

Suggestions for Readings from Holy Scriptures for Funerals in The Episcopal Church

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, shall be raised.

The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, 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."

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

Hebrew Scripture

Option A -- Proverbs 31 (*verses may be selected*)

In praise of a good woman

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs.

- ¹⁰A capable wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.
¹¹The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.
¹²She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.
¹³She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.
¹⁴She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away.
¹⁵She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her servant-girls.
¹⁶She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
¹⁷She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong.
¹⁸She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.
¹⁹She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.
²⁰She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.
²¹She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson.
²²She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple.
²³Her husband is known in the city gates, taking his seat among the elders of the land.
²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them; she supplies the merchant with sashes.
²⁵Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.
²⁶She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
²⁷She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.
²⁸Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her:
²⁹"Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."
³⁰Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
³¹Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option B -- Isaiah 25:6-9

He will swallow up death forever

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

⁶ On this mountain
the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.

⁸ Then the Lord GOD
will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people
he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
"Lo, this is our God;
we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option C -- Isaiah 40:28-31

The Lord is an everlasting God

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option D -- Isaiah 61:1-3

To comfort all who mourn

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

¹ The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
² to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion —
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option E -- Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33

The LORD is good to those who wait for him

A Reading from the Book of Lamentations.

²² The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;

²³ they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.

²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

³¹ For the LORD will not reject forever.

³² Although he causes grief, he will have compassion
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;

³³ for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture **Option F -- Wisdom 3:1-5, 9**

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God

A Reading from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.

- ¹ The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.
- ² In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
³ and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.
- ⁴ For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.
- ⁵ Having been disciplined a little,
they will receive great good,
because God tested them
and found them worthy of himself;
- ⁹ Those who trust in him will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with him in love,
because mercy and grace are upon his holy ones,
and he watches over his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option G -- Wisdom 4:7-9, 13-15

Age is not length of time

A Reading from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon.

⁷ But the righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. ⁸ For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years; ⁹ but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age.

¹³ Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; ¹⁴ for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness. ¹⁵ Yet peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option H -- Job 19:21-27a

I know that my Redeemer lives

A Reading from the Book of Job.

²¹ Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
for the hand of God has touched me!

²² Why do you, like God, pursue me,
never satisfied with my flesh?

²³ O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!

²⁴ O that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved on a rock forever!

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;

²⁶ and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,

²⁷ whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold,
and not another.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option I -- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season

A Reading from Ecclesiastes.

¹ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

² a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵ a time to throw away stones,
and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Option J -- 2 Esdras 2:42-48

The faithful are exalted in heaven

A Reading from the Second Book of Esdras.

⁴² I, Extra, saw on Mount Zion a great multitude that I could not number, and they all were praising the Lord with songs. ⁴³ In their midst was a young man of great stature, taller than any of the others, and on the head of each of them he placed a crown, but he was more exalted than they. And I was held spellbound. ⁴⁴ Then I asked an angel, "Who are these, my lord?" ⁴⁵ He answered and said to me, "These are they who have put off mortal clothing and have put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God. Now they are being crowned, and receive palms." ⁴⁶ Then I said to the angel, "Who is that young man who is placing crowns on them and putting palms in their hands?" ⁴⁷ He answered and said to me, "He is the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world." So I began to praise the name of the Lord. ⁴⁸ Then the angel said to me, "Go, tell my people how great and how many are the wonders of the Lord God that you have seen."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option A -- Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

Dead to sin but alive in Christ

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome.

³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option B -- Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39

The glory that shall be revealed

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome.

¹⁴ All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters **Option C -- 1 Corinthians 13** *Faith, hope and love remain*

A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth.

¹ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters
Option D -- 1 Corinthians 15:12-19
The assurance of a resurrection

A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth.

¹ ²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option E -- 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

The imperishable body

A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth.

²⁰ In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters
Option F -- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58
Our resurrection

A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth.

⁵¹ Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' ⁵⁵'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters
Option G -- 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
Consolation in Christ

A Reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, ⁴who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters
Option H -- 2 Corinthians 4:7-14
Perplexed but not in despair

A Reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth.

⁷But 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.

⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹For 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. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you. ¹³But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—'I believed, and so I spoke' — we also believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option I -- 2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:9

What cannot be seen is eternal

A Reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth.

¹⁶ We do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, ¹⁸ 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.

^{5:1} For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling – ³ if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶ So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option J -- Philippians 3:8-21

Our citizenship is in heaven.

A Reading from the Letter to the Church in Philippi.

⁸ I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not 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. ¹³Beloved, 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, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humiliation 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 Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option K -- Philippians 3:20 — 4:1, 4-7

Rejoice in the Lord

A Reading from the Letter to the Church in Philippi.

²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humiliation 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.

^{4:1} Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option L -- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Raised with Jesus

A Reading from the First Letter to the Church in Thessalonica.

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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 forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option M -- 1 Peter 1:3-9

A living hope

A Reading from the First Letter of Peter.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option N -- 1 John 3:1-2

We will be like him

A Reading from the First Letter of John.

¹ See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.
The reason the world does not know us
is that it did not know him.

² Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we will be has not yet been revealed.
What we do know is this:
 when he is revealed,
 we will be like him,
 for we will see him as he is.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option O -- Revelation 7:9-17

God will wipe away every tear

A Reading from the Revelation to John the Divine.

⁹ I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They cried out in a loud voice, saying, Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne,

and to the Lamb!

¹¹ And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, ¹² singing, Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our

God forever and ever! Amen.

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?"

¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows."

Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶ They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷ for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Christian Letters

Option P -- Revelation 21:2-7

See, I am making all things new

A Reading from the Revelation to John the Divine.

² I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things,
and I will be their God and they will be my children.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel of Christ

Option A -- Matthew 5:3-10

True happiness

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

³ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷ 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰ 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option B -- Mark 10:13-16

Let the little children come to me

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

¹³ People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them:

'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'

¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option C -- Luke 15:11-32

The parable of the lost son

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

“There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” ²²But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate. ²⁵Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.” ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” ³¹Then the father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.””

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option D -- Luke 24:13-19, 27-35

Jesus known in the breaking of bread

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

¹³ Two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' ¹⁹He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.'

²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ
Option E -- John 5:24-27
Anyone who believes has eternal life

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself: ²⁷ and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option F -- John 6:37-40

Everything that the Father gives me will come to me

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

³⁷ Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; ³⁸ for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

⁴⁰ This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option G -- John 10:11-16

I am the good shepherd

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option H -- John 11:21-27

I am the resurrection and the life

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option I -- John 12:23-26

Where I am, there shall my servant be

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

²³ "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Gospel of Christ

Option J -- John 14:1-6

In my Father's house are many rooms

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said:

¹ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ² 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? ³ 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. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. [No one comes to the Father except through me.]"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

