

# Memorial Candle Lighting Service

## Prelude

### Invocation:

May the light of God surround you,  
the love of God enfold you,  
the presence of God watch you.

We come into this sacred space this morning to remember our losses,  
to grieve, to find comfort and to walk on the path toward healing and to worship.

We invite you to bring to mind a loss that has affected you deeply  
– death of a loved one, relationship, a job, a dream, loss of health  
– a loss that needs healing.

### Christ Candle:

We bring this remembering of endings into the presence of God.  
The presence of God symbolized by this Christ candle,  
the visible reminder of the invisible Spirit walking with us.

### Call to Worship:

*Hymnal Worship Book 661*

### Song:

*Hymnal Worship Book 634 Let Hope and Sorrow Now Unite*

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus trudged along with heavy hearts. The story of Jesus, which had filled their lives briefly with hope and meaning had ended badly, very badly. It ended with the death of their hero.

As these two disciples walked along the dusty road on that Easter morning they were talking. To the disciples the death of Jesus seemed the end of the dream, the end of everything. They were lost in their sorrow and hardly noticed the stranger walking with them. When the stranger did enter the conversation he encouraged them to talk. They eagerly poured out the whole story to the stranger – good parts, sad and difficult parts. The stranger in an unexpected turn of events opened their hearts to the Scriptures and their eyes to recognize Jesus walking with them.

It was no stranger but Jesus walking with them, encouraging them to talk, to weep, to gain new insights, to find comfort.

You are invited this morning to walk down the dusty road of sorrow and loss. You also may find your hearts opening to Scripture and your eyes recognizing in a new way Jesus walking with you.

### **Memory Candle:**

We light a candle of memory of the persons and/or loss,  
the deaths and endings we each are remembering this morning.

This is a fragile flame.

It can be extinguished with a gust of air.

Or, if left to burn,

the flame will eventually consume the candle.

A candle has its allotted span of time to burn.

Yet, while the candle burns

it radiates light and heat.

So, long after the candle is extinguished or consumed,  
the fire of life and love still burns.

### **Scripture Text:**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (excerpts)

To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die;

A time to weep and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance;

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to keep and a time to cast away.

We hold our experience of a death, a loss and an ending.

Some of us hold them close, some more at a distance.

Together, let us stop to light candles – or markers on the road

– markers that hold the light towards healing.

And let us pause, each time, to hear Scripture.

### **Candle of Community:**

We light this candle to signify community

– the communities where those who died did their living,  
and were cared for in their dying;  
the communities where our loss occurred;  
and the community we create today in our being together.  
We need one another in our grief,  
in our loss  
and in our starting again.  
We each need a place to be really heard.

**Scripture Texts:**

Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:2

**Song:**

*Hymnal Worship Book 353* Lord, listen to your children praying

**Candle of Grief:**

We light this candle to acknowledge our grief.  
We cannot reverse the loss.  
We can, however, enter fully into the pain and hurt of our loss  
and thereby slowly move through  
to a measure of healing.

**Scripture Texts:**

Psalm 31:9-10, 14

**Song:**

*Hymnal Worship Book 353* Lord, listen to your children praying

**Candle of Joy:**

We light this candle to signify that our sorrow and joy are woven together.  
We cannot deny the grief that death or loss brings.  
We must let it spill from our hearts.  
We must let our sorrow have its time,  
because our joy has had its time.  
It is because we knew, loved and delighted in our relationships we remember today  
that we feel such sorrow in their endings.  
Our joy came first.

Because of the joy, we feel such sorrow now.  
Though sorrow is strong when we remember our grief,  
    there will be a new day  
    when once again our joy in life will be greater than our sorrow.

**Scripture Text:**

Psalm 40:1-30

**Song:**

*Hymnal Worship Book* 353 Lord, listen to your children praying

**Candle of Mystery:**

We light this candle to recognize the mystery of life and death.  
In awe and wonder our thoughts stretch to understand  
    where we come from when we are born  
    and where we go when we die.

**Scripture Texts:**

Genesis 1 (excerpts)

In the beginning ... God created humankind in God's own image ... male and female God  
    created them ... and breathed into them the breath of life.

John 11:25; Romans 8:38

**Song:**

*Hymnal Worship Book* 353 Lord, listen to your children praying

**Candle of Thanksgiving:**

We light this candle in thanksgiving.  
We are thankful for the gift of life,  
    even though life does not come without death and endings.  
We are thankful for the persons  
    whose lives touched and changed our lives.  
We are thankful that memories can help heal grief  
    and bring us into deeper understandings of our self,  
    the world  
    and our relationship with God.

We are thankful for love that never dies.

**Scripture Text:**

Lamentations 3:19-23

Therefore, I have hope! And sometimes, even if only for a moment, our eyes are opened and we recognize the Spirit of Jesus walking with us.

**Song:**

*Hymnal Worship Book 614* In the bulb there is a flower

**Extinguish Memory Candle** *(optional)*

The light of the persons we remember has changed  
to shine in another time and place with God.

The light of God remains with us and accompanies us

– as do the lights of community, grief, joy, mystery and thanksgiving.

**Lord's Prayer**

**Benediction:**

And now may the peace of Christ which passes all understanding

The peace that comes with acceptance and thanksgiving

The peace that rises above the strains of the earth

Be and abide with us all

Both this day and forevermore. Amen.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College (Canada), 2000.

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