

A Celebration of Life

Lighting the Candles

In our time of grief, we light a flame of sharing, the flame of ongoing life. In this time when we search for understanding and serenity in the face of our deep grief, we light this candle of hope and peace, praying that this small flame of light guides us in the days and months ahead.

Greeting

Hello and welcome. I won't say "Good Morning" because this day, this moment does *not* feel good at all. None of us one week ago could have imagined that this is how we would spend our Friday. But here we are, a group of friends and family come together to say goodbye to Dilara; a young woman whose life ended much too soon!

It is good to be with each other – to be a support for one another; to laugh and to cry; to find hope, to grieve; to scream and shout in anger and pain; to comfort and to hold each other; to try to make sense of why such a beautiful person died so soon. Whatever you're feeling, whatever you've been feeling since you heard the tragic news of Dilara's death – it is ok. There is no right way to travel this journey of grief. I pray that today you will find some measure of peace in giving thanks for Dilara's life.

MUSIC I Found a Way from the Drake and Josh Show

Today is a hard day for everyone in this room. It is beyond what words can describe. Your emotions have been all over the map. You've experienced deep, deep pain and anguish, anger,

frustration, guilt, fear. Your appetite's gone haywire, sleep is just out of reach. And chances are there's been a one-word question looming over your every thought about Dilara – "Why? Why? Why?" How did it come to this? Maybe you're asking yourself what you missed, blaming yourself for not seeing the signs that for her life had become unbearable. You know, all the coulda shoulda woulda's Why didn't I call more? Why didn't I pop over that morning? Could I have stopped her somehow? Was our last meeting a positive one? And, in reality, the only way that any of us could have stopped Dilara from taking her life, would have been to be there at that very moment to stop her. And not only then, but to be with her every waking moment of every single day.

What happened last week wasn't your fault. It wasn't Dilara's fault...it was no one's fault.

The weeks ahead will find each of us mourning and grieving in our own and different ways. There is no right way to grieve, and grieving death by suicide is made more difficult and complicated by feelings of anger and guilt. We may feel angry at the medical professionals who couldn't save her; angry at the communities she was a part of for not seeing that something was wrong; anger at ourselves and others who love her; angry at our God; and you know what? Very likely even angry at Dilara herself.

Her world was upside down – chaos like a vigorously shaken snow globe. We may never know what was happening for her. We can't judge what went on in her mind, heart or soul. We can only know that she's not suffering now.

Remember - Her death does not define her life

When you think of Dilara and wonder, 'Why?' Think of her incredible courage in the face of a suffering that none of us can comprehend. Remember how she always befriended people, championing, and supporting others, ... Remember her strong determination to press through the pain she was feeling care for others.

Remember that even in the midst of her own demons she was always cheerful, the happiest person in the world. Remember her incredible intellect and her abundant creativity. Remember her with empathy and admiration.

When someone dies by suicide, much more is taken from us than their presence. In a sense suicide challenges our human optimism that things can always 'get better' or be resolved.

Suicide is a challenge to hope. We may not find hope in answers to our questions today; but we can find hope in compassion. the compassion we have for each other; the compassion we have for ourselves; and especially the compassion we are called to have for Dilara. And in our compassion for her let us stand with Fayza, who courageously and most compassionately told me, "We can only honor her choice."

Ann Frank inverted a common cultural idiom of her time, "Where there is life there is hope." Instead, she said, "Where there's hope, there's life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again.". Hope is the source of life, but is not dependent upon life.

Today as we gather together to give thanks for Dilara's life, let

us hold onto this hope, a hope that is not defined by the presence of life; but one that goes beyond even death itself.

You will miss her a great deal. While death does separate us physically, we are reminded that nothing can truly separate us in love. Her love for each of you lives on in you now. In the many lives she touched her memory and her love will never end. I have a hope that one day you will be with her again because the power of that love. The power of hope will overcome and is never constrained by death.

Know that she is carried now on wings like eagles, gone to whence she came – in freedom, in joy and compassion, warmth and wholeness.

May it be so.

The death of one we love is never easy. When death happens, when we “lose a loved one” we lose her stories, the tales she told, but not the tales told about her. In a few moments I invite you share your tales. That is how she will go on living.

Music somewhere over a rainbow

The farewell

As we come to the time of farewell, may we be wrapped in peace. To love someone is to risk the pain of parting. Not to love is never to have lived.

The grief which we now experience is the honoring of our love.

Gentle Creator of All that is, be among us today, holding us in peace and gentleness. Fill this space with winds of hope and healing that begin to mend our saddened hearts. As we mourn

and grieve, laugh and cry, remind us that death is only change; that Dilara will always be with us in the memories of our hearts. As the sun shines outside, we seek those warming rays break through our heaviness and lift our spirits. As we are all together in one small community today, may we each find comfort and support from our fellow sojourners. May it be so.

The Committal and commendation
Benediction and last piece of music as people leave?

May the rising of the sun bring you new hope every day.

May the moon gently restore you by night.

May the rain wash away your tears,

and the breeze blow new joy into your being.

And all the days of your life may you walk gently through this land and know its peace.

Amen.

The Grace of our Mighty Creator be with you!

PRAYER

READING Instructions by Arnold Crompton

When I have moved beyond you in the adventure of life,
Gather in some pleasant place and there remember me
With spoken words, old and new.

Let a tear if you will, but let a smile come quickly
For I have loved the laughter of life.

Do not linger too long with your solemnities.

Go eat and talk, and when you can;
Follow a woodland trail, climb a high mountain,
Walk along the wild seashore,
Chew the thoughts of some book
Which challenges your soul.

Use your hands some bright day
To make a thing of beauty
Or to lift someone's heavy load.

Though you mention not my name,
Though no thought of me crosses your mind,
I shall be with you,
For these have been the realities of my life for me.

And when you face some crisis with anguish.

When you walk alone with courage,
When you choose your path of right,
I shall be very close to you.

I have followed the valleys,
I have climbed the heights of life.

By Arnold Crompton

MESSAGE

We've gathered together to honor John to celebrate his life and to give thanks for the promise of memories and connection beyond today. John's time here among you is worthy of celebration. Born in October 1926 not long after the very first weather map was shown on TV, he experience many exciting moments in history and so many changes in the world. Especially right here in Littleton where some of his ancenters were the first settlers and founders. After graduating from Littleton High School, he went on to join the Navy and study at Tufts University. More than 50 years later John had earned his Masters degree in education, taught and touched many many

students lives during his career as teacher and business manager in several school systems. His life touched those whom he mentored and those he traveled with. He found joy in collaborating with, mentoring, and teaching others. He accomplished much and touched many in his professional world. He touched many in this small town of Littleton and became Grand Marshal of the Memorial Parade.

Yet with all his professional accomplishments, none could equal his greatest joy and pride – his family. He married his sweetheart Mabel and raised two wonderful sons – John and Leslie. His boys were grown and headed off in their own careers and families, giving John the joy of several grandchildren. After 46 years together, his Mabel died, and he eventually found the gift of his companion Ruth. John was hero, best friend, loving, talented, handy, and wise. A man who set the standard for how to live life.

He built his own home, enjoyed the history of Littleton, and explored his ancestry far and wide. He is a man whose legacy lives on.

Each of you hold memories of his lifetime with you and the great gift of that is that you get to share those memories with others to keep him alive in your hearts. In this web of life he will live on.

Over the years I've heard many stories of a loved one's preence after they've died – stories about dragonflies and rainbows and love songs coming on the radio at just the right moment. Maybe it's a coincidence. Maybe we're just looking for signs so we find them. But maybe – just maybe those we love are nearer to us than we realize. Maybe love is more vast than the

limits of our understanding. I believe that love is always present in the web of glorious creation! And my prayer is that you too may find that grace. May it be so. Amen.

The SAILORS PARAPHRAE of the 23RD PSALM

The Lord is my pilot, I shall not go adrift;
He lighteth my passage across dark channels;
He steereth me through the deep waters,
He keepeth my log.
He guideth me by the evening star for my safety's sake.
Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and tempests of life,
I shall fear no peril, for Thou art with me,
Thy stars and heavens, they comfort me.
The vastness of thy sea upholds me.
Surely fair winds and safe harbors shall be found
All the days of my life;
And I shall moor, fast and secure, forever.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

PRAYER

Source of Love, we are sustained and upheld by the love of those who have gone before us. May we know, deep in our bones that love does not disappear. Mysterious Power of the Universe, moving within and between and among us; upholding and connecting all: the living, the dead, and the generations yet to come, we give thanks for the web of all creation, strands interwoven. And for the gifts of love, which can never be ungiven or unraveled.

We came together today to share the loss we've felt in John's passing. We've come to share memories and stories of the joy we carry from his life. This we have done. But before we depart,

let us acknowledge that we will never extinguish the love he showed us; or the memory of him; or the love we carry forward.

And remember. And smile, knowing *his* love is with us too.

BENEDICTION

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you
May the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you
May the Lord's face shine upon you and give you peace.

Our service is ended