

# Readings for Funerals



**Love**  
**Lament**  
**Salvation**  
**Hope**



Richmond  
Team Ministry

# Choosing readings for a funeral

Whether you are choosing readings for a loved one's funeral, or thinking about readings for your own, we hope that this booklet is helpful. It contains 25 passages from the bible which may be suitable for your needs.

The readings in this booklet are only suggestions. You are welcome to choose any reading from the bible: perhaps a favourite story or a Psalm which is important to you or your loved one. If you have a theme or thought in mind which is not covered here, please do speak to your priest, and they will be happy to help you work out which passages are right for you.

You may also wish to only use a part of one of the passages which we have included. For example, we have included the whole story of the raising of Lazarus, but you may wish only to include Thomas' faith, or the grief of Lazarus' sisters and their hope, or Jesus' grief, or just the miracle. Again, your priest can help you make any decisions about pairing down your chosen reading.

Our recommendation is that you include at least one reading from the bible, but you may also like to include a reading from another source. You might also think about a passage from a novel or speech which has a particular significance for you or your loved one. At the end of this booklet are included the titles of some poems which you may like to consider.

# Love

*Psalm 23*

## **The Lord is my Shepherd**

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.

## **Because he has heard my voice**

*Psalm 116*

I love the Lord, because he has heard  
my voice and my supplications.  
Because he inclined his ear to me,  
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on the name of the Lord:  
'O Lord, I pray, save my life!'

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.

The Lord protects the simple;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return, O my soul, to your rest,  
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling.

I walk before the Lord  
in the land of the living.

I kept my faith, even when I said,  
'I am greatly afflicted';

I said in my consternation,  
'Everyone is a liar.'

What shall I return to the Lord  
for all his bounty to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the Lord,

I will pay my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful ones.

O Lord, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your serving-maid.  
You have loosed my bonds.

I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice  
and call on the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows to the Lord  
in the presence of all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord!

**You know me**

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down,

and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,

O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before,

and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,

and the light around me become night',

even the darkness is not dark to you;

the night is as bright as the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.  
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end—I am still with you.

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases**     *Lamentations 3:19-33*

The thought of my affliction and my homelessness  
is wormwood and gall!

My soul continually thinks of it  
and is bowed down within me.

But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,  
'therefore I will hope in him.'

The Lord is good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul that seeks him.

It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the Lord.

It is good for one to bear  
the yoke in youth,

to sit alone in silence  
when the Lord has imposed it,

to put one's mouth to the dust  
(there may yet be hope),

to give one's cheek to the smiter,  
and be filled with insults.

For the Lord will not  
reject for ever.

Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;  
for he does not willingly afflict  
or grieve anyone.

## **A light burden**

*Matthew 11:25-30*

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that 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.'

## **God so loved the world**

*John 3:13-21*

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

## **God is love**

*1 John 4:7-19*

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us.



# Lament

*Psalm 34*

## Comfort in the Lord

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me,  
and delivered me from all my fears.  
Look to him, and be radiant;  
so your faces shall never be ashamed.  
This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,  
and was saved from every trouble.  
The angel of the Lord encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.  
O taste and see that the Lord is good;  
happy are those who take refuge in him.  
O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,  
for those who fear him have no want.  
The young lions suffer want and hunger,  
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Come, O children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
Which of you desires life,  
and covets many days to enjoy good?  
Keep your tongue from evil,  
and your lips from speaking deceit.  
Depart from evil, and do good;  
seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their cry.

The face of the Lord is against evildoers,  
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.  
When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears,  
and rescues them from all their troubles.  
The Lord is near to the broken-hearted,  
and saves the crushed in spirit.

### **For everything there is a season**

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 & 14*

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;  
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;  
a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.  
I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to  
it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in  
awe before him.

### **Weeping in Ramah**

*Jeremiah 31:15-17*

Thus says the Lord:  
A voice is heard in Ramah,  
lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
she refuses to be comforted for her children,  
because they are no more.

Thus says the Lord:

Keep your voice from weeping,

and your eyes from tears;

for there is a reward for your work,

says the Lord:

they shall come back from the land of the enemy;

there is hope for your future,

says the Lord:

your children shall come back to their own country.

## **The death and resurrection of Lazarus**

*John 11:1-44*

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about

their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

# Salvation

## Neither death nor life...

*Romans 8:31-39*

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Where, O death, is your sting?

*1 Corinthians 15:50-57*

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **What cannot be seen is eternal**

*2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18*

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you

[...]

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

## **One died for all**

*2 Corinthians 5:14-21*

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## **In life or in death**

*Philippians 1:20-26*

It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

## **Our citizenship is in heaven**

*Philippians 3:12-21*

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

## **The dead in Christ will rise first**

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no

hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.



# Hope

*Job 19:23-27*

## **I shall see God**

○ that my words were written down!  
○ that they were inscribed in a book!  
○ that with an iron pen and with lead  
they were engraved on a rock for ever!  
For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;  
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
then in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see on my side,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!

## **The house of the Lord**

*Psalms 27*

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?  
One thing I asked of the Lord,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple.  
For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.  
Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,

and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!  
'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'  
Your face, Lord, do I seek.  
Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!  
If my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will take me up.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!

## **Vision of the Temple**

*Isaiah 6:1-8*

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.'

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it

and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

## **New heavens and a new earth**

*Isaiah 65:17-25*

For I am about to create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
or come to mind.  
But be glad and rejoice for ever  
in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,  
and its people as a delight.  
I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,  
or the cry of distress.  
No more shall there be in it  
an infant that lives but a few days,  
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.  
They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
They shall not labour in vain,  
or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—  
and their descendants as well.  
Before they call I will answer,  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;  
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
says the Lord.

### **My Father's house has many rooms**

*John 14:1-7*

'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. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

### **The New Heaven and the New Earth**

*Revelation 21:1-7*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things

new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

## **The Throne Room**

*Revelation 4*

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,  
‘Holy, holy, holy,  
the Lord God the Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come.’

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

'You are worthy, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honour and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed and were created.'

# Other readings

## Love

When you died (verse 5)	<i>Pamela Gillian</i>
If I should go before the rest of you	<i>Joyce Grenfell</i>
Think of me then	<i>Asa James</i>
Remember	<i>Christina Rosetti</i>

## Lament

We say the dead depart	<i>David Constantine</i>
The Suicides	<i>Janet Frame</i>
Breath	<i>Patricia Pogson</i>
Music, when soft voices die	<i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i>
Time does not bring relief	<i>Edna St Vincent Millay</i>
In Memoriam A.H.H. (Four stanzas from LXXXV)	<i>Alfred, Lord Tennyson</i>

## Salvation

I see myself now at the end of my journey	<i>John Bunyan</i>
Death, be not proud	<i>John Donne</i>

## Hope

I thought I'd write my own obituary	<i>Simon Armitage</i>
Rest	<i>Alan Curtis</i>
Resurrection	<i>Vladimir Holan</i>
Heaven-Haven	<i>Gerard Manley Hopkins</i>
Notes from the other side	<i>Jane Kenyon</i>
In Blackwater Woods	<i>Mary Oliver</i>
If Death is Kind	<i>Sara Teasdale</i>
'Good night, Willie Lee, I'll see you in the morning,'	<i>Alice Walker</i>

