

Memorial Program Examples Readings from Scripture

11/18/22: All sections have been vetted by various Harvard Chaplains with the exception of the Buddhist section.

Christian

Psalm 23

(KJV)

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 anointest 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.

(NRSV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

—

Matthew 5:3–10

(KJV)

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(NRSV)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 11:28–30

(KJV)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

(NRSV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

John 14:1–3

(KJV)

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 ye may be also.

(NRSV)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–4

(KJV)

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.

(NRSV)

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to pluck up what 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.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Hymn to Joy

Lyrics by Henry van Dyke (1852–1933)

Music by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

Mortals, join the happy chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
Father love is reigning o'er us,

Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us Sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
Lyrics by Isaac Watts (1674–1748)
Music by William Croft (1677–1727)

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all who breathe away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guide while life shall last,
And our eternal home.

Amazing Grace
Lyrics by John Newton (1725–1807)
Music from *The Virginia Harmony* (1831)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

[Most renditions will repeat the first verse here before ending, but you may choose to incorporate the other verses as you see fit]

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Jewish

The Mourner's Kaddish

Version 1

Yit-ga-dal ve-yit-ka-dash she-mei ra-ba
be-al-ma di-ve-ra-chi-re-u-tei,
ve-yam-lich mal-chu-tei be-cha-yei-chon
u-ve-yo-mei-chon u-ve-cha-yei
de-chol beit Yis-ra-eil,
ba-a-ga-la u-vi-ze-man ka-riv,
ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.
Ye-hei she-mei ra-ba me-va-rach
le-a-lam u-le-al-mei al-ma-ya.
Yit-ba-rach ve-yish-ta-bach,
ve-yit-pa-ar ve-yit-ro-mam ve-yit-na-sei,
ve-yit-ha-dar ve-yit-a-leh ve-yit-ha-lal
she-mei de-ku-de-sha, be-rich hu,
le-ei-la min kol bi-re-cha-ta ve-shi-ra-ta,
tush-be-cha-ta ve-ne-che-ma-ta
da-a-mi-ran be-al-ma, ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.
Ye-hei she-la-ma ra-ba min she-ma-ya
ve-cha-yim a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,
ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.
O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh
sha-lom a-lei-nu ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,
ve-al kol yo-sh-vey te-vel
ve-i-me-ru: a-mein.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא
בְּעַלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי
דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזֶמַן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ
לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח,
וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא,
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמְתָּא
דְאָמְרִין בְּעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מְרַשְׁמֵיָּא
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה
שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

May Your Great Name grow in holiness in the world created as You willed. May Your majesty rule in our lifetimes, in our day, and in the lifetimes of all the House of Israel; speedily and soon, and we answer: Amen. May Your Great Name be blessed for ever and eternity. May the Name of the Holy Blessed One be praised and lauded, glorified and exalted, honored and respected beyond any blessing, song, hymn or psalm that we on earth could offer, and we answer: Amen. May the great peace of the heavens be ours; with life for all Israel, and we answer: Amen. May the source of peace in the heavens bring peace to us and to all Israel and to all who dwell on earth, and we answer: Amen

Version 2

Hebrew:

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי
דְּכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ
הוּא, לְעֵלְמָא מִן-כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא וּשְׁרָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא דְּאֲמִירָן בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן-שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-כָּל-
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוֵמֵינוּ, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל-
כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Transliteration:

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba b'alma di-v'ra
chirutei, v'yamlich malchutei b'chayeichon
uvyomeichon uvchayei d'chol beit yisrael, ba'agala
uvizman kariv, v'im'ru: "amen."

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach, v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam
v'yitnaseh, v'yithadar v'yit'aleh v'yit'halal sh'mei
d'kud'sha, b'rich hu,

l'eila min-kol-birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata
v'nechemata da'amiran b'alma, v'im'ru: "amen."

Y'hei shlama raba min-sh'maya v'chayim aleinu
v'al-kol-yisrael, v'im'ru: "amen."

Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu
v'al kol-yisrael, v'imru: "amen."

Translation:

Glorified and sanctified be His great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will.

May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

El Maleh Rachamim: Recasting the Language of Loss

Hebrew:

אל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה
נכונה על כנפי השכינה במעלות קדושים וטהורים
קזוהר הרקיע מזהירים (נשמת) פלוני בן פלוני
שקהל לעולמו בעבור שנדבו צדקה בעד הזכרת,
נשמתו. בגן עדן תהא מנוחתו לכן בעל הרחמים
יסתירהו בסתר כנפיו לעולמים, ויצר בצרו,
החיים את נשמתו ה' הוא נחלתו, וננוח, בשלום על
משקבו ונאמר אמן

Transliteration:

Al molay rachamim, shochayn bam'romim, ham-tzay m'nucha
n'chona al kanfay Hash'china, b'ma-alot k'doshim ut-horim k'zo-har
haraki-a mazhirim, et nishmat (Name of the Deceased) she-halach
l-olomo, ba-avur shenodvu tz'dakah b'ad hazkarat nishmata. B'Gan
Ayden t'hay m'nuchata; la-chayn Ba-al Harachamim yas-tire-ha
b'sayter k'nafav l'olamim, v'yitz-ror bitz-ror hacha-yim et nishmatah,
Ado-nay Hu na-chalatah, v'tanu-ach b'shalom al mishkavah.
V'nomar: Amayn.

Translation:

God, full of mercy, who dwells in the heights, provide a sure rest upon the Divine Presence's wings,
within the range of the holy, pure and glorious, whose shining resemble the sky's, to the soul of [woman's
name, daughter of, parent's name] for a charity was given to the memory of his soul. Therefore, the
Master of Mercy will protect him forever, from behind the hiding of his wings, and will tie his soul with
the rope of life. The Everlasting is his heritage, and he shall rest peacefully upon his lying place, and let
us say: Amen.

—

“Life Is a Journey”

Rabbi Alvin Fine

Birth is a beginning and death a destination;
And life is a journey.
From childhood to maturity and youth to old age.
From innocence to awareness to ignorance to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion and then perhaps to wisdom.
From weakness to strength or from strength to weakness and often back again.
From health to sickness and we pray to health again.
From offense to forgiveness, from loneliness to love,
From joy to gratitude, from pain to compassion.
From grief to understanding, from fear to faith;
From defeat to defeat to defeat until, looking backward or ahead,
We see that victory lies not at some high point along the way,

But in having made the journey, step by step, a sacred pilgrimage.
Birth is a beginning and death a destination
And life is a journey.

—

“We Remember Them”

Rabbi Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer

We remember them
Whom once the bell called to the hours of our youth.
We remember them
Who shared the weathers of the young world
with us.
In the rising of the sun and in its going down
We remember them.
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
We remember them.
In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them.
In the blueness of the sky and in the heat of summer
We remember them.
In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them.
In the year's beginning and at its end
We remember them.
In our joys and griefs, our gains and losses
We remember them.
So long as we live, they live
For we remember them.

Muslim

Dua of Salat al-Janazah

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا
وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا وَذَكَرِنَا وَأُنثَانَا اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ
أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَاحْيِهِ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ مِنَّا
فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ

English translation:

O Allah, forgive our living and our dead, those present and those absent, our young and our old, our males and our females. O Allah, whom among us You keep alive, then let such a life be upon Islam, and whom among us You take unto Yourself, then let such a death be upon faith. O Allah, do not deprive us of his reward and do not let us stray after him.

“On the Day I Die”

by Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

On the day I die, when I’m being
carried toward the grave, don’t weep.

Don’t say, “He’s gone! He’s gone!”
Death has nothing to do with going away.

The sun sets and the moon sets,
but they’re not gone. Death
is a coming together.

The tomb looks like a prison,
but it’s really release into Union.

The human seed goes down in the ground
like a bucket into the well where Joseph is.

It grows and comes up full
of some unimagined beauty.

Your mouth closes here
and immediately opens
with a shout of joy there.

Buddhist

The Heart Sutra

Body is nothing more than emptiness, emptiness is nothing more than body. The body is exactly empty, and emptiness is exactly body.

The other four aspects of human existence—feeling, thought, will, and consciousness—are likewise nothing more than emptiness, and emptiness nothing more than they.

All things are empty: Nothing is born, nothing dies, nothing is pure, nothing is stained, nothing increases, and nothing decreases.

So, in emptiness, there is no body, no feeling, no thought, no will, no consciousness.

There are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind.

There is no seeing, no hearing, no smelling, no tasting, no touching, no imagining.

There is nothing seen, nor heard, nor smelled, nor tasted, nor touched, nor imagined.

There is no ignorance, and no end to ignorance.

There is no old age and death, and no end to old age and death.

There is no suffering, no cause of suffering, no end to suffering, no path to follow.

There is no attainment of wisdom, and no wisdom to attain.

The Bodhisattvas rely on the Perfection of Wisdom, and so with no delusions, they feel no fear, and have Nirvana here and now.

All the Buddhas, past, present, and future, rely on the Perfection of Wisdom, and live in full enlightenment.

The Perfection of Wisdom is the greatest mantra. It is the clearest mantra, the highest mantra, the mantra that removes all suffering.

This is truth that cannot be doubted.

Say it so:

Gaté,
gaté,
paragaté,
parasamgaté.
Bodhi!
Svaha!
—

[English translation]

Gone,
gone,
gone over,
gone fully over.
Awakened!
So be it!

Dying Prayer from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*

Through your blessing, grace, and guidance, through the power of the light that streams from you:
May all my negative karma, destructive emotions, obscurations, and blockages be purified and removed,
May I know myself forgiven for all the harm I may have thought and done,
May I accomplish this profound practice of phowa*, and die a good and peaceful death,
And through the triumph of my death, may I be able to benefit all other beings, living or dead.

* “transference of consciousness at the time of death,” or “mindstream transference,” or “conscious dying,” or “enlightenment without meditation.”

—

Note to chaplain: This does not appear scriptural but is clearly from a Buddhist tradition, however contemporary. If you recognize this please let us know if we have the correct text.

“Golden Chain of Love” by Dorothy Poulton

I am a link
In Amida Buddha’s Golden Chain of Love
that stretches around the world.
I must keep my link bright and strong.
I will try to be kind and gentle
to every living thing
and protect all who are weaker than myself.
I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts,
to say pure and beautiful words,
and to do pure and beautiful deeds,
knowing that on what I do now
depends not only my happiness or unhappiness
but also that of others.
May every link
in Amida’s Golden Chain of Love
be bright and strong
and may we all attain perfect peace.

Namo Amida Butsu

Hindu

Selection from the *Bhagavad Gita*

The people who see me in everything and everything within me
will not be lost to me, nor
will I ever be lost to them.

They who are rooted in oneness realize that I am
in every being; wherever
they go, they remain in me.

When they see all being as equal
in suffering or in joy
because they are like themselves
that person has grown perfect in yoga.

The soul is neither born, nor does it ever die;
nor having once existed, does it ever cease to be.
The soul is without birth, eternal, immortal, and ageless.
It is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

Antyesti

Burn him not up, nor quite consume him, Agni: let not his body or his skin be scattered, O all possessing Fire, when thou hast matured him, then send him on his way unto the fathers. When thou hast made him ready, all possessing Fire, then do thou give him over to the fathers, when he attains unto the life that waits him, he shall become subject to the will of gods. The Sun receives thine eye, the Wind thy Prana (life-principle, breath; go, as thy merit is, to earth or heaven. Go, if it be thy lot, unto the waters; go, make thine home in plants with all thy members.

Bahá'í

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

“[A]lthough the loss of a son is indeed heart-breaking and beyond the limits of human endurance, yet one who knoweth and understandeth is assured that the son hath not been lost but, rather, hath stepped from this world into another, and she will find him in the divine realm. That reunion shall be for eternity, while in this world separation is inevitable and bringeth with it a burning grief.

... That beloved child addresseth thee from the hidden world: ‘O thou kind Mother, thank divine Providence that I have been freed from a small and gloomy cage and, like the birds of the meadows, have soared to the divine world—a world which is spacious, illumined, and ever gay and jubilant. Therefore, lament not, O Mother, and be not grieved; I am not of the lost, nor have I been obliterated and destroyed. I have shaken off the mortal form and have raised my banner in this spiritual world. Following this separation is everlasting companionship. ‘Thou shalt find me in the heaven of the Lord, immersed in an ocean of light.’ ”