

Lighting of individual candles of remembrance

People may come forward to light an individual memory candle.

This may be done in silent remembrance, or, if a name has been chosen it can be mentioned aloud.

Following the lighting of the individual candles of remembrance the group stands together for the conclusion.

Conclusion

Though never came to birth,
Never living
Never dies
But continues its creation
In the heart of its Creator.
And so, the symphony,
The masterpiece
The stillborn child
Lives eternally
In a mother's loving heart;
In the heart
Of its creator .

The Leaving

In this season of your grief may you find a peace that will hold you

On this day of remembering may you grasp the strength that is offered you;

In the unfolding of your future may you hold on to the hope that was yours and go on believing in the future and trusting your dreams.

In all of this may the Divine Presence encompass you and day by day.

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Women and Newborn Health Service

A Ritual of Remembrance

Pastoral Care Service



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Introduction

We have gathered here to remember those tiny babies who have touched our hearts but whose development journey has suddenly ceased. Hidden to the world, unknown to most of the people around you the loss of your pregnancy may be otherwise unacknowledged. Subsequently you may be finding the experience quite lonely and confusing.

The loss of your pregnancy is no less a grief than any other life loss, a shattered dream, a loss of happiness and possibly a loss of hope in the future. It may also be a time of questioning all that you may have once held as secure or trustworthy. For some the experience may include a choice for which there was no perfect solution.

We all have different ways of understanding the meaning of life and death and your tragedy could understandably lead you to question your beliefs, reach for your traditions and faith or perhaps reject what you've always understood.

Today, let us remember and honour those for whom there will be no grave site to visit, no grave to decorate, no headstone or plaque to remind us of their existence. The only gift you had from them was the experience of their short time within. Through this they have touched you, become part of your lives, and are now carried by you in memory.

This short service is simply an opportunity to remember and acknowledge those whose faces we did not see but who are no less real in your experience. To do this we will use words, ritual and symbolism as a way of recognition and taking a small step in the long road towards the healing of memory.

If you have a specific reading you would like to feature during your service, please discuss this with our Pastoral Care Services beforehand.

The essential symbol will be that of the candle.

The light of a flame has always been symbolic across many cultures and beliefs.

In this context it symbolises that the tiny lives whom we recall today, flickering into life within the darkness of the womb have become inexplicably both light and darkness, life and death to us. During the service you will be invited to light a candle which you may take home to re-light on special occasions such as the date you would have expected to give birth to your baby.

The lighting of symbolic candles

The first candle we light represents our grief

The second candle represents our courage

The third candle represents our memories

The fourth candle represents our love

The fifth candle represents meanings, transcendence, faith or religious traditions.

Readings for the Gathering

A Reading from the Judaeo Christian Tradition, Psalm 139: 12 - 16

You created my inmost parts:

You knit me together in my mothers womb.

You know my soul and my bones were not hidden from you: while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my limbs when they were still unfinished:

All of them were written in your book.

They were fashioned day by day:

And not one was late in growing

A Reflection on Loss and Timelessness

Their time did not come

Their time did not complete

They belong to time and timelessness –

To Gods eternity or Gods Self

To the forces of nature

To the forces of the Universe

As it is and not as it would be.

But their time is also now

Too soon, too fast, too incomplete

Yet it must be given voice

Their time resides heavily within us and over us

Beyond us and before us,

and sometimes like the calm after a storm

Their lingering presence envelopes us

as mist over a shrouded valley,

Calm now, damp with our tears, the dew of heaven.

Our burning pain is refined deeply, lovingly and completely.