

## Outline of a Cemetery Blessing

The assembled group gathers at one point in the cemetery, moving towards their family graves at the final part of the ceremony. Candles, flowers etc will be blessed during the service, so they should be to hand. A focal point of flowers and holy water could be placed in front of a lectern or similar stand.

### **Opening Hymn:**

#### **Greeting and Welcome**

In the name of the Father ....

The grace and peace of God our Father, who raised Jesus from the dead be with you all.

R: And with your Spirit.

#### **Reflection:**

With death a light goes out in our midst. Our lives are darker without our loved ones. Their death can cause a darkness to descend on us. And so, in times of darkness, we turn to the one who is the light of the world. Only Christ – the light of the world – can offer a way forward in our heartache. This is the hour to recognise that we are not alone in our pain. Now more than ever we need to lift up the lamp of our faith and allow God into our lives.

#### **We listen to Gods Word for us today.**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said; 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but you will have the light of life. The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in darkness, you do not know where you are going. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness. I have come not to judge the world, but to save the world.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

#### **Blessing of cemetery candles and lights:**

All present invited to hold out any candles or lights that they will place on the graves.

Bless these lights Lord; May they remind us of Jesus who is the light of the world. By your grace may we always recognise your light in our lives, and may those who have died know your healing embrace.

#### **Blessing of flowers and mementos for graves:**

All present invited to hold out any flowers or other mementos that they will place on the graves.

Bless all these gifts which we place on the graves of those we love. We give thanks today for their lives. May these gifts serve as reminders of their goodness and generosity to us.

All are now invited to move in procession towards their family grave and to reverently place candles, flowers etc on the graves. As we process, we are led in the singing of the hymn:

The Lords my Shepherd

### **Blessing of graves:**

Families now stand around their grave, as the presider sprinkles each grave with holy water and leads us in prayer. Some traditional music might be played at this point to maintain a prayerful atmosphere.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord  
And let your perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed , through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

### **Concluding Prayer**

The Lord be with you And with your Spirit

May God the Father, who created each of us in love, bless all of us gathered and all those we remember today. Amen

May God the Son, who wept at the grave of Lazarus, lead us, even in our time of grief, into wholeness and healing. Amen

May God the Spirit, who is with us in our pain, console and inspire us as we give thanks for those we love. Amen

May the holy and eternal Trinity grant  
To the living, grace  
To the departed, rest  
To the world, peace  
And to us, and all the faithful, life everlasting  
Let us go from this place in peace, to love and serve the Lord and each other.  
Amen

### **Concluding hymn: I am the bread of life**