order of the procession.

**NOTE:** *No Smoking Allowed At Masonic Funerals.* There should be no smoking during any part of the ceremony, including the procession. The Marshal should see that this rule is strictly enforced.

*More specific instructions of the procession and the formation at the grave site is found on pages 152-160 of the Iowa Companion to the Monitor with a diagram of the formation at the site on page 184.*

## Funeral Grand Honors

Both arms are crossed on the breast, the left uppermost, and the palms of the hands sharply striking the shoulders. The hands are then raised above the head, palms to the front, and then let fall upon the thighs.

### Funeral Honors

**MARSHAL:** Brethren, prepare to give the funeral honors.

#### Method I

Each brother will uncover and step forward, depositing his hat on the ground at his feet. The brethren will then extend their hands toward the grave, palms uppermost, when the Master says: **“We consign his body to the earth.”** Next cross the arms on the breast, the left uppermost, and the Master says: **“We cherish his memory here.”** The brethren then raise their hands above their heads palms inward, looking upward, and the Master says: **“We commend his spirit to God, who gave it.”** He then drops the hand to the side.

#### Method II

If desired, the funeral honors may be given in connection with the deposit of the evergreen in the following manner: The Master extends the right hand over the grave, dropping the evergreen in the grave and says: **“To the grave we consign the remains of our departed brother.”** He then places the hand upon the left breast and says: **“His memory is faithfully cherished within our hearts.”** He then raises the hand and pointing it to the zenith says: **“We commend his spirit to God, who gave it.”** He then drops the hand to the side.

The brethren move around the grave in single file, leaving the grave on the right. Each brother removes the sprig of evergreen with his right hand, and as he passes the head of the grave, drops the evergreen into the grave, making the same movements as the Master, but without repeating the words.

If the surface of the ground is uneven so that the brethren cannot march about the grave, the Craft with the Worshipful Master can group themselves about the grave, and all deposit evergreens with the funeral honors.

## RITUALISTIC BURIAL SERVICE

### Suggested Order of Service

- A. Introductory statement.
- B. Prayer.
- C. Dissertation or Masonic comment including sketch of the life of the deceased, if desired.
- D. Deposit the apron.
- E. Deposit the evergreen and funeral honors. Note: When the body is buried in a grave, the Master should say: “We consign his body to the grave.” When the body is placed in a mausoleum, he will say: “We consign his body to the tomb.” And when cremated, he will say: “We consign his ashes to the grave (or tomb).”
- F. Words of comfort.
- G. Benediction.



### *General Directions:*

1. The Master of the lodge, having received notice of the death of a Brother, should call on the family at once, extending the sympathy of the brethren and the comforting assurances of our faith.

2. If there is a request for a burial with Masonic ceremonies, the Master will make all suitable arrangements therefore. At the appointed hour, the Lodge will open on the Third Degree, hear instructions, and proceed under the Marshal's directions, without calling off. The Lodge may accompany the remains to the place of interment regardless of jurisdictional boundary.

3. The Master may take the Charter of his lodge to another place and open a funeral lodge there for the purpose of a Masonic burial.

4. The ceremonies which are observed at funerals are performed as a Masonic duty and as token of respect and fraternal affection to the memory of the departed brother. In order that such ceremonies may be conducted in a decorous and impressive manner and with due regard both to the dignity of the Craft and to the feelings of the relatives and friends of the departed, it is of the greatest importance that the instructions for the conduct of the Masonic funeral service be carefully studied by the Master and other officers of the lodge.

5. The proper dress to be worn at a Masonic funeral is black or dark clothing, black hat, white gloves, a plain white apron, black crepe upon the left arm above the elbow, and a sprig of evergreen on the left breast. The Master's gavel, the Wardens' columns, the Deacons' and the Stewards' rods, the Tyler's sword, and the Marshal's baton should be suitably trimmed with black crepe. The officers of the lodge should wear their respective jewels. Grand Officers and Past Officers of Grand or subordinate lodges may also wear their official jewels and aprons.

6. The Holy Bible should be opened at the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes. The three Great Lights should be covered with black crepe, and placed on a board or cushion covered with black material, properly arranged for carrying. It will be a help to the brother carrying the Great Lights if lodges will procure an extra square and compass of good size and fasten them over the Holy Bible to the board covered with black cloth. The Great Lights should be borne in a funeral procession by the oldest member of the lodge.

7. The pallbearers (usually six in number) may or may not be Master Masons, as the family of the deceased may desire. The Master should consult the family of the deceased brother and ascertain what their desires are as to who should act. If there are honorary bearers, they should occupy the pews directly in front of the active bearers. If conveyances are provided for the pallbearers, their position should be immediately in front of the funeral car. It is always a mark of respect to remove the hat when serving in the capacity of a bearer, but it is not expected, nor should it be permitted, in cold or inclement weather.

8. Musicians, if belonging to the Fraternity, will walk in the procession immediately after the Tyler; if they are not Masons, they will precede him.

9. The Masonic service should be conducted exclusively by the lodge as if none but Masons were in attendance. If any other be given, it must be before the Masonic service.

10. Whenever other organizations constitute a part of a funeral procession, or otherwise unite with the assembly, the lodge performing the ceremony must have entire charge.

11. GRAND OFFICERS. If the deceased was a Grand or Past Grand Officer, officers of the Grand Lodge should be invited to attend the funeral. In case of the presence of the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, or Grand Wardens, the Master of the lodge in charge of the ceremony will invite the one highest in rank to conduct the service. If any of the four officers named join the procession, his or their places will be next before the Master of the officiating lodge in order of rank. If the Grand Master is present, the Book of Constitutions should be carried before him. If he conducts the service, he should be supported by the Deacons.

12. If the deceased brother was a Knight Templar, please refer to page 132 of the Iowa Book of Ceremonials.

### *At The Grave.*

Friends and Brethren:

From time immemorial, it has been the custom among the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, on request, to accompany a Brother's remains to the place of interment, there to deposit them with the usual formalities.

In conformity to this usage, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer a tribute of affection to the memory of our Brother; thereby demonstrating the sincerity of our esteem for him and our steady attachment to the principles of our Order.

The lambskin, or white apron, is an emblem of innocence, and the badge of a Mason, and is a mark of distinction when worthily worn. This emblem I now deposit in the grave of our deceased Brother (deposits apron). By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of death. The arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent his coming; the wealth of the world cannot purchase our release; nor will the innocence of youth, or the charms of beauty propitiate his purpose. This scene reminds us of our mortality, and that, sooner or later, these frail bodies must return to their parent dust.

The evergreen, which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this we are reminded that we have an immortal part within us, that shall survive the grave, and which shall never, never die. By it we are admonished in the habiliments of death, and deposited in the silent tomb, yet, through our belief in the mercy of God, we may confidently hope that our souls will bloom in eternal spring. This, too, I deposit in the grave. "Alas, my brother!"

*The brethren then drop the sprig of evergreen into the grave, with the same exclamation -- may be omitted if crowd is large or situation at grave makes desirable -- after which the Funeral Grand Honors are given.*

The great Creator having been pleased, out of His infinite mercy, to remove our Brother from the cares and troubles of this transitory existence to a state of endless duration thus severing another link from the fraternal chain that binds us together, may we who survive him be more strongly cemented in the ties of union and friendship; that, during the short space allotted us here, we may wisely and usefully employ our time and, in the reciprocal intercourse of kind and friendly acts, mutually promote the welfare and happiness of each other. Unto the grave we consign the body of our deceased Brother; earth to earth (*earth or flower petals sprinkled on the coffin*), ashes to ashes (*more earth or petals*); there to remain till the trumpet shall sound on the resurrection morn. We can cheerfully leave him in the hands of a Being who doeth all things well.

*Prayer:*

Most glorious God, author of all good and giver of all mercy, pour down Thy blessings upon us and strengthen our solemn engagements with the ties of sincere affection. May the present instance of mortality remind us of our own approaching fate and, by drawing our attention toward Thee the only refuge in time of need, induce us to regulate our conduct here, that when the final moment shall arrive at which we must quit this transitory scene, the enlivening prospect of Thy mercy may dispel the fear of death; and that after our departure hence, in peace and Thy favor, we may be received into Thine everlasting kingdom and there join in union with our friend and enjoy that uninterrupted and unceasing felicity which is allotted to the souls of just men made perfect. *Amen.*

*Response:* So mote it be.

*(Prayer and benediction by Master in charge of the church service may be used instead of ritualistic prayer and responses, or the Master may conclude the prayer with a benediction.)*

*The singing or recitation of the Funeral Ode shall be omitted in all cases.*

*Memorial Service At The Grave (Optional)*

Friends and Brethren:

From time immemorial it has been the custom among the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, on request, to accompany a Brother's remains to the place of interment, there to deposit them with the usual formalities.

Again we are called to assemble among the habitations of the dead, to behold the "narrow house appointed for all living." Here, around us, in that peace which the world cannot give or take away, sleep the unnumbered dead. The gentle breeze fans their verdant covering, they heed it not; the sunshine and the storm pass over them, and they are not disturbed; stones and lettered monuments symbolize the affection of our surviving friends, yet no sound proceeds from them, save that silent but thrilling admonition: "Seek ye the narrow path and the straight gate that lead unto eternal life."

The lambskin, or white apron, is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, and is a mark of distinction when worthily worn. This emblem I now deposit in the grave of our deceased Brother (*deposits apron*). By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of death. The arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent His coming; the wealth of the world cannot purchase our release; nor will the innocence of youth or the charms of beauty propitiate His purpose. This scene reminds us of our mortality and that, sooner or later, these frail bodies must return to their parent dust.

The evergreen, which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this we are reminded that we have an immortal part within us that should survive the grave and which shall never, never die. By it we are admonished that, though like our Brother whose remains lie before us, we shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death and deposited in the silent tomb; yet, through our belief in the mercy of God, we may confidently hope that our souls will bloom in eternal spring. This, too, I deposit in the grave. "Alas, my Brother!"

*(The brethren then drop the sprig of evergreen into the grave, with the same exclamation -- may be omitted if situation at grave makes desirable, or may be deposited only by Master, or by Master and officers -- after which the Funeral Grand Honors are given.)*

The great Creator having been pleased, out of His infinite mercy, to remove our Brother from the cares and troubles of this transitory existence to a state of endless duration, thus severing another link from the fraternal chain that binds us together; may we, who survive him, be more strongly cemented in the ties of union and friendship; that, during the short space allotted us here, we may wisely and usefully employ our time; and in the reciprocal intercourse of kind and friendly acts, mutually promote the welfare and happiness of each other. Unto the grave we consign the body of our deceased Brother; earth to earth (*earth or flower petals sprinkled on the coffin*), ashes to ashes (*more earth or petals*), dust to dust (*more earth or petals*); there to remain till the trumpet shall sound on the resurrection morn. We can cheerfully leave him in the hands of a Being who doeth all things well.

Prayer:

Most glorious God, author of all good and giver of all mercy, pour down Thy blessings upon us and strengthen our solemn engagements with the ties of sincere affection. May the present instance of mortality remind us of our own approaching fate, and by drawing our attention toward Thee, the only refuge in time of need, induce us so to regulate our conduct here, that when the final moment shall arrive at which we must quit this transitory scene, the enlivening prospect of Thy mercy may dispel the fear of death; and that after our departure hence, in peace and Thy favor, we may be received into Thine everlasting kingdom, and there join in union with our friend and enjoy that uninterrupted and unceasing felicity which is allotted to the souls of just men made perfect. *Amen.*

*Response:* So mote it be.

*(Prayer and benediction by Minister in charge of the church service may be used instead of ritualistic prayer and responses, or the Master may conclude the prayer with a benediction.)  
The singing or recitation of the Funeral Ode should be omitted in all cases.*

### *Memorial Service At The Grave (Optional)*

Friends and Brethren:

From time immemorial it has been the custom among the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, on request, to accompany a Brother's remains to the place of interment, there to deposit them with the usual formalities.

Our present meeting and proceedings will have been in vain and useless if they fail to excite our serious reflections and strengthen our resolutions of amendment.

While we drop the sympathetic tear over the grave of our deceased Brother, let us resolve to maintain with sincerity the dignified character of our profession. May our faith be evinced in a correct moral walk and deportment; may our hope be bright as the glorious mysteries that will be revealed hereafter; and our charity boundless as the wants of our fellow-creatures.

The lambskin, or white apron, is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason and is a mark of distinction when worthily worn. This emblem I now deposit in the grave of our deceased

Brother (*deposits apron*). By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of death. The arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent His coming; the wealth of the world cannot purchase our release; nor will the innocence of youth, or the charms of beauty propitiate His purpose. This scene reminds us of our mortality, and that, sooner or later, these frail bodies must return to their parent dust.

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*Response:* So mote it be.

*(Prayer and benediction by Minister in charge of the church service may be used instead of ritualistic prayer and responses, or the Master may conclude the prayer with a benediction.)*

*The singing or recitation of the Funeral Ode should be omitted in all cases.*

## *Chapel Or Non-graveside*

*There are times when the traditional committal or graveside ceremony cannot be used. The following are options to be used for such an occasion.*

### *Non-graveside Option A*

*The following may be used in a chapel when the family desires a Memorial Service of a Masonic character and where a traditional graveside or committal cannot be utilized. Its form and wording may be changed to accommodate the situation (such as where no casket is present). This is a brief service and must not be construed to substitute or take the place of a religious burial service. Freemasonry is not to be understood as substituting for ceremonies or order of any Organized Religion.*

*W.M.* Friends and Brethren:

The body of our beloved Brother \_\_\_\_\_, lies before us, overtaken by that fate which sooner or later must come to all of God's children. No worth or virtue, no wealth or honor, no tears of friends or family can avert or delay it. With it comes the impressive lesson, often repeated but soon forgotten, that every one of us must ere long pass through the portal and experience that higher life toward which we are advancing.

Truly it is an act of grace and wondrous mercy that we are permitted to speak to the Eternal God; to make our pleas to Him as to a father; to ask of Him remedy and ease, support and counsel, health and safety, deliverance and salvation.

Since this sorrow has fallen upon us, let us ask Him for power and assistance to do our duty and His favor for those who feel most deeply our loss.

*Chaplain.* Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we bow in submission to Thy Will and pray for strength to properly value the events of our existence, to number our days, and apply our hearts unto wisdom. May this dispensation of Thy Providence remind us of the universal law of life and Thine own eternal purposes. Make us constant in our trust that the Comforter may come. May we believe that death has no power over a faithful and righteous soul, but that, when the dust returneth to the dust as it was, the spirit goeth unto Thee.

As we sorrow for the departure of this Brother from the circle of our Fraternity, may we trust that he has entered into a higher brotherhood; that he is engaging in nobler duties and finding rest from earthly toil. As we who remain look upon things unseen and eternal, may we consecrate our lives to all good purposes and worthy endeavors. Let Thy peace abide within us to keep us from all evil. May Thy love support us and Thy wisdom guide us through our earthly pilgrimage to our heavenly home. And to Thy name shall be all glory forever. *Amen.*

*Response:* So mote it be.

*(Music if available and desired.)*

*W.M.* We have taken a solemn and impressive survey of human life in all its blended lights and

shades, and learned that all on earth is changed. But is this the end of man and the expiring hope of faithful Masons? It is not. From the emblem of mortality we turn to the great lesson of immortality, which is inculcated in the teachings of our Order and which strengthens within us as we come to the grave. This body, sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory. We pause not at our first or second step, but, true to our principles, we look forward for greater light. As the embers of mortal life are feebly glimmering in the socket of existence, our religion removes the dark shroud, draws aside the sable curtains and bids hope and joy to rouse up, sustain and cheer the departing spirit. It points beyond the silent tomb to the breaking light of a resurrection morn and bids us turn an eye of faith and confidence on the opening scenes of eternity. It teaches us to advance boldly onward and ask more light, till, at the Supreme Grand Master's Word, we shall be raised to the blissful Lodge above. There, light, unmingled with darkness, shall reign, unbroken and perpetual. There, under the sunbeam smiles of immutable Love, we, as faithful Masons, cherish the fond and immortal hope that we shall meet again -- meet to part no more.

*(Music, if arranged.)*

Benediction:

The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

And unto Him, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Response:* So mote it be.

### *Non-graveside Option B*

*In some areas of our Grand Jurisdiction the traditional Masonic Graveside Services have been adapted for use at the chapel the evening preceding the Funeral Services and Burial. This, in those areas, has proven very satisfactory. It leaves the Office of Burial to the Organized Religion and eliminates any conflict over the conduct of the service. It also allows a larger number of brothers to attend the service. This service may also be used when, due to inclement weather or other circumstances, a graveside service is not feasible. Any of the Graveside Rituals may be adapted for this use. The following is one such adaptation.*

Friends and Brethren:

The body of our beloved Brother \_\_\_\_\_, was overtaken by that fate which must sooner or later come to all of God's children. No worth or virtue, no wealth or honor, no tears of friends or family can avert or delay it. With it comes that impressive lesson often repeated but soon forgotten "that every one of us must ere long pass through the portals and experience that higher life toward which we are advancing."

At the request of our beloved brother, whose memory we revere and whose loss we now deplore, we are assembled in the character of Masons to offer up before the world the last tribute of our affection thereby demonstrating our past esteem for him. Thy Great Creator having been pleased in

His infinite wisdom to remove our brother from the cares and troubles of this transitory existence to a state of endless duration, thus severing another link from the fraternal chain that binds us together; may we who survive him be more firmly cemented in the ties of union and brotherhood that we may mutually promote each other's welfare and happiness.

The lambskin or white leather Apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter when worthily worn. (*In fulfillment of a promise made to our brother at the time of his Initiation, I now deposit this emblem upon his casket.*) By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of death. The hand of Friendship cannot interpose to prevent its coming, the wealth of the world cannot purchase our release, nor can the innocence of youth or charms of beauty propitiate its purpose.

This evergreen which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of the imperishable part of man which survives the grave and which can never, never, never die. (*This too I deposit on the casket. Farewell, my brother.*)

To those of his immediate relatives and friends who are most heart-stricken by the loss we have sustained, we have but little of this world's consolation to offer. We can only deeply, sincerely, and most affectionately sympathize with you in your afflictive bereavement. But we can say "He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, looks down with infinite compassion on the bereaved ones" and the Grand Architect of the Universe will fold his arms of love and protection around them who put their trust in Him.

Truly it is an act of grace and wondrous mercy that we are permitted to speak to the Eternal God; to make our pleas to Him as to a father; to ask of Him remedy and ease, support and council, health and safety, deliverance and salvation.

Since this sorrow has fallen upon us, let us ask Him for power and assistance to do our duty and His favor for those who feel most deeply our loss.

Let us pray:

Almighty and Everlasting Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness and mercy, extend to us the riches of Thy everlasting grace. Thou alone art a refuge and help in trouble and affliction. We look to Thee in this bereavement for support and consolation. May we believe that death hath no power over a faithful and righteous soul. May we believe that though the dust shall return unto the earth as it was, the spirit goeth unto thyself. As we mourn the departure of a brother beloved from the circle of our fraternity, may we trust that he has entered a high brotherhood, there to engage in nobler duties and in Heavenly work, to receive rest from earthly labors and refreshment from earthly care. Make us grateful for present benefits and crown us with everlasting life and to Thy name shall be the glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.



## *Masonic Memorial Service*

By Wendell Leonard

For more than three centuries it has been a custom of Masons to conduct funeral services for a brother taken by death. Our Brother \_\_\_\_\_ has crossed from the world we know to that new and wonderful existence beyond. Brother \_\_\_\_\_ was advanced to the last and highest grade of ancient craft Masonry in \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_. He worked his way through the various offices and served as Master in \_\_\_\_\_. He was always eager to help with the Ritual and very much enjoyed the fellowship and activities of lodge.

Shall we pray:

O Almighty and Eternal God, there is no number of Thy days or of Thy mercies. Thou has sent us into this world to serve Thee, but we wander far from Thee in the path of error. Our life is but a span in length and yet tedious, because of the calamities that enclose us on every side. The days of our pilgrimage are few and evil, our bodies frail, our passions violent and distempered, our understandings weak, and our wills perverse. Look Thou upon us, our Father, in mercy and pity. We adore Thy majesty and trust like little children to Thine infinite mercies. Give us patience to live well and firmness to resist evil. Give us, O merciful Father, faith and confidence in Thee, and enable us so to live that when we come to die, we may lie down in the grave as one who composes himself to sleep, and that we may be worthy hereafter to be remembered by future generations. Bless us, O God. Bless our beloved fraternity throughout the world. May we live and emulate the example of our beloved brother. Finally, may we in this world attain a knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting. *Amen.*

To the relatives and friends of our departed brother, let us say that we deeply, sincerely sympathize with you in this hour of sorrow. Until we can see more clearly than with the eye of faith, until we better understand the great simplicity that is the mystery of life, until we more fully realize a close companionship with departed loved ones, we will know heartache and sorrow, a tear of affection and regret. But through the ages, a faith in immortality has sent a steady light of hope, shedding its gentle radiance over man, awakening him to broader views and clearer visions, grounding a sturdy faith, an eternal hope, a perfect confidence that make the vicissitudes of life but stepping stones to higher things. It banishes the shadows of grief and we look forward to a reunion that is everlasting.

This body which lies before us was once animated by the divine spark of life. We bear it tenderly and reverently to its resting place because it has been hallowed by the presence of the immortal spirit which dwelt in it. Peacefully may it rest in the hallowed ground where we now place it. Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust.

As the beautiful butterfly bursts forth from its cocoon to soar aloft in the sunshine, so our brother's spirit has cast off this earthly tenement. The working tools of earth have fallen from his grasp. His work on earth is done. His Temple is completed and he has gone to receive his wages from the Master Builder.

We consign our brother's body to the earth. We cherish his memory in our hearts. We commend his spirit unto God who gave it.

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter or any other Order. Its pure and spotless surface is to us an ever-present reminder of purity of life and rectitude of conduct, a never ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. The apron is also a symbol of service and, therefore, a fitting emblem to be worn by one who has served faithfully and well.

This evergreen which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead is a symbol of our belief in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave, which can never, never die. So we place this tribute upon this casket, among these flowers, and say neither good-night nor good-bye, but good-morrow brother, leaving him in God's quiet, go forth into the world again, taking up our march in the generation of the present, press forward to make way for the generations that are to come.

Let us pray:

O Almighty and most Merciful God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and before whom all men must appear to render an account for the deeds done in the body, we do most earnestly beseech Thee as we now surround the grave of our fallen brother, to impress deeply upon our minds the solemnities of this day. May we ever remember that in the midst of life we are in death, and so live and act our several parts as we will desire to have done when the hour of our departure is at hand. And, O Gracious Father, vouchsafe us we pray Thee Thy Divine assistance to redeem our misspent time, and in the discharge of the duties which Thou has assigned us in the erection of our moral edifice may we have wisdom from on high to direct us, strength commensurate with our tasks to support us, and the beauty of holiness to adorn and render our performances acceptable in Thy sight. And when at last our work on earth is done, when the mallet of death shall call us from our labors, may we obtain a blessing and everlasting rest in that spiritual house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And now may the blessing of heaven rest upon us all. May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us. *Amen.*

### *Masonic Memorial Service*

Mizpah Lodge No. 639 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Approximately 12 Minutes

By C. M. Manley

Opening Prayer:

Great Architect of the Universe, our Heavenly Father: We humbly ask Thy blessing on this assembly and Thy Divine guidance in the duties before us. May this service pay loving and adequate tribute to the memory of our Brother, be a comfort to his family and friends, and with the deepest reverence to Thee. *Amen.*

Response: (So mote it be).

As Masons we are gathered here with family and friends in the presence of Almighty God to pay tribute to the memory of a departed Brother of our fraternity. These last acts of respect and love we pay at this time are useless ceremonies, except as they may be lessons to you, the living. This service is a memorial service...a testimony to a good life. It is a ceremony not of bitter grief, but of Faith, not of despair, but of Hope.

For us today to view present-day Masonry in its true perspective, we need to go back centuries into antiquity when our ancient Brethren and forbearers labored in both operative and speculative Masonry. As operative Masons they were designers and builders of centuries-old, world-renowned structures recognized for their architectural beauty and grandeur. As speculative Masons they practiced the scientific application and the religious consecration of the rules and principles, the language, the implements and materials of operative Masons to the veneration of God, the purification of the heart, and the inculcations of the dogmas of a religious philosophy.

Today, as members of the Masonic fraternity, we labor only in speculative Masonry. To deny that our services are religious in nature would be a gross error, because they bear strong religious overtones. We put our trust in the highest power...in God. At all times we seek His Divine blessing and pray for His guidance in every worthwhile undertaking. We firmly and steadfastly believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

We believe each of us has a task to perform...a job to do. We are builders all. We, each of you and I, as individuals are obligated to build a Temple...a spiritual Temple worthy of our God-given soul. Masonry endeavors to teach us how to build that Temple as designed by the Grand Architect of the Universe, with the plans and designs and rules indelibly inscribed on our moral and spiritual trestle board -- the Holy Bible.

Masonry further endeavors to teach us that we NOW perform this task assigned to each of us. That we direct all our energies and efforts to the building of our spiritual Temple so that it will rise stately, magnificent, inspiring...a joy to the beholder, a serene satisfaction to self, and acceptable in the sight of Almighty God.

Our hearts are saddened and our vision dimmed by this great mystery of death, the most profound mystery of all human experience...that change which sooner or later must come to each of us. When the time comes we know not. All expect it, and none escape it. By it we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life, and a sense of utter grief weighs heavily on those nearest and dearest.

Our fraternity emphasizes that we should so daily live that we can welcome the grim tyrant of death, and receive him, as a kind messenger sent to translate us from the imperfect, to that all perfect, celestial world where the Grand Architect of the World presides.

When life's day has ended and a loved one has gone to rest, we are somehow lifted above the plane of everyday life and our souls are permitted to catch faint gleams of the spiritual world. It is then that we are comforted by His words, and are again reassured that we have a future home in the Grand Lodge Above, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

For untold ages it has been the usual practice for Masons to hold a memorial ceremony at the burial rites for a Brother. As such, this service is held to fulfill the living wish of our Brother and at the request of his family.

*Here write results of an interview with the family and facts from the secretary's records: Fifty-Year member, or more; service and devotion to the lodge; Past Master or other offices. Outside the lodge activities and accomplishments, hobbies and special interests; anecdotes.*

*Be factual...make no statement that can become controversial. If in public office, simply state served ?? years as ??...make no comment as to good, bad, indifferent. Shy away from published*

*obituaries as much as possible as clergyman will cover that quite well.*

*In using anecdote, if amusing it should be only mildly so, but rather use to make a point as to loyalty to friends, lodge, duty.*

*This portion of the service should be used mainly to express how Brother Masons felt toward the deceased...to soften the family's pain.*

Today, we of the Masonic Fraternity, still revere the implements of operative Masonry, and regard them as emblems in our speculative science. As such, we have placed together different values on these implements than did our ancient Brethren. We view the compass as encircling the virtues of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly before God and man. The Square measures our thoughts, words, and actions as to honesty and sincerity. The Level reminds us we are traveling on the level of time to that undiscovered country from whence no traveler returns.

Among other emblems we make use of to enhance the teachings of our institution are the white lambskin apron and a sprig of Acacia. In all ages the lamb has been recognized as an emblem of innocence. So it is only natural that the white lambskin Apron is the Masonic emblem of purity and innocence. This was the Fraternity's first tangible gift to our Brother. It is recognized as more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle. It is considered more honorable than a gift that could have been bestowed upon him by a king, prince, or potentate. It is the badge of a Mason, and he was directed to wear it with honor...ever remembering to keep it free of worldly stains, by following the rules as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Also, it is a symbol of service...and we believe he serves God who serves his fellowmen.

It is a fitting tribute to place this white lambskin Apron on the casket of a Brother who has served (long), faithfully and well.

Of no less importance as an emblem of our Fraternity is this sprig of Acacia, or evergreen. This sprig of evergreen is emblematical of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By its color, the green of Hope, we express our belief in the reunion beyond the grave. By its leaves that flourish and die and return again, we signify our trust in the resurrection and the triumph over death, our belief is that the soul of each of us is imperishable, immortal, eternal.

This, too, we reverently deposit on the casket with the lambskin Apron.

Our Brother's mortal remains we consign to the grave. His memory we shall cherish in our hearts. His soul we commend to Almighty God who gave it.

Let us bow our heads in reverence for the final prayer and benediction.

Merciful and Eternal God: We thank Thee for the peace and serenity that comes to us in times of grief when we stop and realize that Thou art ever in our presence. We pray Thee, Our Father, to teach us day by day that we are but pilgrims and strangers upon this earth, that here we have no continuing city. As the ties of family are broken one by one and kindred and friends pass from our sight, give us the grace to place our affections more and more upon the things that are spiritual and enduring now and forever more. *Amen.*

Response: (So Mote it Be.)

The Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us; the Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and forever more. *Amen.*

Response: (So mote it be.)

*For a longer service...a Masonic service only...the following can be used. With a proper explanation and credit, it can be inserted in the service just before the closing prayer and benediction. The following is from the pen of a Masonic writer:*

It is enough for us to know what Masonry teaches, that we are not all mortal; that the Soul or Spirit, the intellectual and reasoning portion of ourselves, is our Very Self, is not subject to decay and dissolution, but is simple and immaterial, survives the death of the body, and is capable of immortality; that it is also capable of improvement and advancement, of increase of knowledge of the things that are Divine, of becoming wiser and better, and more and more worthy of immortality, and that to become so, and to help to improve and benefit others and all our race is the noblest ambition and highest glory that can be entertained and attained unto, in this momentary and imperfect life.

Ever the evening shadows fall; ever there comes a time, to whomsoever is a man, when even the wisest knows not where he is; ever and ever the twilight...and after that the dark, when all the lights of philosophy go out, and only faith and hope and love remain. There is nothing for it but to walk calmly down the western slope, the sun shining in our faces, into the evening shadows...trusting the Supreme Grand Master over all.

But knowing that we shall live forever, and that the Infinite God loves all of us, we can look on all the evils of the world, and see that it is only the hour before sunrise, and that the light is coming; and so we also, even we, may light a little taper, to illuminate the darkness while it lasts, and help until the day-spring come. Eternal morning follows the night; a rainbow scarfs the shoulder of every cloud that weeps its rain away to be flowers on land and pearls at sea, life rises out of the grave, the Soul cannot be held by fettering flesh. No dawn is hopeless; and disaster is only the threshold of delight.

### *Masonic Memorial Service*

By Charles Jacobs

All things have their season, and in their times all things pass under heaven.

A time to be born -- and a time to die.

A time to weep -- and a time to laugh.

A time to get -- and a time to give.

A time to keep silent -- and a time to speak.

Nothing is better than for a man to rejoice in his work, and that shall be his portion.

We have assembled in the presence of a great mystery, the most profound mystery of all human achievements. That change, which sooner or later, must come to each of us. Yet we have the assurance of the Master that when we go upon that journey, we will be in the hands of a true and trusty friend, in whose fidelity we may with safety confide. Brother \_\_\_\_\_ was initiated an entered apprentice on \_\_\_\_\_, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft on \_\_\_\_\_, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on \_\_\_\_\_. He also belonged to (other bodies).

To those of you who are not members of our Fraternity, I wish to explain that from time im-

memorial, it has been the custom of the Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, at the request of a Brother or close relative, to perform the last rites over his remains. In conformity to that usage, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer our last tribute of affection for our departed Brother, thereby demonstrating our esteem for him and our steady attachments to the principles of the Fraternity. Freemasonry teaches consistently with the Sacred Records, that death is simply the separation of the soul from the body, the body returns to the dust from whence it came, and the soul, in another state of existence, survives eternally.

We, as Masons, put our trust in God, and we believe that He gives each one of us a task to do, and looks down upon us with infinite compassion. We call ourselves builders, for each one of us is trying to build his own spiritual temple of character, and that each one of us has a small part in building that larger temple, which is the summit of all human achievement. Therefore, it is of no great importance how or when we leave our earthly labors, but that we do the job that is given us to do in building that Great Temple, that House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Freemasons believe in the resurrection and a life hereafter. For Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die."

Masonry is a philosophy of life. A distinct system of moral instruction, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by signs and symbols. One of those symbols is the lambskin or white leather apron. It is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. Its whiteness reminds us of a purity of life and conduct. After taking his first obligation at the Altar of Freemasonry, our Brother was presented his apron and exhorted to wear it with equal pleasure to himself and honor the Fraternity, and at the time of his death it would be placed upon his coffin. In the third degree he was asked a question, "whence came you, and whither are you traveling?" There is only one true answer in Masonry, "from the west, and traveling to the East." Brother \_\_\_\_\_ has now arrived in his East. He has laid aside the working tools of life, and having wrought well, will surely hear from Him who sitteth as the judge supreme, these welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter Thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The evergreen is an emblem of our belief in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded that we have an immortal part within us that will never, never die. This too, I now place upon the coffin.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened; nor the clouds return after the rain. In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets; and when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern, then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.

These words from the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastics, present us a wonderful picture of human life, and of manhood's declining years. There is a note of triumph at the end, which is a solace at a time like this. For though our bodily ills are many and our grief is sometimes hard to bear, yet triumphant over all is the blessed assurance, that if we are faithful, the spirit shall return unto God,

who gave it.

An old man going a lone highway,  
Came at the evening cold and gray,  
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide.  
Which he must cross without chart or guide,  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned, when safe on the other side  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,  
“You are wasting your strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
You never again will pass this way.  
You have crossed the chasm deep and wide,  
Why build this bridge at evening tide.”

The builder lifted his old gray head,  
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,  
“There followed after me today  
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been as naught to me,  
To that fair haired youth, may a pitfall be.  
He too must cross in the twilight dim,  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.”

I think that poem is an illustration of our Brother's purpose in life. He has worked long and faithfully. He has built his bridge that others may pass, and now he has gone to receive his wages from the Master Builder.

To those of the immediate family and friends, who are most bereaved at the loss we have all sustained, we offer our heartfelt sympathy. We sincerely hope and pray that He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, will look down upon the bereaved with infinite compassion, and that the Great Architect of the Universe will fold His arms of love around those who put their trust in Him, enabling them to say, along with the Psalmist:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. *Amen.*

Benediction:

And now may the blessing of God, our heavenly Father rest upon us all. Comforting

and strengthening us in all our ways and guiding us along the paths of righteousness to everlasting life. *Amen.*

## *Masonic Memorial Service*

By Glenn G. Johnston

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

To those who are not members of the order, I wish to explain from time immemorial it has been the custom in the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, at the request of a Brother or close relative, to perform the last sad rites over his remains. In conformity to this usage, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer the last tribute of affection to our departed Brother, thereby, demonstrating the sincerity of our esteem for him and our steady attachments to the principles of the Fraternity.

Freemasonry, founded in the older dispensation and perpetuated in the newer, teaches consistently with the sacred records that death is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body; the body returns to the dust whence it came, and the soul in another state of existence, survives eternally.

Freemasons believe in the resurrection. We do not define it. Physical body or spiritual body it matters not. Personal identity capable of some form of recognition is a Masonic article of belief. The life of a Mason you can take; his integrity never; his integrity assures his risen identity.

Here Brethren, more it would seem than anywhere else in the world, the Great Teacher of humanity sits, and we sit at His feet, to hear His words and receive His message, as He teaches the children of men how truly to live, that they may never be afraid to die.

Such is preeminently the significance of this hour.

We get a clear picture of the Divine and reflect it when we put away from us all disturbing human desires and wait upon God, receptive in the divine presence, and taking heed how we hear. Noble thoughts, generous impulses; words of truth, acts of love, deeds of mercy; give to man his only genuine happiness, his lasting satisfaction.

To these precepts our Brother willingly and gladly subscribed. "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

"I am the resurrection of the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Brethren, we have met together to pay our tribute of respect and love to one who was near and dear to us by fraternal ties. He who now lies before us, wrapped in the unbroken slumber, was our Brother. Side by side have we traveled life's rugged pathway and mourned in the dark days of adversity. Our presence here is evidence that we loved him, and remember him in scenes which the world knows not of. While we deplore the loss of our beloved companion and pay this fraternal tribute to his memory, let us not forget that we too are mortal; that our bodies now so strong and vigorous must ere long, like his, become tenets of our mother earth, and that our spirits, too like his, must return to God who gave them existence. He has embarked upon his voyage to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns.

How often when the day is ended and the sun has gone to rest, we pause, to stand in awe, beholding the western sky transformed with a radiance that seems to shine out from the very gates



of Heaven, a wonderful picture painted by the hand of God, and we are lifted and exalted by the beauty and glory of nature.

133rd Psalm: Behold how good and etc....

Brethren let us pray:

Our Heavenly Father, we come to Thee in this bereavement, seeking that support and consolation which Thou alone canst give. By communion with Thee we would strengthen our faith that in passing from this earth we are but entering into that wonderful mystic land where clouds and showers are unknown. As we mourn the departure of a beloved Brother from the circle of our Fraternity, we believe that he has entered into a higher brotherhood, to engage in nobler duties and in heavenly work, to find rest from earthly labor and refreshment from earthly care. As we too shall come one by one, to the end of the day, may the twilight be illumined with a radiant glow shining out through the beautiful gates ajar; and may we fall asleep undismayed and unafraid with the sublime conviction that we shall be raised through the power of the Lion of the tribe of Judah and shall find a new, beautiful, and perfect home in that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. *Amen.*

We are called upon by the imperious mandate of the dreaded messenger, Death, against whose free entrance within the circle of our Fraternity the barred doors and Tyler's weapon offer no impediment, to mourn the loss of one of our companions. Death is a solemn thing, come when, and in what form it may. Solemn -- when the life cords are so slowly and gradually relaxed that the poor, weak sufferer passed from earth to Heaven as softly as the retreating echoes from slumbering harp strings. Solemn -- when in the twilight of the evening hour, at the midnight of low twelve, surrounded by those he loves, the departing one discourses of Heaven and Holy things. Solemn -- when away from home and loved ones, the wayworn traveler is compelled to lay down the burden of this wearisome life, without a ministering angel of mercy to bathe his fevered brow, or moisten his parched lips, or close his dying eyes.

The lifeless form of our beloved Brother \_\_\_\_\_ lies in its narrow house, overtaken by that fate which must sooner or later overtake us all; and which no power or station, no virtue or bravery, no wealth or honor, no tears of friends or agonies of relatives can avert; teaching an impressive lesson, continually repeated, yet soon forgotten, that everyone of us must ere long pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and dwell in the house of darkness.

Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble, He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; turn from him that he may rest till he shall accomplish his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and riseth not up till the Heavens shall be no more. Yet O Lord have compassion on the children of thy creation, administer them comfort in time of trouble and save them with an everlasting salvation.

Man goeth forth to his work and to his labor until the evening of the day. The work and the labor of our Brother are finished. As it hath pleased Almighty God to take the soul of our departed Brother, may he find mercy in the Great when all men shall be judged according to the deed done in the body. We must walk in the light, for the darkness of death may come upon us at a time when

we may not be prepared. Take heed, therefore, watch and pray; for ye know not when the Master cometh; at even, at midnight or in the morning. We should so regulate our lives by the line of rectitude and truth, that in the evening of our days we may be found worthy to be called from labor to refreshment, and duly prepared for a translation from the terrestrial to the celestial lodge, to join the fraternity of just men made perfect.

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter or any other order when worthily worn. Its pure and spotless surface is to us an ever present reminder of purity of life and conduct, a never ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. This emblem I now deposit on the narrow house of our deceased Brother \_\_\_\_\_. By it we are reminded of the universal dominion of death.

This evergreen which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this we are reminded that we have an immortal part within us, that shall survive the grave, and which shall never, never die. By it we are admonished that, though like our Brother whose remains lie before us, we shall soon be clothed in the habiliments of death and deposited in the silent tomb; yet through our belief in the mercy of God, we may confidently hope our souls will bloom in eternal spring. This too, I deposit on the narrow house of our beloved Brother \_\_\_\_\_.

Brethren, prepare to deposit the Evergreen. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say. I have no pleasure in them; while the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out the windows be darkened, and the doors be shut in the streets; when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.

These words from the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes present to us a wonderful picture at the end which is our solace at a time like this; for though our bodily ills are many and our grief is hard to bear, yet triumphant over all is this hope, this blessed assurance, that if we are faithful the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

We shall miss our Brother. He has been a good comrade. His hand was ever ready; his heart was ever true. Now he has led where we may not follow until we, too, shall receive the summons. He has boarded his ship and sailed away -- across the bar.

But our ships are surely coming for us, and we shall follow him across the waters one by one. It may be hours, or it may be a span of years -- What matters it? Measured by the gauge of eternity, the time is short until we shall all be gathered into the land where our fathers have gone before us.

To those, the immediate relatives and friends, who are most heart stricken at the loss we have all sustained, we have but little of this world's consolation to offer. We can only sincerely, deeply, and most affectionately sympathize with them in their afflictive bereavement. But we can say that He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, looks down with infinite compassion upon the widow

and fatherless, in the hours of their desolation; and that the Great Architect will fold the arms of his love and protection around those who put their trust in Him. Enabling them to say with the Psalmist -- 23rd Psalm --- The Lodge is My Shepherd, etc...

Or in place of 23rd Psalm:

Then let us improve this solemn warning that at last, when the sheeted dead are stirring, when the great white throne is set, we shall receive from the omniscient judge the thrilling invitation, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world."

As the beautiful butterfly bursts from its cocoon to soar aloft in the sunshine, so has our brother's spirit cast off this earthly tenement. The working tools of life have fallen from his grasp and his hand can no longer wield the Master's trowel. His work on earth is finished, his Temple is completed and he has been called by the Master Builder to receive his wages. Be not sad, but rather rejoice in the beauty and symmetry of his masterpiece.

With a firm faith in the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe we know that we shall meet again in the realms beyond the skies, so until then dear friend and Brother, until then, farewell.

Benediction:

"And now may the blessing of Heaven rest upon us all. May brotherly love prevail and every moral and social virtue cement us." *Amen.*

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

By F. Richard Zeis

"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who is thirsty I will give drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. I am the resurrection and the life; He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Thus are these words of assurance given us by St. John in the New Testament; these words remain our assurance yet even now.

We are gathered here in the presence of a great mystery -- the most profound mystery of all human life -- that change which, sooner or later, must come to each one of us. When the hour strikes and the summons comes, we embark upon the voyage to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns. Yet we have the assurance of the Master that when we go upon this voyage we are in the hands of a true and trusty friend in whose fidelity we might, with safety, confide.

Brethren, we are taught as Masons that in every contingency of life, we should first make application to the Great Author of our existence and source of all life and invoke His blessing. Let

us turn our attention to the chaplain as he leads us in prayer. Brother Chaplain, will you lead us in prayer.

*(Brethren standing)*

“Our Heavenly Father, we turn to Thee in the presence of this grief, a reminder of our own mortality, because Thou art the giver of all life and Thou only art able to uphold us when our earthly day fades into our last sleep. Comfort and support those who are in affliction and let Thy tenderness soothe the hearts that are here bereft.

As we mourn the loss of this beloved Brother, let us cherish his virtues and his sincere attainment to those finer principles of life. May we find in him those excellencies which will inspire us to higher thoughts and greater achievements as we continue in the march of human endeavor.

Guide and direct us throughout the remaining journey of life, and as we shall come, one by one, to the end of the way, let us wrap the drapery of our couch about us and lie down to pleasant dreams with the sublime conviction that we shall be raised through the power of the lion of the tribe of Judah and find a new, beautiful, and perfect home in that spiritual building, that House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.” *Amen.*

*Response:* So mote it be.

*(Brethren seated)*

My friends and brethren, death is a theme not lightly broached by those subject to its power; the young may die, the old must die, and the wisest knows not how soon.

From time immemorial it has been the custom among the Masonic Fraternity, at the request of the deceased brother or his family, to pay final tribute to the deceased when his work on earth is finished and the working tools of life have dropped forever from his hands.

In conformity to this custom, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer before the world the tribute of our esteem and love. Our presence here is evidence that we love him, and we remember him in scenes of which the world knows not. While we deplore the departure of our brother and pay this final fraternal tribute to his memory, let us not forget that we, too, are mortals; that our bodies now so strong and vigorous must, like his, become tenants of our mother earth, and that our spirits, too, like his, must return under God, who gave them existence. This we are taught in the Old Testament through the most beautiful and poetic allegorical expression of man’s aging process and inevitable death: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not. Nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them, while the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened nor the clouds return after the rain. In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble and the strong men shall bow themselves. And the grinders cease because they are few and those that look out of the windows be darkened and the doors shall be shut in the streets; when the sound of the grinding is low and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way. And the almond tree shall be a burden and desire shall fail. Because man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall

return unto God who gave it.” But right now the closeness of death magnifies our own appreciation of life.

As Masons we put our trust in a Higher Power, a Supreme Being whom we call God, and we believe that He gives us each a task to do and looks down upon us, his children. We call ourselves builders because each one of us is trying to build his own spiritual temple of character, and because we believe that each one of us may have some little part in the building of that larger temple which is the sum of all human achievement, that great structure rising slowly through the ages according to the plans drawn by the Great Architect of the Universe on his Trestleboard, a temple whose foundations were laid in the beginning of time, and which will last through eternity -- the great plan of the Supreme Builder of the Universe. Therefore it is not really of great importance how or when we leave this earthly field of labor, but it is of supreme importance that we do the job that is given us to do, that we use our talents, that we do our part in building the temple. In the Book of Holy Scriptures, which is our spiritual Trestleboard, we are taught that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Thus, we weep but briefly for our loved one as he enters into the Kingdom of God. For He shall possess a joy and peace that is unattainable on God’s earthly realm. Rather, we rejoice in his everlasting and total happiness, for his eyes have seen God.

Our late brother, Everett M. Dirksen, for many years a United States Senator from Illinois, wrote: “Centuries ago the man Job, so long blessed with every material blessing, only to find himself solely afflicted by all that can befall a human being, sat with his companions and uttered the timeless, ageless question, ‘If a man dies, shall he live again?’ In the Easter season when all Christendom observes the resurrection and seeks answers to many questions, there is the forefront question raised by Job, ‘If a man dies, shall he live again?’”

If there be a design in this universe and in this world in which we live, there must be a designer. We cannot behold the inexplicable mysteries of the universe without believing that there is a design for all mankind who is also a Designer.

Who would persuasively contend that this work of the Great Designer could only end in oblivion, in destruction without a trace? Who will contend that this -- the noblest work of the Great Design -- man, with dominion over all living things; man, with a brain and a will; with a mind and a soul; man, with intelligence and divinity, should come to an end when the spirit forsakes its earthly temple?

Except for the handiwork of the Great Designer, nothing in this world is created and nothing is destroyed.

The gaily colored leaves fall so gently to earth in the autumn season not to be destroyed but to be embraced by nature for future use. The falling leaves are a reminder that winter will soon be here to embrace the earth in wintry sleep. Comes the inevitable caress of spring, also from the hand of the Great Designer, to bring life and color, fragrance and beauty to the eager earth.

It is the resurrection of spring. It is an answer to the ageless question of Job, “If a man dies, shall he live again?” Surely he shall, as surely as day follows night, as surely as the stars follow their course, as surely as the crest of every wave brings its trough.

### *Masonic Summary*

This lambskin, or white leather apron, is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other order which earthly power can confer. We deposit it upon the casket as an emblem of innocence, its whiteness demonstrates our belief in that purity of soul which is the wondrous gift

of our Heavenly Father; as the badge of a worker it reminds us that our brother's earthly labors are finished. He has laid aside the working tools of life, and having wrought well and conscientiously, he will surely hear from Him who reviews each human life, no condemnation, no censure, no reproach, but those life-giving, soul-strengthening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord."

This apron was Masonry's first tangible gift to our brother, a visible emblem of purity. This apron is our symbolic gift to him, coming from the lamb, material, and doomed to decay as are all earthly things.

But today, he has exchanged this apron for the invisible spiritual apron, with which he has been invested by the Supreme Grand Master of the Universe. That gift from the omnipotent, comes from the lamb of God, Spiritual, undecaying, eternal.

This evergreen, which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny in the world beyond the shadows; that there dwells within this tabernacle of clay an imperishable spirit over which the grave has no dominion, and death no power. The evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave and which can never, never, never die.

The brethren will deposit the evergreen.

*(During this process, read:)* "I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of strength and beauty, and I stand and watch her until at length she stands like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky meet to mingle with each other. Then some one at my side says, 'There, she's gone.'

Gone? Gone where? Gone from my sight -- that is all. She is just as large in hull and mast and spar as when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination.

Her diminished size is in me, not in her; and just at the moment when someone at my side says 'There, she's gone,' there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, 'Here she comes!'"

*The brethren will assist in giving the funeral honors.*

"We consign our brother's body to the earth. \* We cherish his memory in our hearts. \*\* We commend his spirit unto God, who gave it." \*\*\* *(Seated)*

To the relatives and friends of our departed brother, let us say that we sincerely sympathize with you in this hour of sorrow. Until we can see more clearly than with the eye of faith, until we better understand the great simplicity that is the mystery of life, until we more fully realize the close companionship of departed loved ones, we shall know heartache and sorrow, the tear of affection and regret. But through all the ages, the belief in immortality has sent a steady light of hope, shedding its gentle radiance over man, waking him to broader views and clearer visions, grounding a sturdy faith, and eternal hope, a perfect confidence, that make the vicissitudes of life but stepping stones to higher things. It vanishes the shadows of grief, and we look forward to a reunion that is everlasting.

Let us pray. (Brethren standing.)

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build

up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to castaway; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silent, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their hearts, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for me than for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it nor any thing taken from it, and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.”

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace, both now and forever more.” Amen.

*Response:* So mote it be.

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

By David Nolte

“I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

My friends and Brethren:

We have come together in this place of quietness and peace to honor our dear departed Brother \_\_\_\_\_ . Brother \_\_\_\_\_ received the Masonic degrees in (give Masonic history).

We are gathered in the presence of a great mystery, that most profound mystery of all human experiences; that change which, sooner or later, must come to each and every one of us. Once more we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life, and once again a sense of great loss weighs heavily on those who are nearest and dearest.

Yet after all, we know that the cradle and the grave are but little separated, for the moment we begin to live, that moment we begin also to die; and this change which we call death is no greater mystery than birth, for life itself is a mystery which no scientist has been able to solve. A psychology professor is said to have brought his inattentive college class into shocked awareness by making the following statement, “I am sorry to inform you that I am slowly dying of an incurable disease.” When the startled class had recovered some of its composure, one student asked timidly and sympathetically, “Can you tell us what it is, Sir?” He replied, “Old age.”

Masonry promulgates its teachings through the use of allegories and symbols. One of those symbols is the hourglass, which we, as Masons, regard as a representation of human life. We watch as the sands drift slowly, almost imperceptibly, away and yet, surprisingly, in one short hour, they are all exhausted. So goes life. Today a man puts forth the tender leaves of hope; tomorrow he

blossoms and bears his blushing honors thick upon him; the next day there comes a frost which nips the shoot, and while he thinks his greatness is still aspiring, he falls like the leaves of autumn to enrich our mother earth. But in the words of the poet:

Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal,  
Dust thou art, to dust returneth  
Was not spoken of the soul.

We as Masons put our trust in a higher power, a supreme being whom we call God, and we believe He gives us each a task to do here on earth, and looks down with infinite compassion on those of us who call ourselves his children. We call ourselves builders because each one of us is trying to build his own spiritual temple of character. The idea of using the rules and tools of architecture to build character came to us through legends handed down through the ages from the craft guilds that had their origin during the time of the building of King Solomon's Temple. These guilds were organized by the workers themselves to guard against the intrusion of improper, unskilled workers into the work of the building of the Temple. Each faithful craftsman was invested with some "mysterious" form of recognition, such as a sign, a word, or a handclasp, by means of which he could be admitted among the craft. The craftsmen were particularly enjoined to be on the lookout for "cowans" or "eavesdroppers." "Cowans," more literally stone-pilers were unskilled workers who tried to erect shelters by simply piling up rough stones and as such, were despised and rejected by the craftsmen who had long since learned that when you only piled up stones, you never arrived at anything but a pile of stones. They knew that to erect a building for the ages, that would withstand the ravages of time and weather, you had to begin with stones that had been carefully dressed by the square, and just as carefully laid on a solid foundation by the use of the plumb and level.

When, in later ages, the "operative" or working craft evolved into the "speculative" or spiritual craft as we know it today, the working tools of those ancient builders became Masonic symbols of great moral and spiritual truths. Thus a Mason is taught by the plumb to walk uprightly before God and man, to square his actions by the square of virtue, and to remember that he is traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns.

We, as speculative Masons, still call ourselves builders because we believe that each one of us may have some little part in the building of that larger Temple which is the sum of all human achievement, that great structure rising through the ages according to the plans drawn by the Great Architect of the Universe on His trestleboard; a Temple whose foundations were laid in the beginning of time, and will last throughout eternity according to the plan of the Master Builder of the Universe. Therefore, it is really of great importance that we do the job that is assigned to us, that we use our talents as best we can, and that we do our part in the building of the Great Temple.

How often, when the day is ended, and the sun has gone to rest, do we pause to stand in awe, beholding the western sky transformed with a radiance that seems to shine out from the very gates of Heaven; a wonderful picture painted by the hand of God, and we are lifted and exalted by the beauty and glory of nature.

And when life's day is ended, and a loved one has gone to rest, we are somehow lifted above the plane of our everyday life, and our souls are permitted to catch faint gleams of the ineffable glory of the spiritual world, and we are comforted with the assurance that God has promised us eternal life.



The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order that could be conferred by the hand of mortal man. Its pure and spotless surface is an ever present reminder of a purity of life and conduct, a never ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, and for greater achievements. The apron is also a symbol of great service, and is therefore a fitting emblem to be placed over one who has served both faithfully and well.

The evergreen is a symbol of our belief in the immortality of the soul. It reminds us of that immortal part of us which survives the grave and which can never, never die.

Ecclesiastes 12, 1 - 7

Remember now thy Creator...

These words from the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes present to us a wonderful picture of human life and of manhood's declining years. There is a note of triumph at the end which is solace at a time like this; for though our bodily ills are many and our grief is sometimes hard to bear, yet triumphant over all is this hope, this blessed assurance, that if we are faithful, the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

To the family of our departed brother, may we extend our deepest and most sincere sympathy. May you find comfort and solace in the thought that your loved one has gone to that holy place of eternal peace and rest where we all hope to meet again someday. It is our prayer that you will feel the touch of our Heavenly Father's hand and the warmth of his presence in this time of sorrow.

Until we can see more clearly than with the eye of faith, until we better understand the great simplicity that is the mystery of life, until we more fully realize the close companionship of departed loved ones, we shall know heartache and sorrow, the tear of affection and regret. But through all the ages, the belief in immortality has sent a steady light of hope, shedding its gentle radiance over man, waking him to broader views and clearer visions, grounding a sturdy faith, an eternal hope, a perfect confidence, that make the vicissitudes of life but stepping stones to higher things. It banishes the shadows of grief, and we look forward to a reunion that is everlasting. Finally, my friends and my brethren, we do not mourn as those who have no hope, for Masonry is built on faith and hope, on justice and toleration, on charity and love, on confidence in men; on a belief that man is not for this world alone, but endures when mortality has again mingled with the dust of earth, and that all-wise, all-merciful God watches our steps in the pilgrimage of human life.

## *Masonic Funeral Services*

By Eugene L. Smith

From time immemorial, it has been the custom in the Masonic Fraternity at the request of a deceased Brother or his family to accompany his remains to a place of interment and deposit them with the usual formalities. According to this custom, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer before this world our tribute to our departed Brother whose memory we cherish, whose loss we deplore. Here we have come to deposit in this windowless palace of rest, the earthly remains of one who was near and dear to us by fraternal ties; and as we pay this fraternal tribute to our de-

parted Brother, let us not forget that we too are mortal, that our bodies, now strong and vigorous, must ere long like his, become tenants of our mother earth and our spirits too, like his, must return unto God who gave them existence, remembering that we are traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns.

Then let us support with dignity the honorable character of our profession and in Faith, Hope, and Charity discharge the great duties of life that we owe to God, our neighbors and ourselves. And when our naked souls shall stand trembling and alone before the Great White Throne, may it be our portion to hear from Him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme the welcome words, "Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord."

The lambskin or white leather apron is the emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter when worthily worn.

It is presented to our Brother to wear throughout an honorable life, that when his weary feet should come to the end of their toilsome journey and from his grasp should drop forever the working tools of life, that it should be placed upon the coffin containing his earthly remains and with them laid to rest beneath the turf and flowers. This I deposit in the grave.

The sprig of Acacia or evergreen which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead is a symbol of immortality and by it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny in a world beyond the shadows and that there dwells within this tabernacle of clay an imperishable spirit over which the grave has no dominion and death no power. This, too, I deposit in the grave.

Attention, Brethren! I will give the funeral honors. To the grave we consign the earthly remains of our departed Brother. We cherish his memory here. His spirit we commend to God who gave it. Alas, my poor Brother.

To the relatives and friends of our departed Brother, we tender our heartfelt sympathy and we sincerely hope and pray that he who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb will look with compassion upon these sorrowing ones and enfold them within the arms of His infinite love.

Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art to dust returneth was not spoken of the soul. So be comforted dear ones, for your friend and our Brother is not dead, but lives in that blissful world to which we are all hastening. Soft and safe to you, my Brother, be this mortal bed, bright and beautiful may be thy rising from it. May the sprig of Acacia here flourish. May the earliest buds of spring unfold their beauty over this thy resting place and here may the fragrance of the summers last rose linger longest. Though the cold blast of autumn may lay them in the dust and for a time destroy their loveliness, yet their fading is not final and in the springtime, they will surely bloom again. Till the bright morn of the world's resurrection when thy mortal frame now laid in the dust shall rise to immortal beauty in realms beyond the skies, where we will surely meet again.

Until then, my Brother, until then, farewell.

### *Masonic Funeral Service*

By Tex R. Heyer

Brethren and Friends: It has been a custom among the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons from time immemorial, at the request of a departed Brother or his family, to assemble in the character of Masons and, with the solemn formalities of the Craft, to offer up to his memory, before the world, the last tribute of our affection.

Our Brother has reached the end of his earthly toils. The brittle thread which bound him to earth

has been severed, and the liberated spirit has winged its flight to the unknown world. The silver cord is loosed; the golden bowl is broken; the pitcher is broken at the fountain; and the wheel is broken at the cistern. The dust has returned to the earth as it was, and the spirit has returned to God who gave it.

Almighty Father of the Universe, creator of all things and source of light and life, humble and reverently we come to Thee and ask Thee to bless us and strengthen us in this hour of sadness. We pray especially, O God, that Thou wilt comfort and sustain the loved ones of our departed Brother. Help them to feel the healing presence of Thy love. Help them, and help us all, to know that though we cannot now understand the mysteries of life and death, Thou art infinitely wise, just, and good. Help us to know that though we pass into the valley of the shadow of death, Thou art with us, and Thy rod and Thy staff wilt comfort us. Guide us in the coming day, O God, and endue us with a competency of Thy divine wisdom, so that in all of our activities and relationships, we may be true to the excellent tenets of our Order, and display the beauties of brotherly love, relief, and truth, to the honor of Thy holy name. *Amen.*

Brethren:

We are assembled in the character of Masons to join in this ceremony as a tribute of love and esteem for this brother who has laid down the working tools of life.

As we mourn the loss of this beloved Brother, let us cherish his virtues and his sincere attachments of those finer principles of life.

May we find in him those excellencies which will inspire us to higher thoughts and greater achievements as we continue in the march of human endeavor.

Our departed Brother shared with us the hope of life eternal, and his adherence to the tenants of our institution makes firm our belief that his labors have been approved.

So, with this knowledge that with this Brother all is well, we leave him behind as we continue our march in the generation of the present, mindful that our bodies, now so strong and vigorous, must ere long, like his, become tenants of our mother earth.

Then let us approach our journey's end with fearless steps, and with a sublime faith that we are in the hands of a true and trusty friend in whose fidelity we might with safety confide.

Let us bow our heads in prayer.

Thou, O God, knowest our down sitting and our uprising and understandest our thoughts afar off. Shield and defend us from the evil intentions of our enemies and support us under the trials and afflictions we are destined to endure while traveling through this vale of tears. Man that is born of a woman is of a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth, also, as a shadow, and continueth not. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee; Thou hast appointed his bounds that he may rest, till he shall accomplish his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down and riseth not till the Heavens be no more. Yet, O Lord; have compassion on the children of Thy creation, administer them comfort in time of trouble, and save them with

an everlasting salvation. *Amen.*

We are gathered here in the presence of a great mystery, the most profound mystery of all human experience, that change which, sooner or later, must come to each one of us. (Often it comes unexpectedly, and as we follow the pathway of life, we go plunging from the joy and sunshine of the hilltops down into the cold mists and dark shadows of the valley.) Again, we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life, and again a sense of utter loss weighs heavily on those who are nearest and dearest.

(The sands of life run swiftly in the hourglass of time, and thus wastes man. Today, he puts forth the tender leaves of hope; tomorrow, blossoms and bears his blushing honors thick upon him; the next day comes a frost which nips the shoot, and when he thinks his greatness is still aspiring, he falls, like autumn leaves, to enrich our mother earth.)

But as Masons we put our trust in a higher power, a Supreme Being whom we call God, and we believe that he gives us each a task to do and looks down with infinite compassion upon us, His children. We call ourselves builders because each one of us is trying to build his own spiritual Temple of Character, and because we believe that each one of us may have some little part in the building of that larger Temple which is the sum of all human achievement, that great structure rising slowly through the ages according to the plans drawn by the Great Architect of the Universe on His trestleboard, a Temple whose foundations were laid in the beginning of time, and which will last through eternity -- the great plan of the Master Builder. Therefore, it is not really of great importance how or when we leave this earthly field of labor, but it is of great importance that we do the job that is given us to do, that we use our talents, that we do our part in building the Temple.

#### THE SCRIPTURE SENTENCE

John 11: 25 and 26. "Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

2 Corinthians 5: 1 "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

#### OBITUARY and a RESUME of Masonic Activities...

The lambskin or white leather apron, is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order which earthly power can confer. I deposit it upon the casket. As an emblem of innocence its whiteness demonstrates our belief in that purity of soul which is the wondrous gift of our Heavenly Father; as the badge of a worker it reminds us that our Brother's earthly labors are finished. He has laid aside the working tools of life and, having wrought well and conscientiously, he will surely hear from Him who reviews each human life, no condemnation, no censure, no reproach, but those life-giving, soul-strengthening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave and which can never, never, never die.

1. We consign his body to the earth.

2. We cherish his memory here.
3. We commend his spirit to God who gave it.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out the windows be darkened.

And the doors shall shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.

Also, when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even Life for evermore.

Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

And the Lord said unto me, "Amos, what seest thou?" And I said a plumbline. Then said the Lord, "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them anymore."

This passage was written by Solomon, the King of Israel, the son of David and Bathsheba, one of our Great Grand Masters.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

To the relatives and friends of our Brother let us say we deeply, sincerely, and most affectionately sympathize with you in your sorrow. We are leaving behind all that was mortal of one who was near and dear to us all, and although he cannot speak to us in accents of love, yet he is with us in our heart of hearts.

And now may the blessing of Heaven rest upon us all. May brotherly love prevail and every moral and social virtue cement us. *Amen.*

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

By Rex Bottorff

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the Masonic Fraternity at the request of a deceased Brother or his family to accompany his remains to a place of interment and deposit them with the usual formalities.

Conforming to this custom we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer before the world our final tribute to our departed Brother, whose memory we cherish, whose loss we deplore. Here we have come to deposit in this windowless palace of rest the earthly remains of one who was near and dear to us by fraternal ties.

As we pay this fraternal tribute, let us not forget that we too are mortal, and though our bodies now so strong and vigorous they must ere long, like his, become tenants of our mother earth, and our spirit, too, like his, must return unto God who gave it.

Remembering that we are traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns. Then let us support with dignity the honorable character of our profession and in faith, hope and charity discharge the great duties of life that we owe to our God, our country, our neighbors and ourselves.

And when our naked souls should stand trembling and alone before the great white throne, may it be our portion to hear from Him who sitteth as a judge supreme the welcome words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter when worthily worn.

It was presented to our Brother to wear throughout an honorable life, that when his weary feet should come to the end of their toilsome journey and from his nerveless grasp should fall the working tools of life, it would be placed upon the coffin which would contain his earthly remains and with them laid to rest beneath the turf and flowers. This I deposit in the grave. Its pure and spotless surface is to us an ever-present reminder of the purity of life, a rectitude of conduct, a never ending argument for nobler deed and higher thoughts for greater achievements. The apron is also a symbol of service and as such it is fitting to be placed over one who has served faithfully and well.

The sprig of Acacia or evergreen which once marked the temporary resting place of our illustrious dead is a symbol of immortality, and by it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny in a world beyond the shadows and that there dwells within this tabernacle of clay an imperishable spirit, over which the grave has no dominion and death no power. This, too, I deposit in the grave.

Attention, brethren, I will give the funeral honors. To the grave we consign the earthly remains of our departed Brother. We cherish his memory here. His spirit we commend unto God who gave it. Alas, my dear Brother.

Is this the end of man? The expiring hope of a faithful Mason? NO. Blessed be God! We pause not upon our first or second step, but true to our principles look forward for greater light while the embers of mortality are faintly glimmering in the socket of our existence.

The Bible, that great light of Masonry, removes the dark shroud, draws aside the sable curtains of the tomb and bids hope and joy rise up to cheer and sustain the departing spirit. It points beyond the tomb to the breaking light of a resurrection morn and bids us turn our eyes with hope and

confidence to the opening scenes of eternity.

To the relatives and friends of our departed Brother, we tender our heartfelt sympathy, and we sincerely hope and pray that He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb will look with compassion upon these sorrowing ones and enfold them within the arms of His infinite love.

Life is real; life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. "Dust thou art, to dust returneth" was not spoken of the soul. So be comforted, dear ones, for our friend and our Brother is not dead but lives in that blissful world to which we are all hastening.

Soft and safe to you, my Brother, be this mortal bed. Bright and beautiful may be thy rising from it. With fragrance eternal may the sprig of Acacia here flourish. May the earliest buds of spring unfold their beauty over this thy resting place, and here may the fragrance of the summer's last rose linger longest. Though the cold blast of autumn may lay them in the dust and for a time destroy their loveliness, yet their fading is not final, and in the springtime they will surely bloom again till the bright morn of the world's resurrection, when thy mortal frame now laid in the dust shall rise to immortal beauty in realms beyond the skies, where we will surely meet again. For He has said "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you shall be also."

Until then, my Brother, until then, farewell.

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

By L. W. "Bill" Green

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

The solemn notes that betoken the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle have again alarmed our outer door and another spirit has been summoned to the land where our fathers have gone before us. Again we are called to assemble among the habitations of the dead to beyond the narrow house appointed for all living. Here around us in that peace which the world cannot give nor take away, sleep the unnumbered dead. The gentle breeze fans their verdant covering, they heed it not. The sunshine and the storm pass over them, they are not disturbed. Stones and lettered monuments symbolize the affection of surviving friends. They make no sound, but the influence of their lives live on and on and can never, never, no never die.

*(Here a few words regarding the life, character, and influence of the deceased may be interposed.)*

He who lies before us wrapped in unbroken slumber was our Brother. Side by side have we traveled life's rugged pathway and mourned in the dark days of adversity. Our presence here today is evidence that we loved him, and we remember him in scenes that the world knows not of.

While we deplore the loss of our departed Brother and pay this fraternal tribute to his memory, let us not forget that we, too, are mortal; that our bodies, now so strong and vigorous, must ere long, like his, become tenants of our Mother Earth, and our spirits, too, like his, shall return to God who gave them. With becoming reverence then let us supplicate the Divine Grace to insure the favor of that Eternal Being whose goodness and mercy knows no bounds, so that on our arrival to that momentous house when the fading taper of human life shall but faintly glimmer in the socket of existence, our faith shall remove the dark clouds, roll back the sable curtain of the tomb, and bid

hope sustain and cheer the departing Brother.

The lambskin is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason; more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter when worthily worn. This emblem I now deposit upon the casket of our departed Brother; by it we are reminded of the universal domination of death, the arm of friendship cannot interpose to prevent his coming. The wealth of the world will not purchase our release nor will the innocence of youth nor the charms of beauty propitiate his purpose. The mattock, the coffin, and the melancholy grave all remind us of the MORTALITY OF THE BODY; but the evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny beyond the world of shadows and that there dwells within this tabernacle of clay an imperishable immortal spirit over which the grave has no dominion and death no power. This, too, I deposit on the casket of our departed Brother. *(The Masons will rise, pass around and each deposit a sprig of evergreen on the casket.)*

To the bereaved and mourning relatives and friends of our departed Brother, we tender our heartfelt sympathy, and we earnestly hope and pray that He who doeth all things well will look down with infinite compassion on the widow and the fatherless in this hour of their desolation, and that He will fold His arms of Love and Protection about all who put their trust in Him. We can turn our eyes to that bright land, to the shores that they inhabit. There is no mirage, no delusion there, THAT LAND EXISTS. And after the strong hand of death has leveled us in the humiliation of the grave, the Almighty Hand of the Supreme Master shall prevail and exalt every worthy one to the glorious companionship of his eternal home. There the scales of doubt and darkness shall fall from our eyes and the wise purpose of the Supreme Architect shall be seen in all their splendor.

And now, soft and safe to you, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, be thy mortal bed; bright and beautiful be thy rising from it. With fragrance eternal may the Acacia here (or there) flourish. May the earliest buds of Spring unfold their loveliness over thy last resting place and there may the sweetness of Summer's last rose linger longest, and although the cold blasts of Autumn may lay them in the dust and for a time destroy their loveliness, yet is their fading not final. In the springtime they will surely bloom again. So in the bright morning of the world's resurrection, your mortal frame now laid in the dust shall spring into newness of life and expand in immortal beauty in realms beyond the skies. Until then, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, until then, farewell.

Together brethren with the Grand Honors: To the grave we consign the mortal remains of our departed Brother. We cherish his memory here, his spirit we commend to God who gave it. *Amen.*

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

By George Holder

### A. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

Brethren, once again we are called upon to mourn the loss of a Brother who has been overtaken by that fate which sooner or later must overtake us all. We are taught as Masons that in every contingency of life we should first make application to the Great Author and source of life and invoke his blessing.



Let us pray.

## B. PRAYER

Almighty Father of the Universe, Creator of all things and Source of light and life, humbly and reverently we come to Thee and ask Thee to bless us and strengthen us in this hour of sadness and grief. We pray especially, O God, that Thou wilt comfort and sustain the loved ones of our departed Brother. Help them to feel the healing presence of Thy love. Help them, and help us all, to know that though we cannot now understand the mysteries of life and death, Thou art infinitely wise, just, and good; and that Thou doest love Thy children with a love immeasurable and exhaustless. Help us to know that though we pass into the valley of the shadow of death, Thou art with us and Thy rod and Thy staff wilt comfort us.

Guide us in the coming days, O God, and endue us with a competency of Thy divine wisdom, so that in all our activities and relationships, we may be true to the excellent tenets of our Order, and display the beauties of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, to the honor of Thy Holy name. Amen.

## C. DISSERTATION OR MASONIC COMMENT INCLUDING SKETCH OF LIFE OF THE DECEASED, IF DESIRED.

From time immemorial it has been the custom among the Masonic Fraternity, at the request of a deceased Brother or his family, to accompany his remains to the place of interment and there deposit them with the usual formalities. In conformity to this custom, we have assembled in the character of Masons to offer before the world the tribute of our esteem and love. Our presence here is evidence that we love him, and we remember him in scenes which the world knows not of.

While we deplore the departure of our brother and pay this fraternal tribute to his memory, let us not forget that we, too, are mortal; that our bodies now so strong and vigorous must ere long, like his, become tenants of our Mother Earth, and that our Spirits too, like his, must return to God, who gave them existence.

If there is one subject upon which Masonry sounds no uncertain note, it is upon the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul; with us the question of the deathlessness of the soul is no longer a subject for speculation. We believe in it abidingly. Knowing that we shall surely meet again, it is of little or no concern to us to know that we shall meet, shall be reunited with those we have long loved and lost awhile, to know that "in our Father's house there are many mansions."

With this abiding faith to lighten our load, no road of life can be too long or too hard that at last leads us all to that blissful home, "that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

## D. DEPOSIT APRON.

This lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order, which earthly power can confer. I deposit it upon the casket. As an emblem of innocence its whiteness demonstrates our belief in that purity of soul which is the wondrous gift of our Heavenly Father; as the badge of a worker it reminds us that our Brother's earthly labors

are finished. He has laid aside the working tools of life and, having wrought well and conscientiously, he will surely hear from Him who reviews each human life, no condemnation, no censure, no reproach, but those life-giving, soul-strengthening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

#### E. DEPOSIT EVERGREEN AND FUNERAL HONORS.

This evergreen, which once marked the temporary resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of our high and glorious destiny in the world beyond the shadows; that there dwells within this tabernacle of clay an imperishable spirit over which the grave has no dominion, and death no power. (Deposits Sprig)

#### F. WORDS OF COMFORT.

To the relatives and friends of our departed Brother let us say that we sincerely sympathize with you in this hour of sorrow. Until we can see more clearly than the eye of faith, until we better understand the great simplicity that is the mystery of life, until we more fully realize the close companionship of departed loved ones, we shall know heartache and sorrow, the tears of affection and regret.

But through all the ages, the belief in immortality has sent a steady light of hope shedding its gentle radiance over man, waking him to broader views and clearer visions, grounding a sturdy faith, an eternal hope, a perfect confidence, that make the vicissitudes of life but stepping stones to higher things. It banishes the shadows of grief, and we look forward to reunion that is everlasting.

#### G. EXCERPTS TO BE USED AS DESIRED.

Soft and safe to you, my Brother, be this mortal bed; bright and beautiful be thy rising from it. With fragrance eternal may the sprig of Acacia here flourish; may the earliest buds of Spring unfold their beauties over this, your resting place, and here may the sweetness of Summer's last rose linger the longest. Though the cold blasts of Autumn may lay them in dust and for a time destroy their loveliness, yet their fading is not final, and in the springtime they will surely bloom again.

So in the bright morning of the world's resurrection your mortal frame, now laid in dust, shall again spring into newness of life, and expand in immortal beauty in realms beyond the skies. Until then, my Brother - until then, farewell!!

#### H. BENEDICTION.

Almighty God, maker and ruler of the universe, we acknowledge Thy authority and invoke Thy aid and comfort. We rejoice and praise Thee for the comforting knowledge that our spiritual bodies, made in Thine own image, shall never die, and for the assurance that if faithfully we do Thy will and keep Thy commandments, we shall, in Thy safe keeping, pass through the portals of mortal death to Eternal Life in Thy presence and the glorious fellowship of the triumphant faithful.

Bless with Thy special guidance and protection and hold in Thy holy keeping the

friends and relatives of our Brother. May they be sheltered by Thy merciful might. And guide and bring us all at last into Thine unending joy. *Amen.*

*The brethren will assist in giving the funeral honors.*

WE CONSIGN HIS BODY TO THE EARTH.

WE CHERISH HIS MEMORY HERE.

WE COMMEND HIS SPIRIT TO GOD, WHO GAVE IT.

#### I. ABBREVIATION OF CEREMONY.

Portions of the ceremony not essential may be omitted at the discretion of the Master. Essentials are: prayer, deposit of apron, deposit of evergreen, funeral honors, and benediction or closing prayer. (*The benediction or closing prayer may be given by the minister.*)

### *Masonic Funeral Service*

By Ed Armstead

I am the resurrection and the life; He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever believeth in me...shall never die.

From time immemorial, it has been a custom among the members of the Masonic Fraternity, upon request, to conduct funeral services for a Brother who has been taken by death.

In conformity to this ancient usage, we have assembled at this time in the character of Freemasons, to offer before the world the last tribute of our affection and thus demonstrate in the strongest manner possible, the sincerity of our esteem for our Brother and our steadfast faith in the principles of our Fraternity.

As we are taught never to enter upon any great and important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of deity, let us pray:

Almighty Father of the Universe, Creator of all things and source of light and life, humbly and reverently we come to Thee and ask Thee to bless us and strengthen us in this hour of sadness and grief. We pray, especially of God, that Thou wilt comfort and sustain the loved ones of our departed Brother. Help them, though we cannot understand the mysteries of life and death, that Thou art infinitely wise, just, and good; and that Thou dost love Thy children with a love that is immeasurable and exhaustless. Help us to know that though we pass into the valley of the shadow of death Thou art with us, Thy rod and Thy staff wilt comfort us. Guide us in the coming days, O God, and endue us with a competency of Thy divine wisdom, so that in all our activities and relationships, we may be true to the excellent tenets of our Order and display the beauties of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, to the honor of Thy Holy Name. *Amen.*

Brethren, Death is a Theme not lightly to be broached by those subject to its power. The young

may die...the old must die...and the wisest know not how soon. There is none that escapes this inevitable end.

Death terminates the labor of man. As our Most Excellent King Solomon said, "the dead know not anything. Their love, their hatred, and their envy is now perished."

Death is a fate that must sooner or later overtake us all, and which no power or station...no virtue or bravery...no tears or friends or agonies of relatives can avert.

What an incentive is this to an industrious use of our time and our facilities, that we should build industriously while our strength endures, and labor to complete our work, ere the week closes and the Sabbath of Eternity sets in.

The preceding was an excerpt of the lessons taught in the York Rite of Freemasonry. It reinforces our belief in the mortality of man...and the immortality of the soul.

In the New Testament Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions - I go to prepare a place for you." This scripture gives us a vision.

As we are bidding farewell to a Brother, someone in the Grand Lodge above is saying "Welcome my Brother - follow Me and I will seat you with the Craft."

#### MASONIC OBITUARY HERE.

My friends, it is through the Gate of Death that we find an entrance to the place of wages, refreshment, and rest. Therefore, we do not mourn as those who have no hope, for Masonry is built on faith and hope, on justice and toleration, on charity and love and confidence in men, on a belief that man is not for this world alone - but endures when mortality has again mingled with the clods of the earth and that an all-wise, all-merciful God directs our steps in the pilgrimage of life.

Our departed Brother shared with us the hope of life eternal, and his adherence to the tenets of our Institution makes firm our belief that his labors have been approved. So, with the knowledge that with this Brother all is well, we leave him behind as we continue our march in the generation of the present, mindful that our own bodies, now strong and vigorous, must ere long, like his, become tenants of our Mother Earth.

This lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order, which earthly power can confer. As an emblem of innocence, its whiteness demonstrates our belief in that purity of soul which is the wondrous gift of our Heavenly Father; as the badge of a worker it reminds us that our Brother's earthly labors are finished. He has laid aside the working tools of life and, having wrought well and conscientiously, will surely hear from Him who reviews each human life, no condemnation, no censure, no reproach, but those life-giving, soul-strengthening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The evergreen is an emblem of faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave and which can never, never, never die.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of your youth...

#### ASSIST IN FUNERAL HONORS

We consign our Brother's body to the grave.

We cherish his memory in our hearts.

We commend his spirit to God who gave it.

Let us pray:

Thou, O God, knowest our down-sitting and our uprising and understandest our thoughts afar off. Shield and defend us from the evil intentions of our enemies and support us through the trials and afflictions we are destined to endure while traveling through this vale of tears.

Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. Seeing that his days are determined, the number of his months is with Thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds that he can not pass.

There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again and the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more.

Yet, O Lord, have compassion on the children of Thy creation. Administer them comfort in time of trouble and save them with an everlasting salvation. *Amen.*

To the bereaved and mourning friends and relatives of our departed Brother, we tender our heartfelt sympathies.

We sincerely hope and pray that He, "who knowest all things," will look down with infinite compassion upon the bereaved, and will fold the arms of His love and protection around those who put their trust in Him.

I do not know why sorrows creep  
into our hearts, to make us weep,  
Or why our path is rough and steep  
- as down through life we go.  
But this I know, that if we  
trust in God,  
We'll see that he is just and  
kind and merciful.  
Just now I only know in part  
- my mind is limited.  
My heart is longing for that better part -  
no mortal can bestow.  
But now he's run and  
won his race.  
When undimmed light and shadows chase  
he'll meet his Savior, face to face.  
I know this is so.

And now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and be presented faultless

before the throne, be and abide with us now and forever more. *Amen.*

## *Masonic Funeral Service*

by Frank Odekirk

Jesus said "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house, there are many mansions. If it was not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (St. John 14-1-3)

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like a precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garment. As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there, the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever more.

"I am the Resurrection and the life," saith the Lord. "He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted His hands and blessed them. And as He blessed, He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven, where He sits at the right hand of our Heavenly Father, a mediator and intercessor for all those who have faith in Him. This my friends, should remind us of that glorious conclusion of that hallowed sacrifice offered by the Redeemer of the world to provide a way of salvation for all mankind.

Brethren, we are taught as Masons, that in every contingency of life, we should make application to the Great Author and source of all and invoke His blessing.

O Lord our God, have compassion upon thy servants. Man that is born of woman is of a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not. In the midst of life, we are in death; of whom may we seek succor but from Thee, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeasing, O Lord Most Holy, most mighty and merciful Savior, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death. May we hear the voice from Heaven saying unto us, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their good works will follow them." *Amen.*

From time immemorial, it has been the custom of the Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, at the request of a relative, a friend or a Brother, to hold memorial services for a deceased Brother. In conformity with this usage, we have assembled here this evening in the character of Master Masons to offer up his memory before the world, this tribute of our love and affection. Thereby, demonstrating our esteem for the Brother whose mortal remains now lie before us and our steady attachment to the principles of Masonry.

We are gathered here in the presence of a great mystery, old, yet new in its power to bring new sorrow to our hearts. One of our numbers has passed beyond the boundary line of life into a new and wonderful existence beyond. Again, we are reminded of the uncertainty of human life, and again, a sense of utter loss weighs heavily on those who were nearest and dearest to him. The sands

of Life run swiftly in the hour glass of time, and thus wastes Man. Today, he puts forth the tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms and bears his blushing honors thick upon him; the next day, a frost comes and nips his tender shoots and when he thinks his greatness is still aspiring, he falls like autumn leaves to enrich our mother earth.

This profound mystery, death, is a change we must all experience. It levels all, the rich man, the poor man. The strongest has no supremacy, the weakest needs no defense. When the hour strikes and the summons comes, there is no resistance. The call comes, and we all obey. But, we as Masons, put our trust in a higher power, in a Supreme Being whom we call God. We believe that He gives each a task to do and looks down with infinite compassion upon us, His children.

This form, over which we now mourn, is not our Brother, but only that which was his human and material part until God laid his hand upon him, and he slept. He was mortal, but he has put on immortality. His place in our midst is vacant, but yesterday he was here. Is he shut up in total darkness? We think not, because he has built his moral edifice in beauty, so his spirit shall bask in the sunshine of eternal day. Did he fall because of weakness? Never. Where is the power that shall raise him up and whisper words of comfort to his soul? We know that Lion of the Tribe of Judah is strong. In strength he is established and his Kingdom shall endureth from everlasting to everlasting, and He shall raise him up forever.

The Lambskin or white leather apron is the emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. More ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter or any other Order which earthly power can confer. Its pure and spotless surface should be an ever ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. The apron is also a symbol of service and is therefore a fitting emblem to place over one who has served faithfully and well. I now place this badge of a Mason over our Brother \_\_\_\_\_.

This evergreen which once marked the resting place of the illustrious dead, is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it, we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave and bears the nearest affinity to that supreme intelligence which pervades all nature and can never, never die. This, I too, deposit over our Brother. Brethren, prepare to deposit the evergreen.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when Thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. While the sun or the light of the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain. In the days when the keeper of the house shall tremble and strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets. When the sound of the grinding is low, and He shall rise up to the voice of the bird, and the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden and desires fail; because man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the street; or ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken or the pitcher be broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

These words from the 12th Chapter of Ecclesiastes present a wonderful picture of human life and man's declining years. There is a note of triumph at the end which is our solace at a time like this;

for though our bodily ills are many and our grief is sometimes hard to bear, yet triumphed over all is this hope, this blessed assurance, that if we have faith, the spirit will return unto God who gave it.

We shall miss our Brother. He has been a good and faithful comrade. He has marched with us in Grand Procession. His hand was always ready, his heart was ever true. He has now led where we may not follow until we too receive the summons. He has boarded his ship and sailed away across the bar. But our ships are surely coming for us, and we shall follow him across the waters, one by one...It may be hours, it may be days or it may be a span of years, what matters it? Measured by the gauge of eternity, the time is short until we shall all pass into that land where our fathers have gone before us.

To the family and friends of our departed Brother, we can only deeply, sincerely, and most affectionately sympathize with you in this hour of bereavement. We know that death is surely a part of God's wonderful plan as are birth and life. The sun is still shining behind the clouds of sorrow and its light shall surely break through to bless and comfort us all. The arms of our Blessed Saviour will surely enfold and comfort you in this hour of sorrow and may you have the confident hope of consolation and God's grace that David so beautifully expressed in the 23rd Psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still water. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemy. Thou annointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. *Amen.*

As a beautiful butterfly bursts from its cocoon to soar aloft in the sunshine, so has our Brother's spirit cast off its earthly tenement. The working tools of life have fallen from his grasp, his work on earth is finished, his temple is completed, and he has gone to receive his wages from the Master Builder.

We shall remember Brother \_\_\_\_\_ for his good deeds and our association. We shall only think of him as only going ahead to welcome us when we too lay down the working tools of life and enter the Eternal Home in the Heavenly Mansion. He is at rest from his labors. Rest in peace my Brother, rest in peace. Let us Pray:

And now may the blessing of heaven....

### *Masonic Funeral Service*

By Ralph A. Livermore

The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, thou annointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. *Amen.*



Brethren, this evening we have assembled in the character of Masons to join in this solemn ceremony as a final tribute of love and esteem for one who has passed from the circle of our Fraternity. The earthly life of our beloved brother has come to its close, his work on earth is finished, and his spirit has winged its way to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons upon request to conduct funeral services for a brother who has been taken by death. In conformity with this ancient usage, we have assembled at this time in the character of Freemasons to offer before the world the last tribute of our affection and thus to demonstrate in the strongest manner possible, the sincerity of our past esteem for our brother and our steadfast belief in the principles of our Fraternity. In this hour of trial when hearts are filled with sadness let us look to the Great Architect of the Universe for that comfort and support which he alone can give.

Let us pray...

Almighty God, Creator of all things, source of light and life, humbly and reverently we come to Thee and ask Thee to bless us and strengthen us in this hour of sadness and grief. We pray especially, O God, that Thou wilt comfort and sustain the loved ones of our departed brother. Help them to feel the healing presence of Thy love. Help them and help us all to know that though we cannot now understand the mysteries of life and death, Thou art infinitely wise, just and good and that Thou does love Thy children with a love immeasurable and exhaustless. Help us to know that though we pass through the valley of the shadow of death Thou art with us and Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort us. Guide us in the coming days, O God, and endue us with a competency of Thy divine wisdom so that all of our activities and relationships we may be better enabled to display the beauties of brotherly love, relief, and truth to the honor of Thy Holy Name.

*Amen.*

Brethren, we come here on this occasion with saddened and subdued hearts and soft affections because one of our beloved brethren has been called out of our midst to join with the Great Brotherhood Beyond. He has passed out of the love of human hearts to a higher, better love, out of the dim lights of the lodge on earth to the brighter, glorious lodge above. To him we were bound by the mystic tie of our Order. With him we have kept watch and ward together amidst the trials and vicissitudes of life striving as best we could in our weak human way toward the uplift and betterment of our fellow man. We will ever remember him in scenes to which the world was not a witness and where brotherly love and affection were evident without disguise.

Our present gathering will be without profit unless it awakens serious reflections and strengthens us with resolutions for the future. May we look away from these sad scenes of frail mortality to hopes that lie beyond the grave. May we be bound still stronger together by the bonds of brotherly love and affection. May the same tie which united us with our brother continue to bind us with his afflicted and bereaved family. To sympathize with them and to tender them all the relief and consolation that earthly friends can bestow. May we also, my brethren, seeing the uncertainty of human life, forget not that preparation which it is wisdom to make and weakness to defer. Let us here resolved to maintain with greater zeal the dignified character of our profession. May our faith be made manifest by a correct moral walk and deportment.

*[At this time I give the Masonic history of the brother. I give the date that he was Initiated, and*

*I used the Psalm...]*

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.  
It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments;  
As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion;  
for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

*[And then I have comments to make about how the brethren were joined together in unity on that night that he received his First Degree and give the date of his Second Degree and use the Scripture from Amos:]*

Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.

And the Lord said unto me, "Amos, what seest thou?" And I said a plumbline. Then said the Lord, "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them anymore."

*[And then I make comments to the fact that this brother did set his plumbline amid the brethren of the lodge he belonged to and among his community and any other projects he was involved in. Then I say he was Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on such and such a day. Then I proceed to give any more of his Masonic history: when he was Master of the lodge, if he was a 50-year member, if he belonged to any other bodies -- York Rite, Scottish Rite, Shrine, Eastern Star, etc. Also if he held any Grand Lodge Offices, or Grand Chapter, or whatever. Then I continue the service by saying.]*

As Masons we put our trust in a higher power, a Supreme Being whom we call God, and we believe that he gives each of us a task to do and looks down with infinite compassion upon us, his children. We call ourselves builders because each one of us is trying to build his own spiritual Temple of character and because we believe that each one of us may have some small part in building that larger Temple, the sum of all human achievement, that great structure rising slowly through the ages according to plans drawn by the Great Architect of the Universe on his trestleboard, a Temple that had its foundation laid in the beginning of time and which shall last through all eternity, the great plan of the Master Builder. Therefore it is not of great importance of when or how we leave this earthly field of labor, but it is of great importance that we do the job that is given us to do, that we use our talents, that we do our part in building the Temple.

If there is one subject upon which Masonry sounds no uncertain note, it is upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. With us the question of the deathlessness of the soul is no longer a subject for speculation, we believe in it abidingly, knowing that we shall surely meet again. It is of little or no concern to us when that meeting shall occur. It is enough to know that we shall meet, shall be reunited with those we have long loved and lost awhile. To know that in our Father's House there are many mansions. With this abiding faith to lighten our load, no road of life can be too long or too hard that at last leads us to that blissful home, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

My friends it is through the gate of death that we find an entrance into the place of wages, refreshment, and rest. Therefore we do not mourn as those who have no hope for Masonry is built on faith and hope, on justice and toleration, on charity and love, on a confidence in man, on a belief

that man is not for this world alone but endures when mortality has again mingled with the clouds of the earth and that an all wise, all merciful God directs our footsteps in the pilgrimage of human life.

Our departed brother shared with us the hope of life eternal and his adherence to the tenets of our institution made firm our belief that his labors have been approved. So with the knowledge that with this brother all is well we leave him behind as we continue our march in the generation of the present. Ever mindful that our own bodies now so strong and vigorous must ere long like his become tenants of our mother earth. Then let us approach our journey's end with a fearless step and a sublime faith that we are in the hands of a true and trusty friend in whose fidelity we may, with safety, confide.

*[At this time I make comments to the fact that he received his lambskin on such and such a night, at the same time he was Initiated as an Entered Apprentice, that he took the apron home, it was kept in a safe place and if he is wearing it I make the comment that he is wearing it at this time and then I proceed to explain the apron.]*

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. More ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order that can be conferred by earthly power. As an emblem of innocence its whiteness demonstrates our belief in that purity of soul which is a wonderful gift of our Heavenly Father. As a badge of a worker it reminds us that our brother's earthly labors are finished. He has laid aside the working tools of life and, having wrought well and conscientiously, will surely hear from Him who reviews each human life, no condemnation, no censure, no reproach, but those live-giving, soul-strengthening words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

*[And if he is wearing his apron I then keep it but if he is not I deposit it on the casket.]*

The cacia or evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul, by it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave, and which can never, never, never die. *[Then I deposit the Acacia on the casket and give this little poem.]*

There is no death. The stars go down  
To rise upon some fairer shore,  
And bright in heaven's jeweled crown  
They shine forevermore.

And ever near us, though unseen,  
The dear, immortal spirits tread;  
For all the boundless universe is life --  
there are no dead.

*[I then deposit that on the casket and ask the brethren to join with me in giving the funeral honors as follows:]*

We consign our brother's body to the earth, we cherish his memory in our hearts, we command his spirit to God who gave it.

*[Then I go back to the lecturn if I am behind one and continue.]*

To the relatives and friends of our departed brother let us say that we sincerely sympathize with you in this hour of sorrow. Until we can see more clearly with the eye of faith, until we better understand that great simplicity that is the mystery of life, until we more fully realize the close companionship of departed loved ones, we shall know heartache and sorrow, the tear of affection and regret, but through all the ages the belief in immortality has sent a steady light of hope sheathing its gentle radiance over man, awakening him to broader views and clearer visions, grounding a sturdy faith, an eternal hope, a perfect confidence, that make the vicissitudes of life stepping stones to higher things. It banishes the shadow of grief and we look forward to a reunion that is everlasting.

And now beloved friend and brother we bid thee a long farewell and may the sunshine of Heaven beam bright at thy awakening.

Let us pray...

Almighty God, grant that what we have just heard will sink deep into our hearts and bring forth in everyone of us the fruit of righteous living. Teach us how frail and uncertain a thing is human existence, forgive us our sins, make us what we ought to be, pure and spotless in Thy sight. We thank Thee for our creation and our preservation, for all the blessings of this life and for the promise of an eternal life. Prepare us, O Lord, by whatever means Thou deems best for us for all that Thou has in store for us, Thy children. If longer to live, to live to Thy glory so when the end comes, be it sooner or later, it may find us prepared to enter the life eternal. And now may the blessing of Heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons, may brotherly love prevail and every moral and social virtue cement us. *Amen.*

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you His peace, both now and forever more.

### *Masonic Funeral Service*

By James R. Wellendorf  
Kane Lodge No. 377, Ida Grove

[Source: Old Masonic Publication, Various Masonic Printings, and Holy Bible.]

The following is an outline of the verbal content of the Funeral Service and describes the floor work in some detail.

.....Brother carrying Bible and I lead brethren into area with casket. I always face departed brother, a short pause before taking position. Brother with Bible stands at my

left or right, which ever faces the family. I prefer to stand at the foot of the casket so I can look directly at the departed brother.

.....I formally acknowledge the family of the departed brother by name, friends of the family, and all Masonic brothers in attendance.

I state my name and explain it is my honor to conduct this Masonic Service for \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge A.F. & A.M. of \_\_\_\_\_, Iowa. On behalf of the lodge, we appreciate your attendance in honor of our departed brother.

At the request of the family, we are honored to present this final Masonic tribute.

May the Lord add his blessing to this Masonic Service.

(Start the formal service)

The Lord Sayeth:

I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.

We are gathered here in the presence of a mystery. The most profound mystery of all human experience. That great change which sooner or later must come to each one of us.

Often it comes unexpectedly, as we travel down the pathway of life. We go from the joy and sunshine of the hilltops, down into the dark shadows of the valley. Again, we are reminded of the uncertainty of life, and, again, a sense of loss weighs heavily on those who are nearest and dearest.

When the hour strikes and the summons comes, we embark upon the voyage to the undiscovered country from whose borne no traveler returns. Yet we have the assurance of the Master, that when we go on this voyage, we are in the hands of a true and trusty friend, in whose fidelity we may with safety confide.

And when a life's day is ended and loved one has gone to rest, our souls are permitted to catch faint gleams of the ineffable glory of that spiritual world.

[.....small pause.....]

We as Masons place our trust in God, and we believeth that He gives us each a task to do, and looks down with infinite compassion upon us, His children.

We call ourselves builders because we believe that each one of us is trying to build our own "spiritual Temple of character." And because we believe that each one of us may have some small part in the building of that larger Temple, which is "the sum of all human achievement." That great structure, rising slowly through the ages, according to the plans drawn by the "Great Architect of the Universe," on his trestle board. A Temple whose foundations were laid in the beginning of time, and which will last through eternity. The great plan of the Master Builder.

Therefore, it is not important how or when we leave this earthly field of labor, but it is of great importance that we do the task that is given to us to do, that we use our talents, and that we do our

part in building of the Temple.

Picture now with me.....the beautiful butterfly as it bursts from its cocoon to soar aloft in the sunshine. So has our brother's spirit cast off this earthly tenement. The working tools of earth have fallen from his grasp, his work on earth is finished, his "Temple is completed," and he has gone to receive his wages from the "Master Builder."

[.....The brother standing with me with the open Bible is motioned to come near enough so I can rest my hand on the Bible from time to time during the following Bible Lecture.....]

The foundation for the teachings of the Masonic Lodge are found within the Holy Bible. [Hand on Bible.]

This Book has influenced the imagination of the world and the history of the human race, more than all other books combined. Nations live by it, or die quarreling with it. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It is found in the castle of the king and the cottage of the peasant, alike in the home of the rich and the poor, learned and unlearned.

It colors the talk of the street and is found woven in the web of universal literature. It talks to us in our solitude, consoles our grief and gives new ideals to our conscience. It is an inspiration to the strong, a source of strength to the weak and a guiding light to all.

It blesses us at birth, gives names to many, adds sanctity to the marriage tie, writes inscriptions of hope on our tombs. The best of our uttered prayers are in its storied speech.

Generation after generation comes and goes, each with its own ideals, each with its own form of expression. The literature of yesterday is not the literature of today. Famous books go out of fashion, are read only by scholars and antiquarians. But this immortal Book, [hand on the Bible] is everlasting. It talks in the speech and accents of each generation in turn.

The silver cord of the Bible is not loosed nor its golden bowl broken, as centuries slip by like beads of the thread of time. The Bible is the master of the soul, wiser than reason, truer than conscience, greater and more trustworthy than reason or instinct.

How often this Book has been torn to rags, refuted and destroyed. But as the anvil outlasts all the hammers that smite it, so has this immortal Book lived on while those who sought to destroy it are soon forgotten. Other books have their day and are forgotten, they die, their language becomes obsolete, the world's thought runs in new channels, and they are left mere stranded wrecks on the shore of time. But this Book [hand on Bible] belongs to all the centuries and outlives them all. It lives on and on, and on in glorious perpetuity.

And so my friends, may the "Holy Bible" be the guiding light for each of us as we continue our travel down the pathway of life.

[.....Thank brother, which allows him to return to original position.....]

Let us be in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven, we turn to Thee in the presence of this grief, because Thou are the giver of all life, and Thou alone are able to give us consolation.

Help us to understand that our lives are in Thy hands.

We pray that Thou wilt especially let Thy tenderness soothe the hearts that are here bereft.

Cheer our declining days with the certainty that with Thee, there is no death, but only an entrance for all Thy children, into the endless life which Thou hast prepared. *Amen.*

[Brethren, So mote it be]

[.....I take the brother's apron or a new apron if not available. I explain that it was presented to our brother upon his entering into work of the Masonic lodge and read all of the inscription data under the bib. If not inscribed, I have a card with data. I also state any information I can learn about the brother's participation as an officer of the lodge, any special Masonic honors and be sure to explain if he received a Fifty-Year Certificate. Any personal information regarding Masonic lodge work is nice to give the brother recognition.....]

This lambskin has been a rule and a guide to Brother \_\_\_\_\_'s daily life and a cherished possession, as it is to all brother Masons. And I will now explain:

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. More ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order.

Its pure and spotless surface, is to us an ever present reminder of the purity of life and rectitude of conduct.

Not the idle purity of the hermit, remote from the world, but rather the purity of service, for we believe that he serves "God" who serves his fellow man.

We therefore, our brother's friends, place this apron with our departed brother as a symbol of high honor. It is the badge of a Mason.

[.....Take evergreen from lapel and hold it high for all to see.....]

For all brother Masons, the evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By it we are reminded of that immortal part which survives the grave, and which can never, never die.

[.....Motion brethren to rise.....]

Brethren, join me in placing our emblem with our departed brother.

[.....I go first and lay my evergreen on the apron previously placed on the side of casket..... Brethren follow single file and do the same and return to seating.....remain standing.....]

[.....During this depositing of evergreen.....I recite a poem such as.....cross the bar.....or the 23rd Psalm.....The following is one I have used quite often.....]

Soft and safe to you my brother, be your earthly bed. Bright and glorious be thine own rising. Fragrant be the flowers that shall flourish at your grave.

May the earliest buds of Spring, unfold their beauties o'er your resting place and there may the sweetness of the summer's last rose linger longest. Though the cold winds of Autumn may lay them in the dust, and for a time destroy their loveliness. Yet their destruction is not final, and in the springtime they will surely bloom again.

So in the bright morning of your resurrection will your spiritual body rise in immortal beauty, into the life eternal. In realms beyond the skies, where we shall surely meet again.

[.....With brethren standing, I give the following instruction.....]

Brethren, prepare to give the funeral honors.

We consign our brother's body to the earth.

We cherish his memory in our hearts.

We commend his spirit unto God, who gave it.

[.....Motion to brethren to be seated.....]

[.....I turn to casket and step forward some to direct my attention to the departed brother.....]

And so we lay our tribute with our departed brother, among these flowers, and say neither "Good Night" nor "Good-bye," but "Good Morrow" Brother \_\_\_\_\_.

[.....I turn away and step back to previous position.....]

And leaving our brother in God's quiet, go forth into the world again, taking up our march in the generation of the present, press forward to make way for the generations which are to come.

And as surely as each one of us shall come, one by one, to the end of life's journey, may we each share a joyous awareness of having accomplished some good work for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

[.....I ask all present to stand and repeat with me the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in Heaven.....]

[.....I say.....please be seated.....]

[.....I say.....Let us be in prayer.....]

May the blessing of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, rest upon us, comforting and strengthening us in all our ways, and guiding us along the path of righteousness, to everlasting life. Amen. (So mote it be)

[.....I motion to brethren to rise. If widow and children are seated in front and close by, I offer my hand of sympathy to each before leaving and this should take no more than one minute. Then motion for brother with Bible to lead way out and brethren following.....]

[.....This service works well in funeral home setting with an open casket. If a cremation, there are some modifications necessary in floor work and I have made a few changes in the wording. A service at grave side is another matter and requires some modifications. Depending on weather, length of service may also need to be adjusted.....]



*Masonic Memorial Services*  
Selected Scripture Passages

OLD TESTAMENT

Psalms 23  
Psalms 27  
Psalms 46: 1-5, 10-11  
Psalms 90: 1-10, 12  
Psalms 103  
Psalms 121  
Psalms 130  
Psalms 139: 1-12  
Job 19: 23-27  
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-15

NEW TESTAMENT

EPISTLES:

GOSPELS:

Matthew 18: 1-5, 10  
Mark 10: 13-16  
Luke 23: 33, 39-43  
John 11: 17-28  
John 14: 1-7, 15-17, 27

Romans 8: 14-18, 28, 31, 35, 37-39  
Romans 14: 7-9, 10b-12  
Ephesians 3: 14-21  
1 Corinthians 15: 20-22, 35-36, 38a, 42-44  
2 Corinthians 4: 16 thru 5: 1  
1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18  
Revelation 21: 2-7

The Following is a Group of Prayers  
That May be Used During  
Masonic Funeral Services

Dear Father, Giver of all good gifts, Healer of broken hearts, we ask Thy comforting love now, when we have come to pay a last tribute to a beloved one. Give us the consolation to know that death is not the end, but that after the Spirit has discarded the garment used on earth, the glorified robes of eternity will be given to our beloved and that, we too, shall wear such garments when we have laid down this mortal body. Give us a hope and an assurance that we shall meet where there is no parting; no sickness; and no sorrow. Bless us, keep us, and Thine be the glory forever.

*Amen!*

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Great Architect of the Universe, Father of us all, bring into this room, now, the realization of our many blessings. May we recognize that what we have done has been to promote fellowship and a better understanding of people and places. Bless our efforts to serve; forgive anything we have failed to do. And be our shield and our strength, we pray. *Amen!*

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Heavenly and gracious Father of us all, we ask You to bless this assembly, to bless us with Your presence. Let us see You in each other's faces, hear You in each other's voices and ever reflect in all our proceedings the love, grace, peace and harmony which reigns before Your presence. *Amen!*

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Almighty and eternal Spirit, accept our grateful thanksgiving for the heritage that is ours through this Fraternal association, for all those who have gone before us and have been our benefactors as well as the guardians of our traditions; for those whose hopes and dreams have borne fruit through the practice of the virtues taught by our Order. Give us a diligence that is worthy of them, a renewal of our spirit and faith in the eternal values which they have cultivated. Bless us to be worthy stewards in the challenge to continue the great but unfinished work which lies before us. *Amen!*

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Almighty God, renew in us a courage which will prevail, a faith which is sure and unfailing and a willingness to be of service to You and Your purposes. *Amen!*

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Our Father, we lean heavily on our experiences and knowledge of the past with gratitude to You. We live at this moment of the present between the past and the future. May we be strong enough and wise enough not only to use what we have gained, but to plan and prepare boldly for tomorrow. We go forward in Your name as those who have preceded us have done.

Help us to implement our dreams of expanded service, greater love, and more dedication to the spiritual concepts in Freemasonry.

We move ahead confidently in Your name. *Amen!*

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Almighty God, our Father, Thy goodness loved us into life; Thy mercies never fail; our spirits turn to Thee in humble trust. Amid the decay of visible things draw nigh unto our fainting souls, O Thou Invisible Comforter; and as the changes of life leave us poorer and sadder may we know more of the constancy of Thy love and the unfailing riches of Thy sympathy. Our weakness appeals to Thy pity. Hold not Thy peace at our tears. Lead us to the Rock that is higher than we.

We bless Thee for our knowledge through God, that death is not the destruction but the expansion of our life; that it opens the way into new opportunities of service and worship; new disciplines, new joys; that it cannot take us out of our Father's hands, nor separate us from the love of God. We are going whither we cannot see, but we do not leave our Father's house. We are the children of eternal love and underneath are the everlasting arms. Help us to realize the faith of Jesus and the peace of Jesus, that the bereavements that darken our homes may not break our trust in Thee. *Amen!*

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Eternal God, in whose presence a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night; we confess that our life here is as the grass which is renewed in the morning and flourishes...and in the evening fades and withers.

Here in the presence of death we are made aware of mortality. We ask that you teach us to number our days, using them wisely, and looking toward the time when You call us to Yourself.

Hear our prayer, and grant us Your peace and Your life, for we are strangers with You, and travelers, as are all who have gone before us. But You, God, are the same and Your years shall have no end. *Amen!*

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Almighty God, creator and sustainer of all; You have been our dwelling place in all generations. You are our refuge and strength...a very pleasant help in times of trouble.

Grant us Your blessing in this hour, and enable us to put our trust in You, that our spirits may grow calm and our hearts be comforted. Lift our eyes beyond the shadows of earth and help us see the light of eternity which rests with You.

So may we find the grace and strength for this in every time of need. *Amen!*

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Almighty God, we bless Your name in thanks for all those who have entered their rest. We ask especially that You keep alive in us, the memories of our Brother, \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called out of this world. Grant that every memory which turns our hearts from things seen to things unseen, may lead us always upward to You, until we too come to the place of rest You have prepared for Your faithful people.

We also remember before You the family, relatives and friends who mourn the earthly loss of our Brother. May the sense of Your love and sympathy minister to their grief and loneliness. Touch their hearts with the healing power of Your presence and grant them the strength to carry out Your will in their lives as their expression of gratitude for the life of \_\_\_\_\_, whose love they will always remember and cherish. *Amen!*

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O God, thou Comforter of thy children, thou God of love and tenderness, we pray for those who mourn at this time. We cannot - and we need not - tell their sorrow unto Thee. In the stillness of our hearts we ask for them Thy sustaining grace. Be Thou their stay in this sore trial, the strength

of the fainting heart and the light of the darkened home. Open their eyes to see the Father's house on high, and may they be assured that their beloved has found a better life and the more perfect rest in Thee.

And may this visitation of death be Thy voice speaking to us, each one. May it minister to a truer and holier life in our souls. May our passing days be rich in those things which death cannot take away from us; and do Thou strengthen us to live that life of faith and righteousness, of charity and peace, of usefulness and service, which makes the last earthly change but a step nearer to Thee, our everlasting refuge and our home. Hear us for Thy mercy's sake. In Your name. *Amen!*

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We thank Thee for the life and ministry of this good man, our friend; the law of kindness was on his tongue. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer, given to hospitality; having fought the good fight, and finished the course, and kept the faith, grant to him the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. *Amen!*

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Thy children thank Thee for the ministry of this \_\_\_\_\_, whom Thou has taken from our earthly fellowship. \_\_\_\_\_ has refreshed our souls with \_\_\_\_\_ smiling trustfulness, \_\_\_\_\_ gentleness and the strength of \_\_\_\_\_ love. \_\_\_\_\_ has made us glad in \_\_\_\_\_ living and called forth the richest treasures of our hearts. We rejoice in a hope that is big with immortality and in the happy reunion (of this \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ father) in the Unseen Home of Thy love beyond the mystery where he waits our coming. *Amen!*

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*Our Father, who art in Heaven, we commend into Thy hands of mercy, most merciful Father, the soul of this our Brother departed, beseeching Thine infinite goodness to give us grace to live in Thy love and to die in Thy favor, that both this our Brother and we may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall pronounce to all that love and feel Thee, say, "Come ye blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Grant this, merciful Father. Amen!*