

Charles Edmund Cook, Jr

Good Morning and Welcome to all of you who have come to say good bye to a special person in our lives. While we gather in mourning, I hope that this time together is also one of thanksgiving and celebration for Chuck's life. Each of you is here with lots of different emotions – sorrow, anger, grief, frustration... – and each with your own individual sense of loss. Gathering today is painful; none of imagined just a week ago that this is where you'd spend Friday morning. Yet this gathering together, the ways we're offering support – a shoulder, a Kleenex, just an understanding glance – is an important part of this journey we call grief. It marks an end. And it marks a beginning. Today is an opportunity to acknowledge who Chuck was to you, and to lift up the gift of his life.

Would you all join with me in a moment of silence....

To Karen, Chuck's family, friends from near and far...

May the gift of peace surround you in gentleness this day. Let us celebrate the gift life of Charles Edmond Cook, Jr. We were gifted with many days Chuck had here on earth, with memories to sustain us and to be a source of strength and courage – and for that we give thanks. The depth of emotion felt in this room today – the grief, anger and emptiness we feel is known deeply and we search for comfort and healing. We embrace Chuck's family and friends and hope for guidance and comfort for all the lives he touched.

"Death Is Nothing at All" by Henry Scott-Holland

Death is nothing at all.

It does not count.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.

I am I, and you are you,

and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched,
unchanged.

Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.

Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.

Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we
enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a
shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same as it ever was.

There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval,

somewhere very near,

just round the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet
again!

STORY. The Next Place by Warren Hansen

MESSAGE

This morning we come together to honor Chuck. None of us know for sure what happens when we die. Some believe we go to heaven where roads are paved with gold, the sun always shines, and there's nothing else at all that we need or wish for.

Some believe that our loved ones are birthed again in a new human life to carry on what we've learned, to attain a new level of awareness and perfection; to practice until we get it right.

Some believe it's just the end.

Yet, no matter what it is that you believe, there is no doubt that Chuck's essence will live on. His life has not ended. Not as long as we think about him, or share our memories, or say a prayer, or offer a cup of tea and a listening ear as another shares her sadness.

Grief is a journey none of us choose to take. It's a journey fraught with the unknown – an unknown that as soon as we start to feel comfortable with an emotion or feeling, jumps right to the next, and then the next. Some days with silly laughter at one end, deep despair at the other, and everything else in between. And some parts of grief feel like they'll never end.

And in the midst of it, there is one very constant thing. Chuck – Whatever the next place is for him, as Henry Scott-Holland says, “nothing’s has happened. I’m just in the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.”

I didn’t know Chuck – but the person I’ve learned about in the last few days is one who had a lot of ambition toward lifelong learning, loved both the excitement of Boston Harbor Sailing and just as much the relaxing times of watching birds in their sanctuary as he soaked in the warm sunshine.

I can only imagine life growing up with 9 younger brothers and sisters, yet I do know that his huge family gave him a foundation of love for his nieces and nephews, for embracing Karen and her family as he did. Chuck’s “uncle-ness” was such a significant part of who he was.

We will miss Chuck Let today be a celebration of all that he was for each of us.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

We entrust Chuck now to his “next place”. We promise Chuck, to carry you with us into the future. Thank you for your love for us, for the times you made us laugh, and the time we wept together. Thank you for the meaningful ways you touched many lives. Your sorrow and suffering have ended good man, and for that we are glad. Yet, we lost you too soon, and our hearts are heavy.

Until we meet again...

Commendation *with me going to the coffin and hand over the head*

Benediction There is sadness in parting, but we take comfort in the hope that one day we will see Chuck again. Now may God bless you and keep you. May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God look upon you with kindness and peace. Let us go forth in the comfort of eternal love. Our service is now ended. Amen.