

**Service of Burial or  
Memorial for a Stillborn Child or for  
Use after Miscarriage**

**The Greeting**

P: Blessed be God, who creates us, redeems us and comforts us. God deals graciously with all who mourn so that they may give the burden of their loss into God's hands and know they will be comforted.

**A Hymn may be sung.**

The parents may publicly name their child.

P: Names have great meaning for us. God's only Child was named "Jesus," meaning 'salvation.' He was the way of eternal life and the sign of God's great love for us. Psalm 139 tells us that before we were born, God knew us, as well. We name this child today so that we will remember what he/she has meant to us.

What will you name this Child?

Parents: We name him/her \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(because\_\_\_\_\_).

P: Child, we call you \_\_\_\_\_. You will be remembered by this name. Receive it as a sign of your special place in our hearts and in the heart of God.

**Liturgy of the Word**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: O God, your son took the little children to himself and blessed them. Be with us and help us to know your lovingkindness and mercy so that we may give this child/pregnancy into your care, and find comfort in your presence.

**Lessons or psalms may be read.**

**Words of Comfort are spoken.**

**A hymn may be sung.**

P: God has promised new heavens and a new earth. When that day comes, we will never have to mourn the loss of a child. There will be no sickness, no death, no tears. But today we come to God for comfort. We grieve the loss of a child, along with all our plans and hopes and dreams.

**The Apostle's Creed may be said.**

P: We are God's people, gathered together in baptism, and living together in trust and hope and mutual comfort, Let us confess our faith.

Prayers are said for the child/pregnancy, the parents and all who mourn, for trust in God in the midst of bewildering circumstances, for forgiveness and for eternal life.

Prayers may conclude with this petition.

P: Gracious God, you sent Jesus as a little child, and by him have brought us to yourself and destroyed death. Give us strength for the days that lie ahead. Help us to know that your salvation is sure. Comfort us and give us hope, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer is prayed.**

**The Commendation**

P: Grant us grace, O God, to entrust name this child/this pregnancy with all its hopes and dreams into your lovingkindness, knowing that your care for us never ends.

C: Amen.

P: The Lord bless us and bring us to eternal life.

C: Amen.

P: Let us go forth in peace.

C: In the name of Christ. Amen.

**A hymn may be sung.**

1. This service may be used as a funeral service if remains are present, or- as a memorial service.
  2. Because of great medical advances, the loss of a perinatal or postnatal child/pregnancy is viewed more and more by our society as an unnatural tragedy. This ritual may be used to address the family's feelings of loss, grief, bewilderment and guilt. It affirms the significance of their loss and gives voice to their grief and questions. It offers consolation and hope.
  3. The parents should be offered a great deal of freedom in this service. They may want to view the body, to keep a memento such as a picture or a footprint, or to name the child. These are aids in the grieving process and should not be discouraged. They may wish to be alone, to have only the private prayers of friends and families, or they may wish to gather publicly. A service in home, hospital or church sanctuary should be an option.
- (Some of these suggestions come from article by Elaine J. Ramshaw, "Ritual of Stillbirth: Exploring the Issues", Worship, Vol. 56, No. 6 (1988), p. 533-8. See also Ronna Case, "When Birth Is Also a Funeral", Journal of Pastoral Care 32 (March 1978) 7.)

**Suggested lessons**

Is. 25.6-9

Ps. 23

Rom.8.26-27

Luke18.15-17

Is. 40.27-31	Ps. 46	Rom. 8.37-39	Matt. 1:28—30
Is. 65:17-18,20a	Ps. 121	1 John 3.1-2	John 6.37-40
	Ps. 139	Rev. 21.2-7	John 14.1-6

Suggested LBW Hymns:

263    474    334    324    338    456    479