

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dissertation

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE AT THE GATES OF HEAVEN:  
A STUDY OF THE RITES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN  
IN THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By

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## CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
Chapter	
I. WHAT'S THE QUESTION? .....	1
1. Statement of the Problem	
2. Significance of the Study	
3. Sources of the Study	
4. Preliminary Definitions	
5. Further Definitions	
II. WHERE WE'VE BEEN .....	14
1. History of Death Rites in the Congregational and United Church of Christ Tradition	
2. The 1986 United Church of Christ Book of Worship	
3. Social Influences on Death Rites in the Connecticut Churches	
III. WHERE WE ARE .....	37
1. Research Design	
IV. WHERE WE MIGHT GO .....	61
1. Conclusions	
2. A Proposed Order of Service	
APPENDIXES .....	80
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	118

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

1.	Sermon title word cloud. ....	48
2.	Remembrance title word cloud.....	49
3.	Service title word cloud.....	50

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(Order No.            )

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Doctor of Ministry  
Boston University School of Theology, 2012

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the rites that members and churches of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ perform when a member of the community dies. A distinction between a “funeral” and “memorial service” is established, with a funeral defined as a rite provided by the Church at the death of a Christian that is both a rite of passage for the dead and a service of the worship of God for the living, and a memorial service identified as a communal gathering that focuses more on eulogizing and remembering the deceased and less on the overt worship of God. By examining the difference between the two, and by looking at historic liturgical sources, it is clear that in the Connecticut Conference at this time, most rites are memorial services rather than funerals. Assessment was made by means of a qualitative analysis of worship bulletins for rites at the time of death that were submitted by seventy-two of the Connecticut Conference churches, in which worship patterns, hymns and scriptures were identified in order to construct a “moment-in-time” snapshot of commonalities among churches in a tradition that cherishes individual expression and resists standard liturgies imposed from the denomination. In conclusion, a new set of death rites based on the findings of the research is offered.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT'S THE QUESTION?

#### 1. Statement of the Problem

Do the rites surrounding the death of a Christian performed by and in congregations of the United Church of Christ (UCC) accomplish what they intend to? Do UCC pastors make a distinction between a funeral—the Christian proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ in the midst of a human death—and a memorial service—a ritualized remembering of the deceased which may include hymns, prayers, remembrances or eulogies?<sup>1</sup> Why does it seem that parishioners prefer a memorial service to a funeral? How do the rites published in the 1986 United Church of Christ *Book of Worship* differ from what is actually done in the parishes? Do these published rites offer a “funeral”? What theologies of death do the rites used by UCC pastors at the time of death convey? Is there a baptismal theology expressed in these rites, for example, drawing a linkage between baptism and dying and rising (e.g., Romans 6)? What is the theological focus of these rites as published and as adapted, and are there differences? If there are differences, why? Does the presence or absence of the remains of the deceased make a difference in what type of service is celebrated? Are both types of services necessary, or can one service suffice to accomplish together all that both would separately?

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1. This is a definition constructed from multiple sources, but primarily arises out of a question that the Rev. Dr. Paul Sheppy, my tutor at Oxford, asked, which will be discussed later. Of course, there is not such a clear bifurcation between the two; but for the purposes of this paper, it is a useful distinction. This definition also appears in Thomas Long, *Accompany Them With Singing: The Christian Funeral* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox Press, 2009), 57.

These questions arise out of my experiences as an assistant funeral director, a pastor of a congregation, a university chaplain, and a seminary teaching assistant and occasional lecturer. Most of the obsequies that I have attended or at which I have presided would fit into the classification of memorial service rather than funeral (as described above), even if the body or cremated remains were present. Even in denominational churches with prescribed liturgical forms, there appears to be a tendency toward extensive individualization, personalization, and eulogization. This trend raises questions about the event being a worship service of the church and ultimately a proclamation of the Christian promise of resurrection. In this thesis, I hope to identify the reasons why the memorial service seems to have become the preferred form and to examine how and why UCC clergy in particular have become part of this phenomenon.

As a practicing parish pastor, I am faced regularly with the question of what happens when we die. How is the Church to respond? If our response is pastorally and theologically unsatisfying, what is the reason? Do we truly believe and teach a theology that the promises made at baptism are fulfilled at the moment of death? If we do not, are we being dishonest with ourselves in the face of our own mortality? How do we accommodate the pastoral requirements to preach the gospel and to focus the people's attention on God while also allowing for an acknowledgement—and even celebration—of the life of the deceased? These are the kinds of questions I strive to answer in this project.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

Stephen Prothero suggests at the beginning of his class entitled “Death and Immortality” that the ultimate, and perhaps only, useful goal of most of the world's religions is to explain

death to its adherents.<sup>2</sup> While I may disagree with the narrow focus of his statement, I do agree that one of the primary things that Christian theology and practice attempts to do is deal with death. If Prothero's assertion is correct, then perhaps one of the reasons for the decline in attendance in mainline Protestant churches is that we are not addressing death and loss well. The disjuncture that I perceive between the printed UCC rites and what is actually going on in the parishes may also be an indicator of our failure to address death effectively in this time and place in our culture. To say it another way, if the needs of the people are unmet at the time of death then a decline in participation in the church may result since the church no longer speaks effectively to the question of what happens after death. By comparing the printed UCC rites (which may or may not fulfill the definition of a "funeral" or accomplish all that a funeral is supposed to), to what is actually being practiced in the parishes, I hope to lift up excellent practices, theology and pastoral care, and also places where improvements can be made.

To my knowledge, there has been no primary research done specifically examining the rituals surrounding death either by the UCC as a denomination or by academic members of the UCC, nor has there been a survey of the use of the rites in the *Book of Worship*. It is my hope that my work will contribute to scholarly discourse in this matter, and be available to those creating liturgy for the United Church of Christ. As a practicing parish pastor, this research will aid me personally, and, if published in some form, it may be able to assist other clergy in improving the theological and practical quality of the death rites we are asked to perform in the course of our duties. The challenging topic of death, with all its attending stigma and

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2. Stephen Prothero, Class Notes for RN 106 - Death and Immortality, Boston University, Spring Semester, 2006.

accompanying discomfort, must be faced head-on by pastors and, as already stated, rites surrounding death must be done well by pastors and by communities of faith. It is my hope that this scholarly research will contribute to improved congregational praxis.

At the conclusion of this project, I offer a new set of liturgies for use in conjunction with the UCC *Book of Worship*, based on findings from the research portion of this project. Common modifications that a significant number of respondents to the research survey indicated have been included. In addition, I provide a framework by which to rethink the larger set of rites around the death of a Christian, not just the funeral itself. This new framework is based on a conversation and email exchange I had with the Rev. Dr. Arlo Duba, former Director of Worship for the Presbyterian Church, USA, and a retired worship professor.<sup>3</sup> I hope to offer these new resources for possible publication on the UCC website (as is the case in many denominations, the UCC does not plan to issue a revised printed and bound *Book of Worship* any longer). As many of my colleagues from other denominations look at the UCC website, I hope that this research will benefit death-rite practices in other Protestant traditions as well.

### **3. Sources of the Study**

The principal source for this study is the 1986 United Church of Christ *Book of Worship*, which contains the rites for the death of a Christian suggested (but not required) for use in United Church of Christ congregations. Primarily, I have looked at the UCC rites through the lens of the criteria for funerals established by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England in its 1965 Second Series of Alternative Worship, part of the proposals of that era for supplements to

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3. The Rev. Dr. Arlo Duba, conversation and email with the author. January, 2010.

the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. In my preliminary research for this project, and in preparations for lecturing about funerals in general, I have found this to be the most succinct and universal expression of the purpose of a Christian funeral. It is the framework that Paul Sheppy<sup>4</sup> uses in his work to evaluate British funerals, and I believe it to be universally applicable in any Christian context.<sup>5</sup>

Having faced the question afresh in the light of theological and pastoral considerations, the Commission puts forward the following five-fold answer (in response to the question “what are funerals supposed to do?”)

1. To secure the reverent disposal of the corpse.
2. To commend the deceased to the care of our heavenly Father.
3. To proclaim the glory of our risen life in Christ here and hereafter.
4. To remind us of the awful certainty of our own coming death and judgment.
5. To make plain the eternal unity of Christian people, living and departed, in the risen and ascended Christ.

It would perhaps be natural to add a sixth point, namely the consolation of the mourners; but the Commission believes that this object should be attained by means of the objects already included in its answer.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, I will also be looking at the “Service of Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died” from the UCC *Book of Worship* in its own context. In particular, I will use Prayer B from the “Greeting” portion of the service, which sets out a similar framework of purpose as the criteria from the Church of England Liturgical Commission above.

Friends, we gather here in the protective shelter of God’s healing love.  
We are free to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness,  
and know that God cares.

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4. I spent Hilary Term 2007 at Regent’s Park College, Oxford, studying with Dr. Sheppy, a Baptist liturgical scholar. Together we read his two books, and I was introduced to several prominent English Baptist and Anglican liturgical scholars with whom I had conversations about death rituals. I am grateful for the support Dr. Sheppy has given this project.

5. Paul P. J. Sheppy, *Death Liturgy and Ritual*, vol. 1 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 17.

6. *Alternative Services*, 2nd Series (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1965), 29.

We gather here as God's people, conscious of others who have died  
and of the frailty of our own existence on earth.  
We come to comfort and to support one another in our common loss.

We gather to hear God's word of hope that can drive away our despair  
and move us to offer God our praise.  
We gather to commend to God with thanksgiving the life of N.  
as we celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection.  
For whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ  
who is Lord both of the dead and of the living.<sup>7</sup>

Several texts serve as lenses for this work, and have helped to guide my critical analysis of Christian funerary practices. As already mentioned, Dr. Sheppy's work on what a funeral is really supposed to accomplish, and why memorial services seem to have become the preferred form at the time of (or increasingly some time after) a death, is foundational. His two most recent books, *Death Liturgy and Ritual Vols. 1 and 2*, serve as fundamental sources for what a funeral or memorial service is supposed to accomplish. Dr. Sheppy relies heavily on work done by Donald Gray, particularly the resource *Memorial Services*, published in 2002, which I have also used. *Accompany Them With Singing* by Thomas Long is used as the primary American text and as a counterpoint to the Anglo-centric viewpoint of Drs. Sheppy and Gray. Dr. Long's work shares some of the same conclusions as Dr. Duba's work regarding trends in American death rites.

In order to address the larger liturgical implications of re-thinking UCC death rites, I have used D. G. Hart's book *Recovering Mother Kirk: the Case for Liturgy in the Reformed Tradition*. Hart advocates the careful reconsideration of "the way we've always done it" and suggests that churches in the Reformed tradition that have historically eschewed more

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7. United Church of Christ, *The Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ*. (New York: United Church Press, 1986), 372.

liturgically structured forms of worship (including funerals) need to reconsider this viewpoint. Hart and others are committed to what has been loosely termed “liturgical renewal” in the Reformed family of churches.

This research project has two main parts. In the first, I examine in depth the definitions of “funeral” and “memorial service,” and look at the liturgical, ritual and pastoral differences between the two. I then briefly examine the Christian history and traditions surrounding death antecedent to the current United Church of Christ rites as published in the *Book of Worship* by examining the previously published funeral rites in each predecessor denomination,<sup>8</sup> and then comparing those rites to the rites in the current *Book of Worship*. I touch on historical practices, theological and pastoral considerations, as well as examine current and recent historical literature on the subject.

The second part of this project is a research survey of current practices in local UCC parishes. I look at demographics, planning practices for death rites, and the use, adaptation and substitution (if any) of the rites contained in the UCC *Book of Worship*. I analyze the results to see how my sample population uses or adapts the printed rites, and to determine if there is any correlation between the demographic data (age, training, years of experience, denominational factors) and if and how the rites are used or adapted. Finally, I offer an amended set of rites, based on common adaptations found in the research and guiding theological principles.

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8. The two predecessor denominations that formed the United Church of Christ in 1957 are the Congregational and Christian Church, and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. These two denominations were themselves the result of earlier mergers.

#### 4. Preliminary Definitions

A funeral is the rite that the Church provides at the death of a Christian. It is a rite of passage for the dead, and a service of the worship of God for the living. When the church offers such a rite for its members, it offers a service of worship for God. The body (or ashes, if cremated) is present, and the rites almost always conclude on the same day with transport to the cemetery, committal and burial. The primary focus is on the worship of God, and while there may be a eulogy or a remembrance of the deceased, such remembrances are secondary.

A memorial service has a different purpose. It may or may not take place in the church. It may or may not be led by a clergyperson. The body or ashes are often not present, since the service may or may not take place at the time of death. There may be prayers, scripture and even a homily, but often these are not in any prescribed order. The most obvious difference between a funeral and a memorial service is the focus; in the latter, it is less on the worship of God, and more on eulogizing and remembering the deceased. There may be many eulogies, or even an open invitation to the gathered community to share a remembrance of the deceased. Donald Gray insists that for Christians, the eulogistic character of the service should not obscure the Christian character of the service by focusing so much on the deceased that God is unseen.<sup>9</sup>

One more definition here is important. I will be referring to these rites in the context of the death of Christians, and this paper will be limited in its focus to those persons who are baptized according to the Christian faith. There are, of course, a variety of definitions of what being a Christian means; that is not up to this project to determine. It is assumed that a person who is baptized, or, who dies before believer's baptism but intended to be baptized, is a Christian

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9. Donald Gray, *Memorial Services*, Alcuin Liturgy Guides (London: SPCK, 2002), 13-14.

and falls within the focus of this study. Of course, pastors are often asked to preside at rites for the unbaptized, or for those who are of other or no clear faith tradition. Pastoral sensitivity and UCC ordination rites demand that we never decline such invitations, but the theological and practical implications are important to consider.<sup>10</sup>

### 5. Further Definitions

When, in public discourse, we talk about a wedding, there is largely unanimity of opinion about the expectations of what will happen. Two people (current social discussion about what combination of two people aside for a moment) stand before their friends and family, and declare their love for one another. Two things are happening; a legal, civil event (the wedding or marriage license) is publicly assented to, and in a religious context, the marriage is blessed. When we talk about a wedding, it is fairly clear what people's expectations are.

The same is true about a Christian baptism. An individual (or the parents of a child) stands before a congregation of people, and makes promises before God about their faith life. There is water, sometimes oil, prayers, and the newly baptized takes his or her place among the congregation.

In both cases the term "wedding" or "baptism" carries a certain certainty about what will happen. Of course there are ritual and theological distinctions, sociological and anthropological

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10. Two questions from UCC ordination vows are pertinent here. "Will you seek to regard all people with equal love and concern, and undertake to minister impartially to the needs of all . . . and will you, as an ordained minister in this communion, ecumenically reach out toward all who are in Christ, and show Christian love to people of other faiths and people of no faith?" Most UCC clergy interpret this vow to mean that we cannot decline a request to preside at a funeral or memorial service just because someone is not Christian. See UCC, *The Book of Worship*, 408.

differences, but the fundamental expectation of what is to occur is relatively common throughout.

But with the term “funeral,” there is less clarity, particularly in our increasingly secular culture. Because not everyone does (or even can) get married, and only Christians baptize, these terms have a narrower, more limited definition. But everyone dies. Death is no respecter of age or class or religion; all eventually cease to be alive. Throughout all cultures, in all times, there have been rituals surrounding death. Whatever these rituals have been, and no matter how they appear, the one commonality at the center is that there is a dead person.

To speak then of what the rites surrounding death are called is a much more slippery definition. The consensus in common American parlance seems to be to call all such rites a “funeral,” but I believe that there is not necessarily as clear an understanding of what is happening as exists with the other two rites already mentioned. Clarity and honesty about what is occurring may go a long way in helping both clergy and the bereaved to plan honest, effective rites.

There are at least three ways to think about the differences between a funeral and a memorial service—as the terms were defined in the previous section.

The first, and perhaps the most inaccurate way of thinking about the difference is whether or not the body or cremated remains (“cremains,” to use the industry term) are present. Simply put, it is a funeral if the body or cremains are present and a memorial service if they are not. Even clergy sometimes accept or promote this definition; in an informal discussion with my colleagues in Connecticut about my project, several offered this up as a way of thinking about the difference. This is unclear and inaccurate because the presence or absence of the body is

never a guarantee. There have been funerals (using the above definition) with the body or cremains absent, and memorial services (again, with the above definition) with the body or cremains present.

A second way of thinking about the difference is to consider the theological focus. Or, put the way that Dr. Sheppy has asked, “What is the difference between a Christian proclamation of the Resurrection, and a hale and hearty farewell?”<sup>11</sup> Sheppy and others rightly suggest that the Christian funeral is primarily a service of the worship of God, in thanksgiving for the life of the one who has died. We will see this phrase later in the title of the UCC rite. A memorial service, on the other hand, may or may not have religious content, but the service itself is primarily focused on the remembrance and even sanctification of the deceased, rather than on God.

A modern example is to compare the public services that were televised for Diana, Princess of Wales, and for Pope John Paul II. Though held in Westminster Abbey, and containing scripture and a “sermon,” Princess Diana’s service on September 6, 1997 was focused on her person and her life. Eulogies praised her humanitarian work, the music selected included her favorites (and the entertainer Elton John wrote/adapted and performed a song about Diana as a tribute), and the entire service was designed to allow for public grief. Notably, the funeral service from the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* was said for her immediate family, privately.

John Paul II’s service (though lavish and with a cast of thousands, and with only a few minor liturgical additions owing to his ecclesiastical position) was essentially the same rite that

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11. Sheppy, *Death Liturgy and Ritual*, 1:5.

any Catholic in good standing could reasonably expect. Trim away the Papal rites and the pomp and majesty, and it was a funeral mass said on behalf of the deceased, in worship of God.

A third way of thinking about the distinction between a funeral and a memorial service is to consider the question of whether or not the gathered community (and for that matter the deceased) believe that the rite itself does anything for the deceased. This is where theology and to a lesser extent ecclesiology come into play. If the gathered community holds the belief that the performance of the rite itself is effectual in helping the dead to be dead in the way that the living hope they will be—and also hope they too will one day themselves be—then the rite can properly be defined (in this narrow Christian definition) a funeral. If, however (as is the case with much of the United Church of Christ), the religious tradition and the gathered community believe that the rite itself does *not* make a difference in the eternal fate of the deceased, then it can properly be defined as a memorial service.

Perhaps we can add one further definition to this conversation, which has more to do with purpose than anything else. James White (a historian and liturgist), suggests that there are just two things that any rite of death does. First, that it is the purpose of these rites (and the *community* in which they occur) to console the bereaved in the midst of the death of a loved one. Not to explain death, not to deny it, but simply to comfort. And second is to commend the deceased to God.<sup>12</sup> If we look at Romans 6:3-4 through a Protestant lens, we can assume that those who die in Christ are already raised in Christ, and so we are not praying for God's mercy (already bestowed), but simply commending the dead to God's care and keeping.

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12. James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 275.

## 6. Limitations

I have looked specifically at the rites contained within the 1986 United Church of Christ *Book of Worship*, the sole print resource for death rites currently available from the denomination. As already mentioned, it is not required for use by UCC pastors or congregations; the polity of the UCC gives pastors the right to use whatever resource or set of rites they choose.

For this project, I limited my survey of pastors to those who are currently serving in parish-based ministry, are Authorized Ministers of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, and who have earned the Master of Divinity degree as part of their ordination requirements. Parish-based, because they are the ones who are most frequently asked to plan and perform death rites with parishioners. Limited to the Connecticut Conference, because those are the clergy to whom I have the easiest access, and because it is a workable sample size. Of course, later research could (and should) expand the sample size to include pastors from other Conferences for comparison. A further expansion of this work would be to do a similar study in other denominations for comparison. And, those who have earned a Master of Divinity have fulfilled the requirement for the denomination for educational background; a few pastors have other degrees or degrees from foreign schools and they may or may not have similar academic training.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

#### **1. History of Death Rites in the Congregational and United Church of Christ Traditions**

The most logical place to begin a discussion of funerary rites in the United Church of Christ is at the Reformation. While the previous 1500 years of funeral practices have variously informed the Christian traditions, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century included reformation of the theology and rituals of death. The branch upon which the UCC in Connecticut in the twentieth century grows was (until very recently) deliberately self-severed from its ancient roots.

Protestant objection to and rejection of the medieval Catholic theology of death and the related funeral masses, votive offerings, blessings and other rites (which Luther eventually, and Calvin and Zwingli immediately rejected as unscriptural,) resulted in the elimination of such rites from the worship life of the Reformation churches. Luther left no specific funeral rites, believing that funeral rites were largely *adiaphora*. Though there are scattered references to Luther's practices in his writings, rites for the dead consisted simply of "dignified disposal, a celebration of the resurrection, and, if worded correctly, a prayer about the dead."<sup>13</sup> Luther may not have objected to a service that consisted of scripture readings, singing of hymns and prayers. Calvin completely rejected any idea of purgatory, suggesting that the idea denied the principles

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13. Bryan Spinks, "Adiaphora: Marriage and Funeral Liturgies," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (January 1998), 10.

of justification and ordered there to be no ceremonial at the church service marking his own death, and no grave marker, believing that such would represent an unbiblical idolatry. It was clear from his letters, however, that he viewed pastoral visitation to the sick and dying an important ministry.<sup>14</sup> Zwingli saw no scriptural justification for purgatory (and the attending rites) by citing Mark 16:16,<sup>15</sup> and, as with all other worship in the church, if it was not biblical, he disapproved of it. Frank C. Senn describes the aesthetic of Reformed funeral rites thus:

Reformed aversion to the blessing of material objects had a consequence on burial practice also: there was typically no rite of committal of the body other than the reverent burial. But burial was often followed by a service of psalms, readings, sermon and prayers in the church . . . to comfort the bereaved and to edify the community.<sup>16</sup>

English Reformers (direct ancestors of our Connecticut churches), subject to the vagaries of English politics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, varied in their approach to the necessity of funeral rites for the deceased, with differing theological approaches taken in the various Prayer Books. Late Medieval England used the Roman rite of the time, with local variation not unknown. Most common in southern England was the Sarum Rite. With Henry VIII's separation of the English Church from Rome came the opportunity for new forms of worship, in the vernacular—an idea that came from Luther and Calvin on the continent. The Prayer Books of Edward VI in 1549 (attributed to Cranmer, but it is clear that others were contributors) retained a funeral rite, but its radical changes to particularly the Communion rite (weekly communion was a new idea) made it an unpopular book, and not widely used.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Ulrich Gäbler, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 320.

15. Senn, *The People's Work*, 205.

16. *Ibid.*, 370.

17. John E. Booty, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer, 1559: the Elizabethan Prayer Book* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 329.

Revisions by Cranmer in the 1552 book included further modifications to the funeral rite that were inconsistent with Reformed thought (those who died in the faith would be counted among the elect, particularly contradicting Calvin's theology of predestination), creating a theological tension that still exists in the theology of the burial rites of most Anglican prayer books. Most importantly for this study, this particular prayer book removed the rites for the dead from the church.

Most drastic of all was the removal of the Burial service from church: it was to take place at the graveside. In 1549, there had been provision for a Requiem (not so called) and prayers of commendation and committal, the first addressed to the deceased. All that remained was a single reference to the deceased, giving thanks for their delivery from 'the myseryes of this sinneful world'. This new Order for the Burial of the Dead was a drastically stripped-down memorial service designed to undermine definitively the whole complex of traditional beliefs about Purgatory and intercessory prayer.<sup>18</sup>

Mary ascended to the throne in 1553, and restored the Roman rite with its Requiem masses to use in England. Elizabeth, a Protestant, changed the rules again when she ascended to the throne in 1558. The 1559 Prayer Book, mostly a revision of the 1552 book, was produced, eliminating the Requiem masses again, but restoring a funeral service within the church. With her death in 1604, the Puritans (who, by then, had become a powerful influence in the English Church), demanded further revisions. The Commonwealth period saw the growth of the strength of the Puritan motive to remove the Prayer Book and the episcopacy completely from the Church. However, after the restoration of the Monarchy, most dissenting clergy left England for the colonies, and the influence of the Puritans in England waned. By this time, Scotland had gone off on its own path, which we will discuss shortly.

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18. Bryan D. Spinks, "Cranmer's Methods of Liturgical Compilation" in *Thomas Cranmer: Churchman and Scholar*, ed. Paul Ayris and David Selwyn (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 223.

The non-separating Puritans (the founders of Boston and Hartford colonies were those who wished to reform the English Church, but not leave it entirely though many had been deprived of their livings) and the separatist Puritans (like the Brownists who founded the Plimoth Colony in 1620) shared the opinion that the English Reformation had not gone far enough in removing Roman practices from the church, and believed that a purely biblical faith was the only true religion. Any prayer book that was not the Bible was seen as inappropriate to be required for use.

It is from this context that the Congregationalist spiritual heritage is derived. The New England Puritans, influenced by both Continental and English Reformers, saw no necessity or significance to funeral rites, dismissing anything other than decent and orderly disposition of the corpse as pointless, or idolatrous, or popish. With the removal of the burial service from the Prayer Book in 1552 (and despite its later restoration in a new form), it had been decades since the Puritans had experienced anything like the former Roman burial rites. Stephen Mintz, a historian and scholar of Puritan New England, says this about how the Puritans approached death:

Since there was nothing that friends or relatives could do to alter the fate of a dying Puritan, there was no place in Puritan New England for expensive and elaborate religious rites or ceremonies. Funeral sermons offered no individual eulogies for the dead and funeral monuments were kept plain and simple. The first grave markers were wooden and early grave stones contained words but no designs because the Puritans thought that the Second Commandment prohibited the use of graven images. Elaborate funerals or headstones seemed like idolatry.<sup>19</sup>

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19. Steven Mintz, "<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/usdeath.cfm>," Digital History, <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/usdeath.cfm> (accessed March 27, 2012).

Eulogies were to be avoided as well as the ceremonial; since the possibility existed that a preacher would say something about the final disposition of the deceased that Calvinist predestinarianism could not guarantee. Praying *for* the deceased or commending them to God was also pointless, in as much as God had already decided the decedent's eternal fate. Additionally, there was the objection to expensive priestly functions (chantry masses) and even more expensive gift giving and post-burial refreshments which had become fashionable in some parts of society. Though some of these traditions re-emerged in the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, the religious view of the style of funeral rites (separate from the mourning rituals) was one of simplicity.

The 1645 Westminster Directory for the Scottish churches (produced by the same divines who wrote the Westminster Confession, and who objected most strenuously to the imposition of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the Scotland), said about the burial of the dead:

Concerning Burial of the Dead.

WHEN any person departeth this life, let the dead body, upon the day of burial, be decently attended from the house to the place appointed for publick burial, and there immediately interred, without any ceremony.

And because the custom of kneeling down, and praying by or towards the dead corpse, and other such usages, in the place where it lies before it be carried to burial, are superstitious; and for that praying, reading, and singing, both in going to and at the grave, have been grossly abused, are no way beneficial to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtful to the living; therefore let all such things be laid aside.

Howbeit, we judge it very convenient, that the Christian friends, which accompany the dead body to the place appointed for publick burial, do apply themselves to meditations and conferences suitable to the occasion; and that the minister, as upon other occasions, so at this time, if he be present, may put them in remembrance of their duty.

That this shall not extend to deny any civil respects or deferences at the burial,

suitable to the rank and condition of the party deceased, while he was living.<sup>20</sup>

It is this attitude towards death and funeral rites that came to the New World with the Puritans to the Boston, Hartford and the New Haven Colonies in the seventeenth century, and is the strongest antecedent theological and liturgical tradition for Congregational churches of New England today. Dr. Mintz remarks about the theology of death of the Puritans:

A deep, underlying tension characterized the Puritan view of death. On the one hand, in line with a long Christian tradition, the Puritans viewed death as a blessed release from the trials of this world into the joys of everlasting life. At the same time, the Puritans regarded death as God's punishment for human sinfulness and on their deathbeds; many New Englanders trembled with fear that they might suffer eternal damnation in Hell.

From their earliest upbringing, Puritans were taught to fear death. Ministers terrorized young children with graphic descriptions of Hell and the horrors of eternal damnation and told them that at the Last Judgment their own parents would testify against them. Fear of death was also inculcated by showing young children corpses and public hangings.

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Puritan theology denied that individuals had any assurance of salvation. God had decided their fate at the time of creation and His will was inscrutable. It was a delusion to think that God in His mercy would forgive their sins and take them to Heaven. Consequently, many Puritans like Increase Mather and John Tappin suffered desperate spiritual torment and anxiety in the face of death. Gradually, the stark Puritan view of death softened.

After 1650 Puritan funerals became increasingly elaborate and expensive and tombstones less plain. Corpses began to be embalmed in order to allow time for families to plan funerals and for guests to gather. Especially after the Great Awakening—the intense religious revival that swept the American colonies beginning in the 1720s—attitudes toward death began to change. Where, in the seventeenth century, children were told to fear death, they were increasingly told in the eighteenth century to look forward to death as a reunion with God and their parents. Adults, in turn, were increasingly assured that a life of active piety assured salvation.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Alex Gibson, *An ACT of the PARLIAMENT of the KINGDOM of SCOTLAND, Approving and Establishing the DIRECTORY for Publick Worship*. 1645. <http://www.covenanter.org/Westminster/directoryforpublicworship.htm> (accessed January 14, 2012).

21. Steven Mintz, “<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/usdeath.cfm>,” Digital History, <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/usdeath.cfm> (accessed March 27, 2012).

Remnants of the Puritan resistance to ceremonial can still be found in churches with a Congregational history, particularly in Connecticut with its slightly different history from the churches in Massachusetts.<sup>22</sup>

The earliest authorized manual for worship in the Congregational Church (after its formation in 1648 with the *Cambridge Platform* in Massachusetts<sup>23</sup> and the 1708 *Saybrook Platform*, which established a slightly more presbyterian form of church governance in the Connecticut Colony) was *The Council Manual* in 1898.<sup>24</sup> Until this time, no document other than the Westminster Directory (adopted as definitive by the *Cambridge Platform*) in conjunction with local tradition and principles of biblical worship guided the worship life of Congregational churches. Local changes occurred, of course, but given the polity of the denomination, none of it was guided by anything but the education of the pastor and local tastes. Congregational polity allowed for each congregation to direct its own worship in the manner it found most suitable, but most often guided by the principles contained in the Westminster Directory. Local traditions within congregations held sway; there was little by way of liturgical innovation for much of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, save the gradual introduction of congregational hymnody that was not strictly metrical psalmody or psalm paraphrases, and the even more gradual acceptance of organs and choirs. The shift in theology away from the Calvinist predestination (salvation is only for the elect, and no one knows who is

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22. The church I currently serve still rejects the use of paraments, and did not own a pair of candlesticks for the communion table as late as 2004 when I was called to serve there.

23. Edward Hunt, *The Ancient Platforms of the Congregational Churches of New England*. (Hartford: The General Association of Churches in Connecticut), 1845.

24. This volume contained little by way of rubrics or directions for how funerals were to be done. It does refer to the services being in the church, but importantly, it suggests that the burial should already have taken place. This seems to be a reflection of practice familiar to the author, rather than an innovation.

and who is not) to a more Arminian view (salvation might be available to everyone) and even to a Universalist view (Christ's death and resurrection effected salvation once and for all) was a gradual one. Despite the shift in theology, and as already mentioned, funerals in New England Congregationalism retained the simplicity that appeared in the sixteenth century. Simple prayers, hymns, scripture and sermon were all that was necessary or desired. Elaborate commendations or prayers on behalf of the dead, processions, and the celebration of Communion were not. We shall see that this is the case even into the twenty-first century in the next chapter.

The Congregational Church and the Christian Church (separate denominations until merger in 1931) and the Congregational-Christian Church (until 1959), were very reluctant to publish "official" liturgical manuals or directories. Suggested orders of worship appeared in various versions of the Congregational *The Pilgrim Hymnal*, published by the Pilgrim Press beginning in 1895, but never included a funeral service in any edition (1895, 1912, 1932, 1958). The UCC's current denominational hymnal, *The New Century Hymnal* (1995), does contain the "Service of Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died" in the liturgical material at the beginning of the hymnal, a first in a book meant for the congregation, at least for churches from the Congregational tradition in New England.

Though not published as official manuals or liturgies by the denomination, there were many resources available as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. Individual pastors often published manuals to aid in the planning of worship. The *Pulpit and Parish Manual*, compiled by Henry Hallam Saunderson in 1930, is a notable example.<sup>25</sup> It contains outlines of

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25. This particular volume has been found in the desk or on the bookshelf of every Congregational church to which I have been called as a pastor.

suggested services, and provides extensive readings and poems (of the type mentioned later in this paper) for use in various types of worship services. It also includes a funeral service, consisting simply of an Ascription, a Prayer, a Reading (including suggested scriptures, mostly psalms), an Address (in the minister's own words, or one of the prepared selections in a following section), another prayer, and a Benediction. There is no suggestion of hymnody or congregational participation at all, and no actual provision for mentioning the name of the deceased.<sup>26</sup>

Saunderson's service makes extensive use of both ancient and contemporary poetry. In the service itself, he uses Tennyson's poem *Crossing the Bar* as the closing prayer before the Benediction.

Sunset and Evening Star,  
 And one clear call for me!  
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
 When I put out to sea,  
  
 But such a tide as, moving, seems asleep,  
 Too full for sound and foam,  
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep,  
 Turns again home.  
  
 Twilight, and evening bell,  
 And after that, the dark!  
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
 When I embark;  
  
 For tho' from out our born of time and place,  
 The flood may bear me far,  
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face,  
 When I have crossed the bar.<sup>27</sup>

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26. H. H. Saunderson, *Pulpit and Parish Manual with Orders of Worship, Prayers, and Other Aids to Devotion* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1930), 5.

27. *Ibid.* *Crossing the Bar*, by Alfred Lord Tennyson, 164.

The reassuring and hopeful quality of this poem is typical of the funeral service in this book, and others from the period. There are no liturgical directions or rubrics for “A General Funeral Service,” though the “Service at the Graveside” does instruct the minister to come prepared with flowers for placing on the casket at the words “ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”<sup>28</sup>

Other manuals for worship that appeared include those of Rev. Joseph Roy,<sup>29</sup> DD, Rev. Henry Martyn Dexter,<sup>30</sup> DD, Rev. A Hastings Ross, DD,<sup>31</sup> *The Pilgrim Pastor’s Manual* by Rev. George M. Boynton, DD,<sup>32</sup> the *Handbook of Services*, by Rev. Martin Summerbell, DD,<sup>33</sup> and particularly the *Congregational Manual and Rules of Order* by Rev. William E. Barton, DD.<sup>34</sup> There were countless others; these received special note as contributory sources to the book we will discuss next.

In 1936, just after the merger of the Congregational and Christian churches, the Executive Committee of the General Council of Congregational and Christian Churches published *A Manual of the Congregational and Christian Churches: A Compendium of*

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28. Ibid. 231.

29. Joseph Roy (1827-1908) was a Congregational Minister in Chicago. His biographer was William E. Barton.

30. Henry Martyn Dexter (1821-1890) was a Congregational minister on the south shore of Massachusetts.

31. A. Hastings Ross (1846?-1922) was a Congregational minister who served churches in Ohio.

32. George M. Boynton, *The Pilgrim Pastor’s Manual* (Boston: The Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1898).

33. Martin Summerbell, *Handbook of Services* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1910).

34. William E. Barton, *The Congregational Manual and Rules of Order* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1936).

*Information, Forms and Services*.<sup>35</sup> This was the first liturgical manual published as an “official”<sup>36</sup> guide by either denomination. It contains a guide to organizing a parish, electing officers, various forms for transfer of members and of pastors; orders for ordination and installation of officers and pastors. It was an attempt on the part of the newly-created denomination to have some standardization across the churches. Again, importantly for this study, the *Manual* also contains a suggested order for what may be termed “last rites” (Section VIII. “Scripture for the Sick Room”), and a funeral rite (Section IX. “Funeral Service”). The funeral rite takes this shape:<sup>37</sup>

**Organ**, the playing of hymns

**Opening Sentences**

**Hymn** (sung or read)

**Scripture Reading** (May be chosen from the following as occasion demands, see p. 221 ff.)

**Address** (if none, the minister may read from poetic or prose selections, as follows)

**Prayer** (see p. 257 ff.)

**Benediction**

**Committal Service** (see p. 242 ff.)<sup>38</sup>

Similar to the order in Saunderson’s book, this is a sparse service indeed; and it is well in keeping with the liturgical aesthetic of the denomination’s history: very little to no ceremonial; no prayers on behalf of the deceased; no commendation, even in the Committal Service. The

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35. Charles E. Burton, *A Manual of the Congregational and Christian Churches: A Compendium of Information, Forms and Services* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1936), iii–iv. This *Manual* specifically states that the above resources were “non-denominational,” but it is clear that they are largely Congregational.

36. “Official” resources from the denomination are those which were ordered or approved at whatever national council was in effect at the time, and published through one of the two in-house publishing arms, either Pilgrim Press in Boston or the Evangelical and Reformed Press in St. Louis.

37. I have included the internal page references as they appeared in the original text.

38. Burton, *A Manual Of The Congregational And Christian Churches*, 219.

provided readings are of a poetic nature that reflect a variety of theological viewpoints, but mostly praise the deceased and reassure that he or she is in a better place. It is striking that in the 1951 revision of this *Manual*, all worship services were omitted; the book became simply a manual of procedures and policies.

The merger of the Congregational-Christian Church with the Evangelical and Reformed Church in America in 1957 (itself a merger of two earlier denominations in 1934, both of German, continental heritage), to form the United Church of Christ, was a much more challenging one. The two denominations had (and in some ways remain to have at the local parish level) enormous differences of opinion about the style of worship, theological matters, and polity. Historically quite different, sometimes still speaking different languages even in the 1950's, with different understandings of the nature of ministry and the role and nature of liturgy, the two denominations struggled in the early years to find common liturgical ground. Local autonomy was preserved as much as possible: local congregations were allowed and encouraged to continue local liturgical traditions, particularly with regard to death rites. Later liturgical resources reflect the tension between the attempts to create a common liturgy for the church (whether for funeral rites or not) and the preservation of autonomous liturgical decision-making at the local level.

The United Church of Christ (from 1959-present) has only had two official liturgical manuals. *The Services of the Church* in its complete form in 1969 (there were test versions available as early as 1964) was the first such set of services produced by the newly-formed denomination. Printed in eight slender volumes and designed to be made available in the pews

for the use of the people, the books attempted to provide a liturgy for the church that incorporated the best of the two traditions.<sup>39</sup>

The now defunct Commission on Worship, led by Louis H. Gunnemann (from the Evangelical and Reformed side) and Horton Davies (from the Congregational-Christian side,) crafted the liturgies to encourage more congregational participation, and a “common” set of practices to unify the new denomination. *The Services of the Church* was poorly received in New England, and met with only mediocre reception elsewhere in the country.<sup>40</sup> The formerly Congregational churches in New England, but also the second-generation mission churches in the Congregational tradition in the Midwest, immediately rejected the attempt as being “too liturgical,”<sup>41</sup> and deeply resented the imposition of a standard liturgy upon the church.<sup>42</sup>

The E&R churches did not reject the books outright, but found them generally to be watered down, and preferred for many years to continue with the liturgies they were familiar

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39. In actuality, there are over two dozen identifiable liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions that have become a part of the United Church of Christ. It is virtually impossible to create any liturgical resource that would meet the needs of the entirety of the church today, given the denominational desire for local congregations to retain local autonomy. This is one of the reasons there will probably never be another printed version of the UCC *Book of Worship* provided by the denomination. The *BOW* is now available online, as are an increasing variety of newer liturgical resources provided by the denomination. I hope the liturgy at the end of this project will be included in the growing corpus of online resources provided by the denomination.

40. One of my senior colleagues recounted a story of a revered senior pastor who (when sent the *Services of the Church*), brought it to an Association meeting, threw it down into the center of the table around which they had all gathered and declared “I’ll be damned if I ever use something that for all intents and purposes is a Catholic sacramentary.” This occurred in Fairfield County, CT just after the publication of the resource.

41. The books were judged too Catholic, too Episcopal, too Lutheran depending upon where in the country the objection was raised.

42. Louis H. Gunnemann, *United and Uniting: The Meaning of an Ecclesial Journey* (Cleveland, United Church Press, 1987), 106.

with.<sup>43</sup> Local preference and use continues to this day. The E&R Church (like the Congregational Christian Church) effected a merger in 1934 of two earlier traditions. The Reformed Church in the United States (also known as the German Reformed Church), with roots centered around eastern Pennsylvania, and the Evangelical Synod of North America, centered around St. Louis, Missouri were more “liturgical” than their Congregational-Christian counterparts. Notably, the Mercersburg Movement of the mid-nineteenth century arose out of the German Reformed church. These churches were all used to having standardized, or common liturgies, used a common catechism, and generally had a much more centralized form of governance and identity.

As concerns our study, the “Order for the Burial of the Dead” from the 1969 *Services of the Church* represented a significant departure from the New England tradition of minimal liturgy surrounding death. While it may reflect some inclusion of what Davies perceived as the reality in the churches on the Congregational-Christian side, it clearly adds from the E&R side. First, it is called an Order, something unfamiliar to the Congregational-Christian churches. Second, it specifies in the beginning rubrics that the service should be held in the church, and that the coffin should be closed, and processed in and out of the church. It continues thus:

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43. Unlike other denominations, there is no authority within the UCC to dictate to the local congregations which hymnal or set of liturgies to use. There are still congregations who choose to use *The Hymnal* (published by the E&R in the 1940s), the *Pilgrim Hymnal* (published by the Congregationalists in its latest form in 1958, though reprinted many times), or some other hymnal. The UCC congregation in Meriden chose *Hymns of Truth and Light*, published by FCC Houston as its new hymnal, because they did not like the radical change of language in all hymns in the UCC’s *New Century Hymnal (NCH)*. The *NCH* was not universally accepted by churches in the denomination, and it has not become the hoped-for standard hymnal in UCC churches. Denominational statistics report that 39% of congregations use the *NCH* exclusively, and 58% use it occasionally. Worship and Education Ministry Team-Local Church Ministries, *Worshipping Into God’s Future: A Worship Initiative of the United Church of Christ* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 2005) 10.

**Hymn**

**Opening Collect**

**The Promises of God**

(Rev. 1:17-18, John 11:25-26, Is. 41:10)

or

(1 Cor. 15:20, 54-55, 57, 1 Peter 1:3, Rom 8:38-39)

**Prayer** (Almighty God, whose will is sovereign . . . )

**Psalm 23** (and/or Ps. 46,90,121,139) *in unison or responsively*

**Gloria Patri** (sung or spoken, immediately following the Psalm)

**Scripture Lesson** (several are suggested and provided in full)

**Sermon** (“The scripture *may* be expounded in the preaching of a sermon”)

**Creed** (the new UCC Statement of Faith, or the Apostles’ or Nicene Creed)

**Hymn**

**Various Prayers** (there are a number of prayers offered, for thanksgiving, for salvation)

**Commemoration of the Departed** (eulogies and remembrances)

**Hymn**<sup>44</sup>

There are several supplemental, topical prayers supplied, and there is a committal prayer at the very end, for use at the cemetery. Creeds, hymns, processing with the body, prayers for the departed: the introduction of such components in the funeral liturgy was the cause of such consternation on the part of many clergy and laity, particularly those from the Puritan stream. Though it was largely rejected by the Congregationalists, pastors of a certain generation still own this resource, and as they have with other liturgical resources, incorporated parts of it quietly into the worship life of the church.

## 2. The 1986 United Church of Christ Book of Worship

The latest *Book of Worship* (and perhaps the last one printed in book form) was produced by the UCC in 1986. The work began in 1977, when “a resolution at General Synod . . .

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44. United Church of Christ Commission on Worship. *The Services of the Church*. (New York, United Church of Christ Board for Homeland Missions Division of Publication, 1969), 223.

directed the Office for Church Life and Leadership to develop, if feasible, a book of worship for the United Church of Christ using inclusive language.<sup>45</sup> A number of individuals in the then Office of Church Life and Leadership contributed to this book, but its visionary director and the principal author of much of the new material in the book was the Rev. Dr. Thomas Dipko, who was, at the time, the Executive Vice President of the Board for Homeland Ministries. It is a more extensive book of worship than the 1962 edition that contains liturgies for the full range of liturgical needs in the life of a local congregation. A survey of the Table of Contents reveals several orders for Sunday morning, giving primacy to and restoring the idea of the tie between weekly celebration of Word and Sacrament. There are services of baptism and confirmation, seasonal and occasional services, services of reconciliation and healing, marriage, memorial and thanksgiving (the death rites we will focus on shortly), services for the authorization of ministries, and a fairly full index of prayer and liturgical music for congregational use.

There are actually three services for the dying and dead provided: the “Order for the Time of Dying,” the “Order for Thanksgiving for the Life of One Who Has Died,” and the “Order for Committal.” Throughout the book, each service is called an “Order” as in the 1969 *Services of the Church*. The rest of this section and the research in the next chapter focus on the “Order for Thanksgiving for the Life of One Who Has Died,” but the three services do form a cohesive whole and are intended to be used all together. The “Order for Thanksgiving . . .” as with all of the services in the UCC *Book of Worship*, has a short but well written introduction, describing the theological assumptions and the suggested purposes of the order:

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45. UCC, *The Book of Worship*, ix.

*The service recognizes both the pain and sorrow of the separation that accompanies death and the hope and joy of the promises of God to those who die and are raised in Jesus Christ. The service celebrates the life of the deceased, gives thanks for that person's life, and commends that life to God. It offers consolation to the bereaved by acknowledging their grief and anger or guilt. It provides the Christian community and others the opportunity to support the bereaved with their presence. Its purpose is to affirm once more the powerful, steadfast love of God from which people cannot be separated, even by death.<sup>46</sup>*

This statement of intent and purposes from the introduction is reflected in the liturgy itself, particularly in the Greeting (cited above in Chapter 1). The community of faith of the deceased is gathered. They are to grieve, be angry or guilty if necessary, and acknowledge that there is a change in their lives that is irreparable. The community is to know God's presence, comfort one another, hear the Gospel promises of God, begin the process of moving from the land of the dead back into the land of the living, commend the dead to God (something the Puritans would have found objectionable) and finally, to celebrate the Resurrection, not only of the deceased, but of Jesus Christ himself. The "Order for Thanksgiving," if used in its fullest form, does provide a more theologically substantive service than a simple farewell with hymns and readings. As is the case with the rest of the *Book of Worship*, the rubrics are all conditional ("may," not "must"), a convention which first appeared in the 1964 resources, which allows for flexibility according to local circumstances. The service proceeds as follows:

**Prelude**  
**Procession and Sentences**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Greeting**  
**Prayer**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Sermon**  
**Words of Remembrance**

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46. UCC, *The Book of Worship*, 367.



Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession are indicated in the “Order for Thanksgiving.”

Option A is a prayer of thanksgiving that does not mention the deceased. Option B is a real prayer of intercession, where the dead are wished to heaven, and it is affirmed that the gathered people believe that the deceased are now in the presence of God.

O God, our strength and our redeemer,  
giver of life and conqueror of death,  
we praise you with humble hearts.  
With faith in your great mercy,  
we entrust N. to your eternal care.

We praise you for your steadfast love for *him/her*  
all the days of *his/her* earthly life.

We thank you for all that *he/she* was to those who loved *him/her*,  
(and for *his/her* faithfulness to the church of Jesus Christ.)

We thank you that for N.  
(all sickness and sorrow are ended, and)

death itself is past, and that N. has entered the home  
where all your people gather in peace.

Keep us all in communion with your faithful people  
in every time and place,  
that at the last, we may rejoice together in the heavenly family  
where Jesus Christ reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever. *Amen.*<sup>49</sup>

There follows also a prayer for the bereaved, and then a particular suggestion for a prayer at the death of a child.

Communion (if celebrated) would follow, though it is an exceptionally uncommon funeral practice in the Congregational traditions.<sup>50</sup> Usually the service would simply proceed

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49. UCC, *The Book of Worship*, 377.

50. Data from the research portion of this project shows that there were only two communion services among the 332 funeral rites examined.

with a moment of silence following the prayers, the Lord's Prayer (or to be inclusive, the Prayer of Our Savior). There are two options for the Commendation, one written new for this service, and the other directly out of the 1979 Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, itself a modernization of a much more ancient version. The Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*) may be said or sung (again, note the conditional) and finally the Benediction, with a rubric stating not to say a suggested Alleluia during Lent. A recessional hymn and music follows to finish the service.

### **3. Social Influences on Death Rites in the Connecticut Churches**

Though this thesis is primarily a study of the liturgical use of the *Book of Worship* in the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, it would be impossible and inaccurate to consider this matter without a brief discussion of the outside societal influences on all death rites in contemporary American culture. We are, as James White commented, in the period of history when Americans “refuse to think about death as part of the Christian message.”<sup>51</sup> The ancient churches focused on the hope of the Resurrection, and the medieval church focused primarily on the fear of death, an attitude that the Calvinist predecessors of the modern UCC retained well into the eighteenth century. Thomas Long asks the question, “What happened to the Christian funeral?”<sup>52</sup> in his book *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*. Long makes the point that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American religion lost the fervor it gained during the Great Awakening. In particular, the earlier practices of the Puritans were replaced by Victorian mourning rituals, which were long on style and short on substance, which

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51. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 298.

52. Long, *Accompany Them With Singing: The Christian Funeral*, 57.

were then replaced by an ever-increasing individualization of funeral rites in the twentieth century. He describes in detail the characteristics of the pattern of ritual for approximately the past fifty years.

*- a memorial service instead of a funeral (i.e., a service focused on remembering the deceased, often held many days after the death, with the body or the cremated remains not present.*

*- a brief, simple, highly personalized and customized service, often involving several speakers (as opposed to a standard church funeral liturgy presided over primarily by clergy.)*

*- a focus upon the life of the deceased (often aided by a display of photographs and other mementos)*

*- an emphasis on joy rather than sadness, a celebration of life rather than an observance of the somber reality of death*

*- a private disposition of the body, often done before the memorial service, with an increasing preference for cremation<sup>53</sup>*

Long goes on to identify that this pattern has not occurred in all denominations, nor in all parts of the country, stating that “it is most pronounced among white, suburban Protestants, and the older customs persist in rural areas. . . . these differences seem more a matter of time lag than anything else.”<sup>54</sup> Long makes the further point (to which I completely agree) that clergy applaud and approve of this shift, finding services of this type preferable to the older, more dour, impersonal forms, focusing on the life of the person who died, deemphasizing (or eliminating)

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53. Ibid., 58.

54. Ibid.

the body of the decedent. In doing so, the Christian witness to the Resurrection is more the theme of the day.<sup>55</sup>

In this brief examination of the direct-line predecessors of the current UCC *Book of Worship*, and a look at the cultural influences of the last fifty years or so, there are a couple of trend lines that seem in opposition. The UCC's "official" funeral liturgies have expanded and become more liturgical (that is with more attention and addition of various prayers and actions beyond just scripture and preaching), importing influences from a pietistic and more Continental liturgical aesthetic than the Puritans practiced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This expansion has met with resistance, both ecclesiologically and culturally. On the cultural side, old patterns in New England (as we shall see in the next chapter) have survived, even thrived.

The theological focus of the services have shifted from the worship of God and a teaching of a Reformed theology of death, to a more joyful celebration of the life of the deceased, as now the bereaved (and even the deceased, before dying) did not and do not think much about where they will spend eternity. This again, is a reflection of the shift from the Calvinist orthodoxy of the eighteenth century, to the more Arminian and even Universalist theology present in many of the New England congregations in the nineteenth century, as mentioned above.<sup>56</sup> This liberalizing theological path that Congregationalism began in the eighteenth century has continued to this day. We now turn to a survey of what is actually going

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55. Ibid., 58–59. Long also makes the point that there is an economic factor at work here, namely, that simple services are less expensive than the costly funeral practices that developed in the 1950's.

56. "1708 - The Saybrook Platform," The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, [http://www.colonialwarsct.org/1708\\_saybrook\\_platform.htm](http://www.colonialwarsct.org/1708_saybrook_platform.htm) (accessed March 26, 2012).

on in the churches of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, a decade into the twenty-first century.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WHERE WE ARE

So, after 400 years of Congregationalism in New England, two major denominational mergers, significant theological shifts (away from Puritan Calvinism and towards a progressive liberal, almost Universalist theology), just a handful of suggested liturgical books, and the advent of the internet and the fact that half of our denomination is now from some other religious tradition, where does that leave the UCC? What are the death rites saying about what the UCC believes? What is actually going on in the churches (and funeral homes and cemeteries) in regard to funerary beliefs and practices?

#### **1. Research Design**

In order to determine what actually is going on in the churches, I designed a simple research project based on the premise that the worship bulletins of rites for people who have died would yield a treasure trove of information. For reasons of access, the scope of this study is limited to the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. The methodology could (and probably should) be repeated in several ways: in other UCC Conferences, and in other regional and national groupings within other denominations.

A letter and a return envelope were sent to all 245 of the Conference churches. Churches were asked to return copies of the orders of service or worship bulletins for the last five death rites that the pastor had performed. If there were multiple pastors, bulletins from each one were requested. I carefully used only the word “funeral” in the letter, and did not specify a location

(church or funeral home, etc.), to see what sort of response I would receive (see Appendix E for the letter). Pastors were invited to indicate which, if any, resources other than the UCC *Book of Worship* they use in planning these services. Further research regarding the choices that my colleagues made regarding these services was planned in a Phase II follow-up project, but as I was unable to convince Boston University's Internal Review Board that there would be no negative consequences for my colleagues by answering my simple questions, that portion of research will have to wait for another time.<sup>57</sup>

I then designed a simple data base into which I compiled information about the demographics of the church and pastor (publicly available information from the UCC Yearbook and the Connecticut Conference UCC), the title of the service, the scripture, hymns and readings chosen, the location in the service of the sermon and/or remembrances, what liturgical sources were used (if noted by the pastor), and whether or not the obituary was printed on the bulletin. This information is distilled into Appendices A-D, and will be analyzed in the next section of this chapter. I also made extensive notes about each bulletin, though those do not appear as a separate Appendix. Throughout, I have attempted to keep any identifying information other than which churches responded and other publicly available information anonymous. Nowhere in my raw data or elsewhere are the names of the deceased revealed in order to respect their privacy. The bulletins I have collected will be deposited, with a copy of the paper, in the archives of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. It is clear from the churches that

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57. It says something, I think, about the perception that outsiders have of unfamiliar religious traditions, and particularly about the United Church of Christ. There honestly is no way to penalize a pastor in the UCC for not using the "approved liturgies," since as we have already discussed, there are none. No amount of documentation to the contrary was able to convince the Internal Review Board that there would be no penalties if it were discovered (despite my assurances of complete confidentiality) that one of my colleagues was thinking for himself or herself.

responded that they represent a broad spectrum of congregations from across Connecticut. Large and small, rural, town and city churches responded, as well as churches from across the theological spectrum present in the United Church of Christ. That said, the churches in the Conference are overwhelmingly racially white, with only one predominantly black church (of three) and none of the predominantly Hispanic (of five) or Asian (of four) churches in the Conference responding. When asked about this informally, the pastors of these churches explained that their services mostly do not use a printed order of service either for Sundays or for other services. Another research method to capture similar information would need to be applied in further studies to gather information from these churches.

## **2. Results Analysis**

The data from this research project is grouped into four categories. First is demographic information about the churches and the pastors (Appendix A). Next is data regarding the scripture, sermon (words or message delivered by the pastor), and remembrances (words or message delivered by friends or family, not the presiding pastor; Appendix B), as well as the title of the service itself. Third is the data regarding the hymnody (Appendix C). I did not collect information about preludes, postludes or solo music; that might be an interesting study for a later time. I did go back into the bulletins to look for prelude and postlude information, and a majority of the churches do not list such information beyond having an indication that there are such things in the service. Last is data regarding which liturgical resources are used (if noted) and list of non-liturgical poems or other readings chosen by the family or friends (or perhaps the deceased themselves) to be read during the service (Appendix D).

## A. Church Demographics

### 1. *Respondent Church by Name and Number*

Seventy-two churches responded with 332 usable bulletins, for a 31% response rate. One church responded, but it was clear that the pastor had not read the directions and provided me simply with a photocopy of the UCC *Book of Worship*. The list of respondent churches reveals that churches from all across the Conference, in all Associations, responded, providing a broadly based, diverse (for Connecticut) representative sample pool.

### 2. *Gender Distribution of Clergy (Men and Women)*

I noted the gender distribution of clergy in my sample set—thirty women and forty-two men—to see if there was a discernable difference in the way that the services were designed between men and women clergy. I found there to be no difference in any of the criteria included in the rest of this study. I did correlate the gender of the pastor with the local congregation (again, publicly available information in the UCC Yearbook), but as I did not find any significance, I did not include that correlation in the data tables. As is typical for the rest of the United Church of Christ, there are still slightly more men than women in ministry, but that gap is closing. It is expected that there will be more women than men in ministry in the UCC, based on seminary projections, sometime in the next ten years.

### 3. *Did the Clergy Follow Directions?*

I had not intended to include this finding as a part of my final study, but the statistical significance of the result merits some discussion. The instructions in my initial letter (see Appendix E) were quite simple: send, in the enclosed return envelope, copies of the last five funeral bulletins. On the back of the letter, indicate which liturgical resource you generally use

in planning funerals. Nearly half of all women, and more than half of all men responding, did not do so. Some did not indicate which resources they use. Some sent not just the bulletins, but extensive photocopies of their copy of the *Book of Worship* or other resources with their own annotations. One colleague wrote a five page theological treatise on funerals (interesting, but not useful; I disagree with the premise this pastor suggests as the rationale for planning). Some sent in just one bulletin, with a note indicating that “all funerals look like this.” I note this phenomenon not to be critical of my colleagues, but to suggest that this is typical behavior for UCC clergy, and for our congregations in general. Members of the UCC do not like to be told what to do, and frequently find it appropriate to disregard instructions (or liturgical books) and follow individual—or a congregation’s—preferences. This tendency of independence has long been a hallmark of Congregationalism, and indicates another reason why it is sometimes quite complicated to say “the UCC does it this way” with any definitiveness; hence, the need for a study to see what is actually going on out in the parishes. This independence is almost always a good thing and is appreciated by parishioners, but does sometimes contradict the idea that there is some universality to what the church has done in history. It does also raise the question of whether or not there is any commonality to what the churches do—are funeral services (and the other worship services) so individualized that there really is no connection to what the wider church is doing? The already-mentioned resistance to the *Book of Worship* as the “official” liturgical resource of the denomination is a part of this, as are the significant adaptations that most clergy make to whatever liturgical resources are being used. For better or for worse, clergy have the freedom to do so in the United Church of Christ.

#### *4. Location of the Service*

Of the 332 services of worship included in this study, the majority of them took place in the church. In asking for worship bulletins, I was aware that this would likely be the case since I personally never prepare a bulletin for services in other locations. However, a number of the respondents included services at funeral homes, a couple of gravesides, and one that took place at the home of the decedent. As might be expected, the non-church-setting services generally did not include hymnody, though there were several that included music from friends or family. The non-church-setting services did often include scripture and a meditation from the pastor, though it was clear that the non-church settings the services were much more flexible about this. Another question to ask in a later study is to find out how many services are done in the church, compared to alternative locations over time, to see if the UCC is following the national trend towards services in places other than churches.

#### *5. Did the Obituary Appear on the Bulletin?*

Unexpectedly, a large percentage of the service bulletins included an obituary of the deceased. (An obituary, as defined here, is a brief synopsis of the deceased's life, often printed in the local newspaper.) I always include it, as well as a picture of the deceased, believing that the bulletin is more than just a throw-away. It can be for some a remembrance of the dead, and saved as a memorial. This is also the reason I have the funeral orders printed on nicer paper than we use for the Sunday bulletins. I did not note the quality of the paper officially, but many of the originals sent in were printed on nice, heavyweight paper. Some churches only included photocopies or later printings off the computer.

## B. Scripture, Sermon, Remembrances, and Service Titles

### *1. Scriptures*

The scriptures used in the 332 services are, as one can imagine, as diverse as the individuals for whom these services were prepared. The diversity comes from the specific selection and editing of verses chosen. However, throughout the services studied, several specific texts appeared quite frequently. This was one of the areas that exhibited the most creativity in the services. Very few of the services included the traditional full cycle of Old Testament, Psalm, Epistle and Gospel readings. Many of the services had just one or two scripture lessons; several were very scripture-heavy. One set of services in particular included no fewer than eight Psalms in whole or in part, with very little else by way of liturgy.

Psalm 23, in whole (or, surprisingly, in part) appeared officially in 230 of the 332 services studied (69%). Of the total occurrences, the majority of them indicated (either by printing the Psalm or by referring to the version) that the King James Version was preferred. I suspect that in several additional services Psalm 23 was also used, but in these services it was not clear what any of the scriptures used might have been. Portions of chapter 14 of the Gospel of John appeared in 135 services (40%), and Psalm 121 appeared in 52 services (15%). The rest of the Scriptures that appeared in the services were quite varied. The selection of Scripture lessons for funeral rites appears to be largely a matter of individual choice; but it is unclear whether the choice is made by the decedent (in pre-planning), the bereaved, or by the clergy. In my own experience, it is most often the clergy who guide the bereaved in choosing Scripture (as well as hymns). Since the majority of parishioners (in my experience) do *not* pre-plan their own

funerals, and at the time of death the bereaved are often not in an emotional place to make rational decisions about these things, it falls to the clergy to offer acceptable choices.

#### A. Psalm 23

It should come as no surprise that Psalm 23 is the most common scripture used in these services. Most children memorize it in Sunday School. It appears often in popular culture (such as movies, TV shows and in popular music). Interestingly, the psalm does not appear in the Church of England 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* (which only offers Pss. 39 and 90) and does not appear in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church in the United States until the 1928 revision. I note this fact, as it is clear that much of what occurred as early American Congregational funeral liturgies were derived in practice from the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. So, why has Psalm 23 become so popular? An interesting interpretation printed on the back of one of the bulletins analyzed for this project may shed some light. Each line of the Psalm (in the King James Version, of course), is noted with a theme or idea:

*The Lord is my shepherd; - SAFETY*  
*I shall not want. - SUPPLY*  
*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: - PEACE*  
*he leadeth me beside the still waters. - HARMONY*  
*He restoreth my soul: - HEALING*  
*he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness - GUIDANCE*  
*for his name's sake. - PURPOSE*  
*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, - DARKNESS*  
*I will fear no evil: - CONFIDENCE*  
*for thou art with me; - PROTECTION*  
*thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. - INSTRUCTION*  
*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: - PROVISION*  
*thou anointest my head with oil; - CONSECRATION*  
*my cup runneth over. - ABUNDANCE*  
*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: - LOVING CARE*

*and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. - ETERNAL HOME<sup>58</sup>*

The Psalm with these notations gives an excellent summary of Christian faith and the messages that need to be heard at the time of death. There are various interpretations of this sort available on the internet, though I was unable to locate this specific one anywhere. The themes of God's benevolence and care are lifted up in the face of adversity, darkness and death, and are just the sentiments needed at such a time.

*B. John 14*

In a similar way, this most commonly appearing Gospel lesson speaks of God's preparation for those who transit from this life to the next. It is a text of reassurance and comfort and promise, also words much needed at the time of death. The bulletins analyzed offered a variety of adaptations to this particular passage of scripture, but the most common adaptation actually seems to be the one that appears in the *UCC Book of Worship*.

Let not your hearts be troubled;  
     believe in God,  
     believe also in me.  
 In my Father's house are many rooms;  
     if it were not so,  
     would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  
 And when I go and prepare a place for you,  
     I will come again and take you to myself,  
     that where I am you may be also.  
 I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.  
 Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more,  
     but you will see me;  
     because I live, you will live also.

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58. This was printed on the back of one of the bulletins used in this study, from a United Church of Christ congregation in the Connecticut Conference. There was no other source cited on the bulletin, and research has not revealed a source. It is one of those things that pastors or parishioners collect and keep in their Bibles or files, cut out of the newspaper or another worship bulletin that also has no source cited. I am sure it has an original author, but I was unable to uncover who it might be. Sadly, this is all too common in the church, particularly with worship bulletins.

These things I have spoken to you,  
     while I am still with you.  
 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit,  
     whom the Father will send in my name,  
     will teach you all things,  
     and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.  
 Peace I leave with you;  
     not as the world gives do I give to you.  
 Let not your hearts be troubled,  
     neither let them be afraid.<sup>59</sup>

This particular passage has, as does Psalm 23, themes of comfort and promise, and reassurance that death is not the end, but the beginning of something new.

### *C. Psalm 121*

The third most common scripture used, Psalm 121, compliments the previous two scriptures passages in that it also contains themes of reassurance, God's eternal presence, and God's eternal aid. The benedictory nature of the last quatrain is particularly appropriate for a funeral. Strangely, the Scottish Psalter metrical version of this Psalm which does appear in the *Pilgrim Hymnal* (tune DUNDEE) does not appear in any of the services in this study.

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
     from where will my help come?  
 My help comes from the Lord,  
     who made heaven and earth.  
 He will not let your foot be moved;  
     he who keeps you will not slumber.  
 He who keeps Israel  
     will neither slumber nor sleep.  
 The Lord is your keeper;  
     the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
 The sun shall not strike you by day,  
     nor the moon by night.  
 The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
     he will keep your life.

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59. Adapted selections from John 14, NRSV. Taken from UCC, *The Book of Worship*, 522. The block quote here is formatted in the way that this text appears in the book for reading.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and for evermore.

The importance of the reading of Scripture is retained from our earliest Reformed roots. It appears in this survey that, in general, there are more readings from the New Testament than from the Old, though there are significant numbers of Psalms used. None of the services examined omitted Scripture completely; all of them had multiple readings of one sort or another.

2. *Location of the Sermon (Delivered by the Minister) and the Remembrances (Delivered by Friends or Family).*

I looked at the location of the sermon, defined here as the message delivered by the minister, and the remembrances, defined here as words and thoughts delivered by the friends or family. For instance, in the services I plan, I place the scriptures and the sermon during a service at the church *after* the family remembrances (and other readings), believing that the message of the Gospel is the last thing that those attending a service should hear. It also gives me the opportunity to listen to the remembrances and to glean little details about the life of the deceased that I might incorporate into the sermon extemporaneously. Of the 332 services analyzed, 128 of them indicated that the sermon was delivered after the Remembrances. Seventy-one of the services indicated that the sermon was delivered first, it was unclear where the minister's sermon was in thirty-six of the services and, surprisingly, it appears as if the minister did not deliver a sermon at all in ninety-seven of the services. It is not clear from this study why this is the case; many of the services that appeared not to include a sermon from the minister were similar in nearly every other regard to those that did.

### 3. Title of the Sermon

A relatively new way of quickly analyzing the frequency of words in a group of texts (such as in a long list of titles) is to create a word cloud.<sup>60</sup> The size of each individual word in a word cloud gives a quick visual indication of how common the word is in the set of data. Words are weighted by frequency. Common words are eliminated. And in this case, as with the two following word clouds, I did not keep the titles together as phrases, but drew out single words from each title.

As can be seen in figure 1, the UCC are a “word” and “meditation” heavy people in supplying synonyms for the sermon. A rather even distribution of varying other titles follows, all of which reflect some form of remembrance and appear to be less of a “traditional” sermon. Note that the word “sermon” is smaller, indicating that it appears less frequently, as does the word “eulogy,” both traditional words for this portion of a funeral service. If (as I shall do in Chapter 4) we were to create a worship service based on the data from this research, the most common title of the sermon would be “Meditation.”

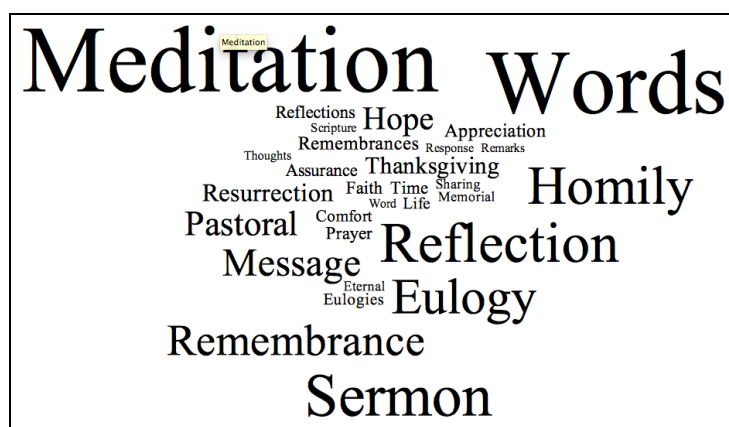


Figure 1. Sermon title word cloud.

60. The word clouds in this thesis were created using Word It Out, an online word cloud generator. [www.worditout.com](http://www.worditout.com).



### 5. *Title of the Service*

The title of the service itself gives us an indication of what the creators of the services (the pastors and the churches together) think is going on. It is interesting to note that in several cases, the title on the outside of the service bulletin did not match the title on the inside. Was this a case of poor proofreading on the part of the bulletin preparer? Or, is the mis-match of titles an indication that there is an internal mis-match in understanding what is going on at the time of death?

Using the “word cloud” technique a third time to analyze quickly the words in the title of the services, we see that in descending order, the most common words are “service,” “life,” “celebration,” “thanksgiving,” “worship,” “remembrance,” and “memorial.” In print almost too small to be seen in this format are the words “God,” “Resurrection,” and “Christian.” Once again, if creating a service based on the data, the title of the event could be called “A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the Life of N.”

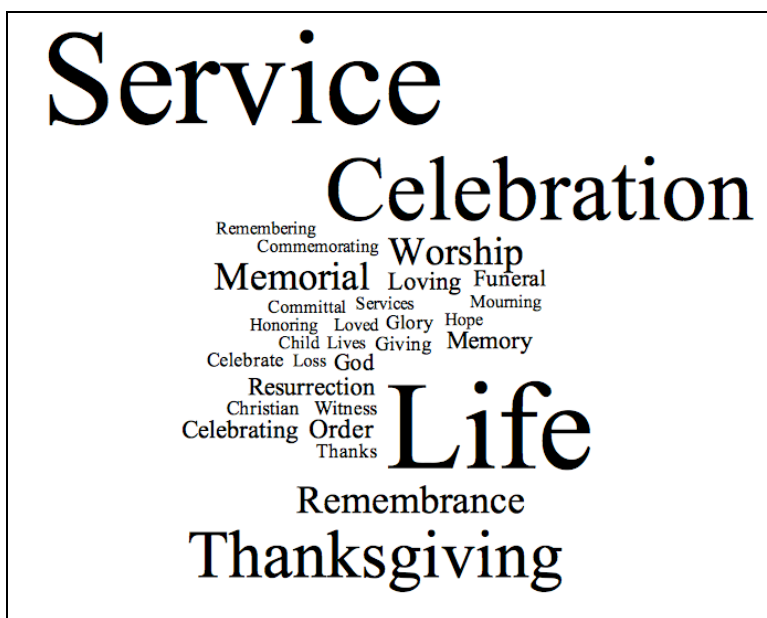


Figure 3. Service title word cloud.

### C. Hymnody

As is the case with the scriptures described above, the hymnody present in these services says a great deal about what is actually believed. Often, it is the hymns and songs in any worship service that people remember and declare most deeply express their thoughts and beliefs. Since the United Church of Christ is not a creedal denomination (that is, it does not require adherence to any of the historic Christian creeds), congregations perhaps have to fall back on the ancient idea of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. This ancient principle, which roughly translates as “what we say is what we believe,”<sup>63</sup> gives us a guide for understanding the role and place of hymnody in worship, particularly during death rites, when belief and emotion are at their most challenged for the bereaved. A quick survey of the top ten or so most common hymns used in the bulletins shared in this study brings out a clear theology: one of hope for the future, a strong belief in the forgiving nature of God, and conviction that the deceased are now in a better place. There is little evidence of trepidation about the eternal disposition of the souls of the deceased; God is all-forgiving, and whatever happens after death, it is really up to the all-forgiving all-loving God to decide.

#### 1. *Amazing Grace*<sup>64</sup>

Far and away, the hymn “Amazing Grace” is the most commonly used hymn. Ninety of the 332 (27%) services analyzed included it. The words, written by John Newton for a sermon on New Year’s Day in 1773, describes Newton’s belief that despite any sin one might commit,

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63. A more strict translation is “the law of prayer is the law of belief.” Hymns are sung prayers.

64. Words: John Newton, *Olney Hymns* (London: W. Oliver, 1779). Exception: the last stanza is by an unknown author; it appeared as early as 1829 in the *Baptist Songster* by R. Winchell (Wethersfield, Connecticut), as the last stanza of the song “*Jerusalem My Happy Home*.” Music: NEW BRITAIN, in *Virginia Harmony*, by James P. Carrell and David S. Clayton (Winchester, Virginia: 1831).

forgiveness and redemption from God are available. It is a hymn of exceptional hope. Similar to Psalm 23, this hymn is very popular outside of church circles; it appears in television programs and movies with some regularity, and is a crossover hit on the music charts in several genres. In my own pastoral experience, it is one ‘church song’ of just a few that those who are un-churched would find familiar. It’s a bit of a circular reinforcement; it is a popular hymn that has become known in the culture; and as the number of the unchurched increase, perhaps it is more frequently requested simply because it is so well known. Fortunately, it is fitting and appropriate at most funerals.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

(The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, who called me here below,

Will be forever mine.)

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.

## 2. *In The Garden*

With no wish to disparage this lovely hymn (text and tune) written by C. Austin Miles in 1912, based on John 20:15, it nonetheless is an excellent example of the type of hymn focused on the individual, personal, intimate relationship with the person of Jesus Christ that arose in American Christianity in the late nineteenth century. Its sentimentality is what makes it almost as popular in secular culture (e.g., television, movies and the music charts) as “Amazing Grace.”

Miles himself describes his thoughts on writing this hymn:

*I read . . . the story of the greatest morn in history: “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet very dark, unto the sepulcher.” Instantly, completely, there unfolded in my mind the scenes of the garden of Joseph . . . Out of the mists of the garden comes a form, halting, hesitating, tearful, seeking, turning from side to side in bewildering amazement. Falteringly, bearing grief in every accent, with tear-dimmed eyes, she whispers, “If thou hast borne him hence” . . . “He speaks, and the sound of His voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” Just one word from his lips, and forgotten the heart-aches, the long dreary hours . . . all the past blotted out in the presence of the Living Present and the Eternal Future.<sup>65</sup>*

The Easter themes in this hymn may be another reason for its popularity in Protestant funerals. It places the listener (or singer) in an intimate walk with Jesus “in the garden,” that is, just after his Resurrection—and you are there with him. This comforting promise extended is theologically consistent with the desire of all Christians who face their own mortality that they too will be with Christ.

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65. <http://www.cyberhymnal.org> (accessed February 18, 2012).

I come to the garden alone  
 While the dew is still on the roses  
 And the voice I hear falling on my ear  
 The Son of God discloses.

Refrain

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
 And He tells me I am His own;  
 And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
 None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice,  
 Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,  
 And the melody that He gave to me  
 Within my heart is ringing. (Refrain)

I'd stay in the garden with Him  
 Though the night around me be falling,  
 But He bids me go; through the voice of woe  
 His voice to me is calling. (Refrain)

### 3. *How Great Thou Art*

This hymn is a translation of the Swedish hymn by Carl Boberg, written in 1885, with original verses composed in 1949 by the translator of the most common English version, Stuart K. Hine in 1949. This text, like the other top hymns in this study, is known beyond the confines of the church. Hines's translation was popularized by George Beverly Shea who sang it frequently for many years during the height of the Billy Graham Crusades beginning in the 1950s. Graham liked this hymn because it directs the Christian's attention to God. Its themes of divine praise and thanksgiving are powerful, and, like the other hymns, have a universal resonance across denominational identity. Again, the popularity of this hymn with a certain generation is related to its widespread use, its crossover appeal into several other musical genres,

and its simple promise of that the Christian who looks at the wonder of creation here, can eagerly expect that the wonders of heaven to be even more majestic.

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder  
 Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made.  
 I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
 Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Refrain:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;  
 How great Thou art, how great Thou art!  
 Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee:  
 How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
 And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
 When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
 And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze: (Refrain)  
 And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,  
 Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
 That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
 He bled and died to take away my sin: (Refrain)

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
 And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
 Then I shall bow in humble adoration,  
 And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art! (Refrain)

#### 4. *On Eagle's Wings*

This song, often used as a hymn (words and music) by Michael Joncas, a Catholic priest, deserves special note because of its appearance so high in the list of hymns favored in the bulletins received for this research project. It is the most recently written hymn of the top ten (1979). It was originally written for Roman Catholic worship, but like the previous hymns, has found a much wider and popular reception. The theme of God's providence and care is primary, as it is in the other top hymns.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord  
 Who abide in His shadow for life,  
 Say to the Lord: 'My refuge, my God in whom I trust!'

Refrain

And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,  
 Bear you on the breath of dawn,  
 Make you to shine like the sun,  
 And hold you in the palm of His hand.

The snare of the fowler will never capture you,  
 And famine will bring you no fear:  
 Under His wings your refuge, His faithfulness your shield. (Refrain)

You need not fear the terror of the night,  
 Nor the arrow that flies by day;  
 Though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come. (Refrain)

For to His angels He's given a command  
 To guard you in all of your ways'  
 Upon their hands they will bear you up,  
 lest you dash your foot against a stone. (Refrain)

All of the top five hymns in this study share several characteristics. First, they appear to have an appeal both musical and theological that is able to transcend the fast-changing tastes in popular music. The tunes are all quite singable and memorable.<sup>66</sup> The message is simple in each of them; that the Christian hope of eternal life and God's love can be trusted. At the moment of bereavement and grief, this simple message is powerful.

Rounding out the top ten hymns are a mix of modern and traditional hymns:

5. "For All The Saints"
6. "In The Bulb There Is A Flower" (the newest of all hymns noted, 1989)
7. "Eternal Father, Strong to Save"
8. "Morning Has Broken"
9. "The Old Rugged Cross"
10. "Abide With Me"

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66. Lawrence Welk once famously quipped "If they can't hum it after we play it, it's not for us." This is the principle here with regards to hymnody that lasts a long time. The success of Welk's orchestra far outlasted the death of the genre in popular music for this precise reason.

Again, these hymns contain similar characteristics to the top five. They are all well written tunes that people can hum long after the service is over. The Navy Hymn has an appeal to Christians of a certain generation who remember that it was part of the funeral service for President Kennedy. “Morning Has Broken” has a crossover appeal, since Cat Stevens had a hit with it in 1972. These tunes—and texts—have remained popular despite the change in musical tastes over time. And again, they all contain a theology of hope and promise.

There were almost no “contemporary Christian” praise and worship style songs for perhaps two reasons. First, because that style of worship is not typical in the churches of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC; and, secondly, that style of worship generally does not make use of worship bulletins. To my knowledge, there are only two or three churches of that liturgical style in the Connecticut Conference. Whether or not this style of worship will become more common in funeral rites in the future is unclear. The immediacy of the theology and what seems to be the impermanent and informal style of worship may not lend itself well to answer the difficult needs and longings of the bereaved at the time of death.

#### D. Sources and Readings

As already discussed, there is no required liturgical book in the United Church of Christ. However, from this study, it appears that thirty of the respondents use some or most of the 1986 UCC *Book of Worship* in planning for funeral services. Three respondents noted that they specifically do *not* use this particular resource. More may use the UCC *BOW* as a resource, particularly given the frequency of the particular grouping of passages from the Gospel of John that is peculiar to that book, as noted above. Other common resources used include the Episcopal Church USA’s *Book of Common Prayer*, the Anglican Church of New Zealand’s *Book*

*of Common Prayer*, The United Methodist *Book of Worship*, and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resources. Only one of the respondents reported that the UCC *Book of Worship* (or really, any worship resource) is used substantially unaltered. Most indicated that the services they put together are a significant adaptation and reconstruction from several sources gathered over time. Many of the respondents did not indicate clearly what their sources were, thereby frustrating attempts to quantify this particular information. It is clear, however, that this is an area where there is great diversity of opinion, freedom, and choice made as to what sources are used. This diversity, again, reflective of the nature of the denomination, does call into question the idea of some sort of commonality or universality in rites (not just the funeral rites) from congregation to congregation.

It is also clear that there are a variety of non-denominational resources used, many of which are not necessarily liturgical, but may be poetic and reflective in nature, and just as effective as more traditional liturgical texts. The non-scriptural readings and poems used in the services surveyed reveal a surprising disconnect between the theological understanding of death revealed in the scripture readings and hymns chosen, and a death-denying secular theology. None of these non-scriptural readings or poems achieved a level of commonality as did, for instance, Psalm 23, or the hymn “Amazing Grace.” The one poem most commonly cited was Mary Frye’s 1932 poem “Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep.” This particular poem does assure the reader (and at a funeral, listeners) that the presence of the deceased continues, though not in a way that traditional Christianity would describe. Other poetical writings included in the services surveyed were similar in sentiment and questionable theologically.

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
 I am not there; I do not sleep.  
 I am a thousand winds that blow,  
 I am the diamond glints on snow,  
 I am the sun on ripened grain,  
 I am the gentle autumn rain.  
 When you awaken in the morning's hush  
 I am the swift uplifting rush  
 Of quiet birds in circling flight.  
 I am the soft star-shine at night.  
 Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
 I am not there; I did not die.<sup>67</sup>

This chapter has looked at the structure, order, hymnody, poetry and other data contained in a group of bulletins for funerals for individuals in Connecticut churches within the United Church of Christ over a period of approximately the past four years, though most of them were within the last year. It is, as described earlier in this paper, a “snapshot” of what is going on out in the churches. In the next chapter, I consider whether or not what is actually happening is achieving the goals and theological aims that were proposed at the beginning of this study, and suggest a set of rites that will combine many of the details of what is currently going on, while looking forward to a future liturgy that may be more in line with the theology of the people, the denomination, and the culture in which both exist in this part of the world. An important factor in writing new liturgy is also to think of its use beyond the immediate context in the ecumenical church. While the rites below do not make direct reference to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Faith and Order Paper No. 111 – The “Lima Text”)*, it is important to note that the United Church of Christ adopted this paper as a guiding text for its liturgical work (among other things)

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67. Frye, Mary. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do\\_not\\_stand\\_at\\_my\\_grave\\_and\\_weep](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do_not_stand_at_my_grave_and_weep) (accessed February 20, 2012).

shortly after it was published.<sup>68</sup> So, any work done to augment the liturgical resources of the United Church of Christ are done with this framework in mind.

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68. Gunnemann. *United and Uniting*, 39.

CHAPTER FOUR  
WHERE WE MIGHT GO

**1. Conclusions**

The answers to some of the questions asked in Chapter 1 have become clearer through the course of this project. As with all things in the UCC, there is no one clear answer to any question posed. The impulse of autonomy (“Don’t tell us what to do”) along with the sense of covenant that unites the congregations is a historic tension in the denomination. When the balance is just right, a loose enough covenant binds the congregations together for important things such as mission and the orderly training and approval of ministers, but leaves plenty of room for the freedom of the congregations to arrange its own worship and internal organization as it sees fit. The use or non-use of the *Book of Worship* falls into the latter category.

Services for the dead in the UCC in Connecticut in the twenty-first century are almost without exception memorial services, using the definition developed in Chapter 1. From the evidence in the bulletins, it is clear that the people generally believe that the services do nothing for the dead, except to commemorate them, and are really geared for the living. The difference in terminology does not appear to matter much, though the use of the word “funeral” to describe the services was not nearly as common in the actual titles of the services as general usage to describe the services in conversation might suggest. There does not appear to be much distinction in the minds of either the parishioners or the pastors; the term “funeral” is short-hand for “A Service of the Thanksgiving and Celebration for the Life of N.” Given that most UCC pastors allow significant participation in the planning of these rites, it appears that the bereaved

prefer the memorial service style, where the theological focus is more on the commemoration (and even sanctification) of the deceased, rather than on the worship of God. For the UCC, this is theologically honest, if nothing else, though I still have reservations about how effectively what is actually going on out in the churches accomplishes the goals stated in the *Book of Worship*. Only a couple of the churches surveyed appear to use the services in the UCC *Book of Worship* largely unchanged, the rest make heavy modifications, if it is used at all. What is more common is a structure, based either on local tradition or the pastor's preference, upon which then prayers, scriptures, readings and hymns from a variety of sources are attached. The services tended to be simpler than the services in the *BOW*. That tendency towards simplicity is present throughout the set of bulletins analyzed, and is historically consistent.

The core question—do the services as they are being done accomplish what they purport to, or have traditionally done, or should do—is really a subjective one. The bereaved bring a lot of emotional and spiritual turmoil to each service. Why do we have these services? If we reduce the purposes of the services to White's plainest definition—to comfort the bereaved and to commend the deceased to God—it appears that we certainly accomplish the first, and sometimes accomplish the second. Since in our New England Congregational, reformed, post-Enlightenment mindset prayers for the dead are largely viewed as superstition, commending the dead to God is often left off. Our Puritan ancestors believed that we were predestined to go one way or the other into the afterlife, with little that we could do about it. Later generations came to believe (with the shift in theology already discussed) that a benevolent God was unlikely to cast anyone into the outer darkness, and so again, prayers for the disposition of the soul of the deceased aren't effective, and do not really accomplish anything. As discussed in Chapter 1, one

of the ways of distinguishing between a “funeral” and a “memorial service” is to determine what the community (or individual) believes about the purpose and effect of services for the dead. If God has already decided what is going to happen, what is left to mourners is to remember and give thanks. These are not insignificant, but are a different thing than believing that the prayers said have an effect on the destination of the deceased’s soul.

## **2. A Proposed Order of Service**

I offer the following set of rites to the church. One of the difficulties I have encountered in fifteen years of pastoral ministry is that we place too much expectation on the single hour of memorial service as we mourn for the dead. Below is an expanded set of rites that should take a couple of days to accomplish. If used in full, and the majority of the community around the deceased participates, the rites will give a fuller opportunity for grieving, remembering, commending, thanking and celebrating than the one-hour experience that is all too typical of modern obsequies.

This set of rites is structured in what I believe to be a more biblical pattern, recognizing that there has been much theological and liturgical development in recent decades within the United Church of Christ. These rites are fuller than many (most?) of the New England Congregationalists might prefer, but the reality is that today, an increasing percentage of our members come from other traditions. In my own congregation, fully half of the membership are from Roman Catholic, Lutheran or Episcopal traditions and will appreciate the expanded set of rites provided. As with all liturgies offered in the UCC, these rites may be used in part or in whole, and may be adapted as local custom dictates. As indicated, a good portion of these rites

are an adaptation and re-ordering of the UCC *Book of Worship* rites. The titles of the various rites, as well as the Scriptures chosen are based on the research in the previous section.

First, there is a simple two-part rite, the first part to be used if the individual is close to death, and the second to be used if death has occurred. In the “Words in Preparation for Death” rite, the prayers are pastoral in nature, and are designed to comfort everyone present.<sup>69</sup> The prayer (As we gather at the edge . . . ) is a sending prayer, but is not intended to be a stand-alone prayer of commendation. Psalm 23, perhaps the most familiar Psalm is suggested, as well as Psalm 46 (God is our refuge and strength . . . ) and Psalm 121 (I lift up my eyes to the hills . . . ). These are Psalms of comfort and assurance. The Lord’s Prayer may be said in whatever form is most familiar to those gathered. Then follows a pastoral prayer directly from the UCC *BOW* designed to call upon God to bring comfort and stillness and grace to the moment. The rite may then pause here, if death has not occurred. Or, it may continue directly into “Words At The Time of Death,” if/when death has occurred. In this rite, one or more of the prayers provided may be said, with rubrics that allow for anointing, if appropriate.

Next is provided a “Service at the Time of Remembrance.” Many families choose to have what is sometimes called a “wake” or “visiting hours” where the friends and family gather informally to view the body or ashes. Increasingly, there are displays of pictures and other personal mementos. This rite is designed to give some structure to this time, and to alleviate some of the pressure on the “Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration” to accomplish too many things in the space of an hour. The rite begins with an informal welcome, a Scripture lesson

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69. I make the assumption that even the most unresponsive individual close to death can still hear what is going on. This is, I think, one of those mysteries that will be explained to us in the next world.

from Exodus that calls us to remember the event “as a festival to the Lord”<sup>70</sup> A prayer (a statement of purpose, really) calls those gathered to remember the deceased. This is where the “open microphone” time may more appropriately occur, and the rite closes with a brief prayer that encourages those gathered to continue to be engaged in the act of remembrance.

Next, is the most significant change in the order of events, which is really a return to ancient Reformed practice. It has been common in the United States for several generations, even in the Congregational/UCC churches for the body or remains to be present for the “funeral,” and then for all to process to the cemetery for burial, or if the ground is still frozen (as it is in New England most winters,) for there to be a later burial once the ground has thawed.<sup>71</sup> But, as we have seen, Reformed practice was to inter the body first, and then proceed to the church (if at all) for prayers and a sermon. In this set of rites, the “Service of Interment” comes next. It is a simple service of Scripture and prayers that again commends the deceased to God, as not everyone present at the place of interment was present at the death of the individual. The “Service of Interment” closes with the verse from the Gospel of Luke, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has risen.”<sup>72</sup> The men at Christ’s tomb ask this question and make this statement on that first Easter morning, foreshadowing the promise of resurrection for us all.

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70. Exodus 12:14

71. Delaying the burial because of frozen ground is increasingly rare for two reasons. First, technology exists to allow cemetery workers to thaw or simply muscle the ground open with larger machinery, and secondly because of the increase in cremation rates. It is relatively easy to thaw or open a hole in the ground for a cremation urn, and again, increasingly, many people simply are not using in-ground burial for cremated loved ones.

72. Luke 24:4-5, adapted.

The set of rites concludes with a “Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration.” The title reflects the purpose of the service, and is a summary description of the most common titles for these services found in the research—and an accurate description of the theology intended. Local custom and differences in liturgical style are again encouraged. The service begins with the baptismal promise found in Romans 6. The “Greeting,” taken directly from the existing UCC service (analyzed in Chapter 1) is next, as is Prayer B, again from the existing service. A time remembrance is included in this service as well, but should be more formal than the remembrances from the “Service at the Time of Remembrance,” and really should be limited to just one or two speakers, so as not to obscure that the theological focus of this service is on the worship of God in thanksgiving for the life of the individual who has died. The Scripture lessons recommended for use are the most common ones identified in the research. “Words of Meditation” follow, delivered by the clergy or principal leader. A hymn and prayers of thanksgiving (from the UCC BOW) come next, with provision for, but no defined liturgy for Communion. Celebration of Communion is so infrequent in New England funerals that it seemed unnecessary to include it, but rather to simply provide for a place using a standard liturgy. This may need to be revisited in the future if more people request it. It should be offered as an option during the planning of the service—I intend for there to be Communion celebrated at my own funeral. The Lord’s Prayer is suggested again, and rather than a “Commendation” as appears in the UCC *BOW* (since interment has already occurred) “Words of Resurrection” from the UCC *BOW* service and John 11 conclude the service, with a Benediction from Hebrews 13.

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**THE CONNECTICUT LITURGY**  
**ORDER OF SERVICES OF REMEMBRANCE, COMMITTAL AND THANKSGIVING**  
**FOR THE LIFE OF ONE WHO HAS DIED**

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*This set of Services is designed to provide a comprehensive set of rites for the death of a Christian. The order of the services differs from the services in the UCC Book of Worship, and is based on the structure of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Careful education and preparation of the members of a congregation and particularly the bereaved should be undertaken well ahead of the time of need. It might be useful to include some explanatory notes in whatever printed bulletin is provided (if any) or some spoken instructions at the beginning of each section to educate those unfamiliar with these rites. As always, these rites may be adapted for local use, and for pastoral sensitivity to the nature and circumstances of the death. Much of the material for these rites is an adaptation of the material contained in the 1986 United Church of Christ Book of Worship. Scripture lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. Additional material from other sources and some original material is also noted.*

*As the last days of Jesus' life are considered, there are three significant events that occur in a particular order. First is the time in the upper room with the disciples, where Jesus institutes the Communion meal and bids the disciples to remember him every time they gather. Second is Christ's death and time in the tomb, where the awful reality of his human mortality is most fully revealed. And third is the open, empty tomb on Easter morning, where the glorious reality of Christ's (and as promised, our) resurrection is made evident to the world.*

*The order of the rites below reflects this biblical pattern of Remembrance, Death and Resurrection. Local custom surrounding ceremonial and liturgical style are encouraged; the structure and content of these services may be used in any style. This order of rites does not leave the bereaved standing at the edge of an open grave or columbarium niche or garden with the remains of their beloved, but rather, facing the empty tomb of resurrection where the men at the tomb ask "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen."<sup>73</sup>*

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73. Luke 24:5-6.

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WORDS IN PREPARATION FOR DEATH

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*If possible, the following prayers may be said with those gathered around as one is close to death. We must always assume that the individual near death can still hear us, and sense our presence. It is appropriate for members of the family, clergy and other representatives from the church to gather at this moment. Anyone may lead this rite. It is appropriate to hold the hand of or lay hands on the person near death. If death has already occurred, these words may be combined with Words at the Time of Death that follow.*

**One:** The peace of the Lord be with you.

**All:** **And also with you.**

**One:** As we gather at the edge between this world and the next, we pray, O God, that you send your holy presence to us now. Guard and guide our *brother/sister N.*, that *he/she* may see what our eyes cannot imagine—that which you have prepared for us. May *his/her* journey be gentle, and may *he/she* find you waiting upon the other shore. May Christ be *his/her* guide now, as always. When *his/her* journey is ended, may *he/she* hear the words you have spoken to all your servants: well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your God.<sup>74</sup>

**All:** **Amen.**

*Here may be said a Psalm (23, 46, or 121 are recommended).*

*Then may be said the Lord's Prayer.*

**One:** Great God of all mystery, if in the presence of death our thoughts are unsettled, bring us stillness, that we may be in the presence of grief and sorrow without fear. Give us grace to wait on you silently and patiently, for you are nearer to us than we know, and closer than we can imagine. If we cannot find you, it is because we search in the wrong places.

Before we felt pain, you suffered it; before we were burdened with this grief, you lifted it; before sorrow darkened our hearts, you were grieved. You are our good shepherd; walk with us now in this valley of shadow that we may not fall.

Guide us past every danger, and grant to us the presence of your Son. Remind us that, though the pain deepens, you are there to sustain and care for us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.<sup>75</sup>

**All:** **Amen.**

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74. Original prayer by James J. Olson for this liturgy.

75. "Prayer for the Grieving," adapted from UCC, *The Book of Worship*, 364. Matthew 25:21, paraphrased.

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WORDS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

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*If death has occurred, these words may be said, and may be combined with the previous rite. Those present may lay hands upon the deceased as an act of final mercy and benediction. If appropriate, the deceased may be anointed with oil at the hands, feet, and head. One or all of these prayers may be used.*

**One:** Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant *N*. Acknowledge, we humbly pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a child of your own redeeming.

Receive *N*. now into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the company of saints in light.<sup>76</sup>

**All: Amen.**

**One:** Lord, now dismiss your servant *N*. in peace, according to your word; for *his/her* eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.<sup>77</sup>

**All: Amen.**

**One:** Depart O Christian, out of this world and into the next; in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May you rest now in the peace of God's eternal home.<sup>78</sup>

**All. Amen.**

*Those gathered may now remain as long as desired for final farewells. It is wise for the one who led this service to remain to comfort those who have participated.*

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76. UCC, "Commendation," *The Book of Worship*, 365, adapted.

77. Luke 2:29-39, adapted.

78. UCC, "Commendation," *The Book of Worship*, 365, adapted.

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 SERVICE AT THE TIME OF REMEMBRANCE
 

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*At what has been traditionally called a “wake” or “visiting hours” at a funeral home or at the church, these words may be used at an announced time to invite those gathered to share memories and stories of the deceased. It is most appropriate for there to be pictures or collages or slide shows of images gathered, as well as other personal items to remind those present of the deceased. This may take place at the beginning of this service, or sometime in the middle. Care should be taken to announce that there will be this structured time of remembrance in the usual notifications. The focus of this occasion is clearly to be on the deceased. Local custom may dictate whether or not the casket (if present) is to be open or not. The remains of the deceased in whatever form they are should be present if possible. Flowers and other remembrances are appropriate. Depending on local tradition, it is appropriate either to hold this event on the day or evening before the Service of Interment and Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration, or early enough in the same day of the subsequent rites to allow for an unhurried feel to the event.*

**One:** Welcome, everyone. We gather to remember *N.*, our *brother/sister* in Christ. On behalf of the family of *N.*, I thank you for coming.

*Mention may be made here of the schedule of events for the Service of Interment and the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration, and any gathering following those services. Then may be said:*

**One:** Hear these words from the Book of Exodus.

*This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.<sup>79</sup>*

We gather to give thanks and to remember. To laugh and cry, to rejoice and grieve, to tell the truth, and to leave some truths unsaid. Let us pray.

Gracious God, giver of eternal life, as we gather to remember the life of *N.*, remind us that your promise is that this time of separation is temporary. That just as we, baptized into a death like Christ’s, will be reunited in eternal life like Christ’s, so we too will be reunited with those whom we have loved and who are now with you. We pray this through your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, with all the company of heaven, now and forever more.<sup>80</sup>

**All: Amen.**

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79. Exodus 12:14.

80. Original prayer by Rev. James J. Olson.

*Here, any who wish to offer a remembrance of the deceased are invited to do so. This time may be as informal or formal as is fitting, and does not need a firm conclusion. It may be appropriate simply to allow informal conversation and visiting to resume, or to have just one or two formal remembrances given. If appropriate, this Service may conclude with this prayer.*

**One:** We have told stories and remembered, O God. As we do so in the days ahead, may we always remember and give thanks for the life of *N.*, with whom and in whom you so richly blessed us. In Christ's name, we say,

**All: Amen.**

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 SERVICE OF INTERMENT
 

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*At the place of interment (cemetery, or columbarium, memorial garden, or at sea), these words may be said. The focus of this portion of the rite is to remind us of our own mortality, admit the reality of the death of the individual to be interred, and offer gratitude for God's provision that we not remain in death.*

*It is appropriate to invite to this Service all those who will later attend the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration. If there is not a churchyard, churches may consider the creation of a place of interment (a memorial garden or columbarium) on church property to take fullest advantage of the symbolism of this Service, and to demonstrate most clearly the continuity between this Service and the next. Once all are gathered at the place of burial, the leader begins:*

One: I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live; and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.<sup>81</sup>

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of God, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.<sup>82</sup>

*And then this prayer, which may be adapted for the location of burial (to the ground; to the deep; to this his/her final resting place):*

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to you the life of *N*, and we commit *his/her* body to the ground.<sup>83</sup>

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit. They rest from their labors, and their works follow them.<sup>84</sup>

*Here may be said the Lord's Prayer.*

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81. John 11:25-26.

82. Romans 6:3-5, adapted.

83. Presbyterian Church USA, "Committal," *PCUSA Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 940), 939, adapted.

84. Revelation 14:13.

One: Merciful God, support us all the day long of this life of trouble, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your tender mercy, grant us a safe lodging,<sup>85</sup> a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

**All: Amen.**

*It is appropriate for those gathered to remain as the coffin or ashes are lowered into the ground or placed into the columbarium niche or whatever other arrangement is made for the final resting place of the remains of the deceased. Dismissal of those gathered before this occurs is to be discouraged.<sup>86</sup> As this is occurring, then is said:*

One: Suddenly, two men in dazzling clothes stood beside the empty tomb and asked the women on that Easter morning: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”<sup>87</sup>

May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope.<sup>88</sup> Go in the peace of Christ.

*Local customs regarding the casting of flowers or earth upon the casket or urn, or into the water, may be observed here.*

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85. UCC, “Committal,” *The Book of Worship*, 389. Adapted from a prayer by John Henry Newman.

86. Death is a sometimes messy thing; and the mourners’ (or cemetery workers’) wish to avoid viewing the mechanics of interment for propriety’s sake deprives the mourners of the sight of the reality of death. Stay to the end.

87. Luke 24:4-5, adapted.

88. Romans 15:13.

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SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION

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*This service focuses on thanksgiving to God for the life of the one who has died, and for the resurrection promised to all baptized in Christ. This is essentially an Easter service, one that speaks of the promises of eternal life made at baptism. It is a service that marks the completion and fulfillment of the baptismal promises, and anticipates our rising with Christ. Grief and sadness are appropriate human emotions, and this is recognized in this service. But while we share in the grief and sadness of a loss, we must also look to the promise and hope of our Christian faith.*

*A carefully crafted remembrance or two, delivered by well-poised speakers in addition to a sermon preached by the presiding minister, are appropriate, but care should be given that the remembrances do not distract unduly from the Godward orientation of the service; if this set of rites is done in full, the remembrance of the deceased has already occurred; now it is time to give thanks and to look forward. It is appropriate for one good picture of the deceased to be given a central place near or on the altar or communion table. Local custom and ceremonial again may dictate use of a paschal candle or the celebration of Holy Communion, as well as the use and style of hymnody, special music, or other practices.*

### **Prelude**

*The service may begin with music that is meditative, but not somber or mournful. Music with an exuberance appropriate for the Easter celebration may also be used. Local custom may dictate whether and how there is to be a procession of participants, family, or choir. It may be best to begin as the usual Sunday service begins.*

### **Opening Sentences**

One: Hear the promises of God. When we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were baptized into Christ's death. By our baptism, then, we were buried with Christ and shared in Christ's death in order that just as he was raised from death by the glorious power of God, so too, we might live a new life. For if we have been united with Christ in a death like Christ's, we shall certainly be united with Christ in a death like his.<sup>89</sup>

### **Hymn of Praise**

*This hymn should be one of praise to God. Most hymnals contain a section of hymns specifically for this purpose.*

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<sup>89</sup>. Romans 6:3-5 adapted.

Great is Thy Faithfulness  
 How Great Thou Art  
 O God Our Help In Ages Past  
 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

### Greeting

One: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.<sup>90</sup>

**All: And also with you.**

*or*

One: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

**All: Amen.**

*then:*

One: Friends, we gather here in the protective shelter of God's healing love. We are here to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness, recall to mind the promises of God, and to know that God cares.

We gather as the people of God, conscious of others who have died, and of the frailty of our own existence.

We come to comfort and to support one another at this time of loss, to hear God's word of hope, and when our despair has been spoken and shared, to then offer God our praise and thanksgiving for the life of *N.*, and for all those who rest in the Lord.

Finally, we gather to celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection. For whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ who is Lord both of the dead and the living.<sup>91</sup>

### Prayer

One: Let us pray. Holy God, whose ways are not our ways, and whose thoughts are not our thoughts, grant that your Holy Spirit may surround us now. Heal our wounded hearts made heavy by our sorrow. Through the veil of our tears and the

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90. 2 Corinthians 13:14 adapted.

91. UCC, "Greeting," *The Book of Worship*, 372.

silence of our emptiness, assure us again that we have not heard, nor have we seen, nor can we imagine the glory that awaits us, which you have prepared for all those who call upon your name. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you now and forever more, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever more,<sup>92</sup>

**All: Amen.**

### Words of Remembrance

*A leader of the church, a member of the family or a close friend or two may offer a carefully crafted remembrance and thanksgiving for the one who has died. As remembrances have already occurred during the Service at the Time of Remembrance, it is recommended that this remembrance be brief, recalling the deceased's uniqueness. If appropriate, mention may be made here of his/her Christian witness and service, or, during the Prayer of Thanksgiving below. The Words of Remembrance may be omitted, though some brief remembrances may also be included in the Words of Meditation, which follows. Non-scriptural readings may be included here, though care should be exercised that the theology in the reading does not contradict the resurrection message and theme of this service.*

### Words from Scripture

*It is recommended that a full set of Scripture lessons be used. Psalms may be said or sung responsively, and a Gloria may be used. Readings should include a Gospel lesson.*

#### OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19:23-27	I know that my redeemer lives
Ecc. 3:1-15	For everything there is a season
Isa. 25:6-9	God will swallow up death forever
Isa. 40:1-11	Comfort my people
Isa. 40: 28-31	Those who wait for the Lord

#### PSALMS

23	The Lord is my shepherd
27	The Lord is my light and my salvation
46	God is our refuge and our strength
121	I lift up my eyes to the hills
130	Out of the depths I cry to the Lord

#### EPISTLE

Rom. 6:3-9	Baptized into Christ's death
Rom. 8:14-23, 31-39	Nothing can separate us from the love of

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92. UCC, "Prayer," *The Book of Worship*, 373.

1 Cor. 15 (portions)	Death is swallowed up in victory
2 Tim. 2:8-13	We shall also live with him
Rev. 21 (portions)	A new heaven and a new earth

#### GOSPEL

Luke 23:33, 39-43	Today you will be with me in paradise
John 6:47-58	Whoever hears and believes has eternal life
John 11:17-27	I am the resurrection and the life
John 14:1-6, 25-27	Let not your hearts be troubled

### Words of Meditation

*Here the principal celebrant or minister may deliver a sermon based on one of the Scripture lessons. It is useful to think of this as an Easter sermon, focusing on the promise of resurrection. Mention may be made, if it has not already been, of the uniqueness of the life of the deceased.*

### Hymn of Thanksgiving

*This hymn ought to be one of thanksgiving or related to the Words of Meditation. This is also an appropriate place to sing one of the deceased's favorite hymns or songs if any.*

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, it may be done so here. Use any order for Communion that is familiar to the gathered congregation. Otherwise, continue with the Prayer of Thanksgiving.*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: Merciful God, we thank you for your word; it is a lamp for our feet, a light for our path. We thank you especially that in the night of our grief and in the shadows of our sorrow, we are not left to ourselves. We have the light of your promises to sustain and comfort us. Through our tears, give us vision to see in faith the consolation you intend for us. In your mercy, grant us the unfailing guidance of your saving Word, both in life and in death; through Jesus Christ our risen Savior.<sup>93</sup>

*and/or*

O God, our strength and our redeemer, giver of life and conqueror of death, we praise you with humble hearts. With faith in your great mercy and wisdom, we entrust *N.* to your eternal care. We praise you for your steadfast love for *her/him*

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93. UCC, "Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession A," *The Book of Worship*, 376.

all the days of *her/his* earthly life. We thank you for all that *he/she* was to those who loved *him/her* [and for *his/her* faithfulness to the church of Jesus Christ.]

*Mention may be made here of the person's Christian life and service.*

We thank you that for *N.* [all sickness and sorrow are ended, and] death itself is past and that *he/she* has entered the home where all your people gather in peace. Keep us all in communion with your faithful people in every time and place, that at last we may rejoice together in the heavenly family where Jesus Christ reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever.<sup>94</sup>

### **The Lord's Prayer**

One: And we pray as Jesus taught us saying:

*Use whichever version of the Lord's Prayer is common to the worshipping community.*

### **Words of Resurrection**

*Since burial or final disposition has already occurred, this takes the place of the Commendation in more traditional services.*

One: When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 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 "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 "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me 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."<sup>95</sup>

*and/or*

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in 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. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 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." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where,

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94. UCC, "Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession B," *The Book of Worship*, 376–377.

95. John 11:17–27

O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

### **Benediction**

*This, or a benediction familiar to the gathered community may be used.*

One: Go in peace, and may the God of peace who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, make you complete in everything good, so that you may do God’s will, working among us that which is pleasing in God’s sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory now and forever more.<sup>96</sup>

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **Hymn of Resurrection and Hope**

*Clergy and family members may depart following the conclusion of this hymn. Remaining in place for the entire hymn will allow participants to experience fully the hope of resurrection that is articulated in the last verse of these hymns, or others selected.*

Amazing Grace  
Christ the Lord is Risen Today  
Holy, Holy, Holy

### **Postlude**

*It is appropriate for this music, if any, to reflect the hopefulness and promise of resurrection.*

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96. Hebrews 13:20–21.

## APPENDIX A

### CHURCH DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

#### 1. Respondent Church Name and Number, as assigned by the Connecticut Conference

<b>Name of Church</b>	<b>Church number</b>
First Congregational Church of Ansonia	30
First Congregational Church of Bethel	90
First Congregational Church Bloomfield	110
The Bolton Congregational Church	120
First Congregational Church of Branford	130
First United Church of Christ Bridgeport	160
United Congregational Church of Bridgeport	190
First Congregational Church of Bristol	220
First Congregational Church of Deep River	490
First Congregational Church of East Hartford	580
First Congregational Church - Old Stone Church - East Haven	600
Ellington Congregational Church	640
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church	690
Gilead Congregational Church UCC	760
Church of Christ Congregational Goshen	790
First Congregational Church of Granby	800
South Congregational Church Granby	810
First Congregational Church of Griswold	860
Groton Congregational Church	880
First Congregational Church Guilford	890
The Mt. Carmel Congregational Church	935
Asylum Hill Congregational Church	980
Faith Congregational Church Hartford	1010
The First Church of Christ in Hartford	1020
Kensington Congregational Church	1110
First Congregational Church Kent	1120
The First Congregational Church of Lyme	1210
First Church of Christ in Mansfield	1270

<b>Name of Church</b>	<b>Church number</b>
Marlborough Congregational Church	1280
Center Congregational Church Meriden	1290
First Congregational Church Meriden	1300
Middlebury Congregational Church	1310
First Congregational Church of Middletown	1340
Mystic Congregational Church	1430
First Church of Christ New Britain	1450
South Congregational Church New Britain	1460
First Church of Christ in New Haven (Center Church On-The-Green)	1550
Second Congregational Church New London	1630
The First Congregational Church New Milford	1640
Niantic Community Church	1670
Church of Christ Congregational Norfolk	1680
North Branford Congregational Church	1690
North Canaan Congregational Church	1695
Congregational Church of North Stonington	1740
Park Congregational Church Norwich	1780
Union Congregational Church Oakville	1800
Orange Congregational Church	1820
Oxford United Church of Christ Congregational	1830
The Plantsville Congregational Church	1860
First Congregational Church Plymouth	1870
First Congregational Church Portland	1900
Congregational Church of Salisbury	2030
First Church of Christ Congregational Old Saybrook	2040
Huntington Congregational Church Shelton	2090
Somers Congregational United Church of Christ	2120
South Britain Congregational Church Southbury	2140
First Congregational Church of South Windham	2220
First Congregational Church Stamford	2270
Union Memorial Chapel Stamford	2295
Storrs Congregational Church	2330
First Church of Christ Suffield	2360
First Church of Christ Congregational Unionville	2510

<b>Name of Church</b>	<b>Church number</b>
Warren Congregational Church	2560
First Congregational Church Watertown	2640
First Congregational Church Westbrook	2670
The First Congregational Church of Willimantic	2800
Wilton Congregational Church United Church of Christ	2820
Winchester Center Congregational Church	2830
The First Church in Windsor	2850
First Congregational Church and Ecclesiastical Society Woodbury	2920
North Congregational Church Woodbury	2930
Woodmont United Church of Christ Milford	2940
East Woodstock Congregational Church	2960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>

## **2. Gender Distribution of Clergy – Women**

<b>Church name</b>	<b>Church number</b>	<b>Pastor gender</b>
First Congregational Church of Ansonia	30	F
First Congregational Church Bloomfield	110	F
First United Church of Christ Bridgeport	160	F
United Congregational Church of Bridgeport	190	F
First Congregational Church of Bristol	220	F
First Congregational Church - Old Stone Church - East Haven	600	F
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church	690	F
Gilead Congregational Church UCC	760	F
Church of Christ Congregational Goshen	790	F
Kensington Congregational Church	1110	F
First Congregational Church Kent	1120	F
First Church of Christ in Mansfield	1270	F
Mystic Congregational Church	1430	F
First Church of Christ in New Haven (Center Church On- The-Green)	1550	F
North Branford Congregational Church	1690	F
Congregational Church of North Stonington	1740	F

<b>Church name</b>	<b>Church number</b>	<b>Pastor gender</b>
Park Congregational Church Norwich	1780	F
Oxford United Church of Christ Congregational	1830	F
First Congregational Church Portland	1900	F
Congregational Church of Salisbury	2030	F
Huntington Congregational Church Shelton	2090	F
South Britain Congregational Church Southbury	2140	F
First Congregational Church of South Windham	2220	F
First Congregational Church Stamford	2270	F
First Church of Christ Suffield	2360	F
First Church of Christ Congregational Unionville	2510	F
Wilton Congregational Church United Church of Christ	2820	F
Winchester Center Congregational Church	2830	F
Woodmont United Church of Christ Milford	2940	F
East Woodstock Congregational Church	2960	F
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30</b>

### 3. Gender Distribution of Clergy – Men

<b>Church Name</b>	<b>Church number</b>	<b>Pastor gender</b>
First Congregational Church of Bethel	90	M
The Bolton Congregational Church	120	M
First Congregational Church of Branford	130	M
First Congregational Church of Deep River	490	M
First Congregational Church of East Hartford	580	M
Ellington Congregational Church	640	M
First Congregational Church of Granby	800	M
South Congregational Church Granby	810	M
Groton Congregational Church	880	M
First Congregational Church Guilford	890	M
The Mt. Carmel Congregational Church	935	M
Asylum Hill Congregational Church	980	M
Faith Congregational Church Hartford	1010	M

<b>Church Name</b>	<b>Church number</b>	<b>Pastor gender</b>
The First Church of Christ in Hartford	1020	M
The First Congregational Church of Lyme	1210	M
Marlborough Congregational Church	1280	M
Center Congregational Church Meriden	1290	M
First Congregational Church Meriden	1300	M
Middlebury Congregational Church	1310	M
First Congregational Church of Middletown	1340	M
First Church of Christ New Britain	1450	M
South Congregational Church New Britain	1460	M
Second Congregational Church New London	1630	M
The First Congregational Church New Milford	1640	M
Niantic Community Church	1670	M
Church of Christ Congregational Norfolk	1680	M
Union Congregational Church Oakville	1800	M
North Canaan Congregational Church	1695	M
Orange Congregational Church	1820	M
The Plantsville Congregational Church	1860	M
First Congregational Church Plymouth	1870	M
First Church of Christ Congregational Old Saybrook	2040	M
Somers Congregational United Church of Christ	2120	M
Union Memorial Chapel Stamford	2295	M
Storrs Congregational Church	2330	M
Warren Congregational Church	2560	M
First Congregational Church Watertown	2640	M
First Congregational Church Westbrook	2670	M
The First Congregational Church of Willimantic	2800	M
The First Church in Windsor	2850	M
First Congregational Church and Ecclesiastical Society Woodbury	2920	M
North Congregational Church Woodbury	2930	M
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>42</b>

#### 4. Did the Clergy Follow the Directions?

Count	Follow directions	Pastor gender
23	Yes	F
26	Yes	M
15	No	M
8	No	F

#### 5. Location of the Service

Count	Location
297	church
22	funeral home
7	not listed/clear
5	graveside
1	home

#### 6. Obituary Appears on the Bulletin

Church Count	Response
295	Yes
37	No

332 total bulletins. Not all churches sent 5 bulletins as requested. (See Table 4.)

## APPENDIX B

### SCRIPTURE, SERMON, AND REMEMBRANCE DATA

#### 1. Scriptures Listed – Alphabetical

Frequency	Scripture as listed in bulletin
1	"Scripture Readings"
1	1 Corinthians (portions)
1	1 Corinthians 13
15	1 Corinthians 13 (portions)
2	1 Corinthians 13:1-13
2	1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 4-8, 13
1	1 Corinthians 13:1-3
6	1 Corinthians 13:1-8
1	1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13
1	1 Corinthians 13:1-8a
1	1 Corinthians 13:4-7
1	1 Corinthians 13:4-8a
4	1 Corinthians 15 (portions)
1	1 Corinthians 15:1-5
1	1 Corinthians 15:12-20
1	1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-44
2	1 Corinthians 15:35-46
1	1 Corinthians 15:35-49
1	1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 54-57
1	1 Corinthians 15:50-57
1	1 Corinthians 15:50-58
1	1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 54b-55
2	1 Corinthians 15:51-57
1	1 Corinthians 15:51-58
1	1 Corinthians 15:53-58
1	1 John 4 (portions)
1	1 John 4:7-12
1	1 John 4:7-16

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
1	1 John 5:1-5, 10, 11
1	1 Peter 1:3-9
1	1 Peter 3:8-12
4	1 Thessalonians 3:7-13
1	1 Thessalonians 3:7:13
4	1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
1	1 Thessalonians 4:14-18
1	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
1	2 Corinthians 1:3-5, 4:16-5:1
1	2 Corinthians 4:13-18
1	2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:1
1	2 Corinthians 4:16-18
1	2 Corinthians 4:5
1	2 Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-18
1	2 Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-5:2, 6-7, 16-20
2	2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 16
1	2 Corinthians 4:7-12
2	2 Corinthians 5:1
1	2 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7
1	2 Corinthians 5:1-5
1	2 Corinthians 9:6-11
6	2 Timothy 4:6-8
1	2 Timothy 4:7-8
8	Ecclesiastes 3 (portions)
1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-5
35	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
2	Ecclesiastes 3:1-9
1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-12
2	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 (responsive)
1	Ecclesiastes 3:10-15
1	Ecclesiastes 8:1-15
1	Ecclesiastes 12 (portions)

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
1	Ecclesiasticus 14:18-15:3
1	Ephesians 3 (portions)
1	Ephesians 3:14-19
1	Ephesians 3:14-20
1	Ephesians 3:14-21
2	Galatians 5:22-23
1	Genesis 1:26-31a
1	Genesis 3:19
1	Genesis 9:8-17
1	Hebrews 12:1-2
1	Isaiah 11:1-9
3	Isaiah 25:6-9
4	Isaiah 40 (portions)
1	Isaiah 40 28-31
1	Isaiah 40:1
1	Isaiah 40:1-11
2	Isaiah 40:1-8
1	Isaiah 40:28-30
8	Isaiah 40:28-31
1	Isaiah 41:9-13
1	Isaiah 43 (portions)
1	Isaiah 43:1-2
1	Isaiah 43:1-3
1	Isaiah 43:1-4
1	Isaiah 43:1-5a
1	Isaiah 43:1-7
1	Isaiah 43:2-3
2	Isaiah 43:2-3a
1	Isaiah 55:10-13
3	Isaiah 55:6-13
1	Isaiah 61:1-3
1	Isaiah 65:17-25
1	James 1:19-21
1	Jeremiah 29:11

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
1	Jeremiah 9:23-24
2	Job 19:25-26
1	Job 19:25-27
1	Job 19:25-27b
5	John (portions)
1	John 3:14-17, 6:35-40, 14:1-6
1	John 3:16
1	John 5:24
1	John 5:24-29
1	John 6:35-40, 47-51
3	John 6:37-40
1	John 6:37-40; 14:1-3, 18-19, 25-27
1	John 10:27-28
1	John 10:7-16
1	John 11 (portions)
4	John 11:17-27
2	John 11:21-27
1	John 11:25
1	John 11:25-
6	John 11:25-26
1	John 11:25-27
1	John 11:28-37
1	John 12:23-26
3	John 12:24-26
1	John 14
44	John 14 (portions)
1	John 14:1-2,27
19	John 14:1-3
4	John 14:1-3, 27
1	John 14:1-3, 15-16, 18-19, 27
3	John 14:1-3, 18, 19
9	John 14:1-3, 18-19, 25-27
2	John 14:1-3, 18-19, 27
1	John 14:1-3, 18-21, 25-27

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
2	John 14:1-3, 25-27
5	John 14:1-4
1	John 14:1-4, 15-19, 25-27
2	John 14:1-4, 18-19, 25-27
9	John 14:1-6
2	John 14:1-6, 25-27
2	John 14:1-6, 25-29
1	John 14:1-6, 27
1	John 14:1-6, 27
2	John 14:1-6, 18, 25-27
11	John 14:1-7
1	John 14:1-7, 18-19, 23-25
1	John 14:1-7, 25-27
1	John 14:1-10
1	John 14:2-3
5	John 14:19
1	John 14:25-27
1	John 14:27
1	John 14:27-31
1	John 15:1-11
1	John 15:3
1	John 16 (portions)
1	John 16:4-7
1	John 17:1-5
2	Lord's Prayer (Gospel not listed)
1	Luke 2:29-32
1	Luke 6:43-45
1	Luke 7:44-50
1	Luke 10:25-37
1	Luke 12:22-31
1	Luke 15:11-24
1	Luke 16:19-31
1	Luke 23:39-43
1	Mark 12:28-34

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
2	Matthew 5:1-10
1	Matthew 5:1-10, 14-16
2	Matthew 5:1-11
2	Matthew 5:1-12
1	Matthew 5:1-16
3	Matthew 5:14-16
3	Matthew 5:3-10
2	Matthew 5:3-9
1	Matthew 6:19
1	Matthew 6:19-21
1	Matthew 6:25-29, 33
2	Matthew 6:25-33
4	Matthew 6:25-34
1	Matthew 7:12-20, 24-27
1	Matthew 8:23-27
1	Matthew 11:25-30
1	Matthew 11:28
1	Matthew 11:28-29
5	Matthew 11:28-30
1	Matthew 14:23b-33
1	Matthew 18:1-5
1	Matthew 25 (portions)
1	Matthew 25:14-21
1	Matthew 25:31-41
1	Matthew 28:19-20
7	Micah 6:6-8
1	Micah 6:8
1	none listed
1	none listed, "Readings"
1	not cited
1	not listed
1	Numbers 6:24-26
1	Peter 1:3-9
1	Philippians 2:1-5

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
1	Philippians 4:13
1	Philippians 4:4-13
1	Philippians 4:4-7
2	Philippians 4:4-9
1	Philippians 4:6-7
1	Philippians 4:7
1	Philippians 4:8-9
1	Proverbs 22:6
1	Proverbs 3 (portions)
1	Proverbs 3:1-6
2	Proverbs 3:3-6
1	Proverbs 3:5-6
8	Proverbs 31 (portions)
1	Proverbs 31:10-12
4	Proverbs 31:10-31
1	Proverbs 31:10, 25-31
1	Proverbs 31:25-29
1	Proverbs 32
1	Proverbs 8:22-23, 30-31
2	Psalms 8
1	Psalms 16
1	Psalms 16:1-15
1	Psalms 18:4-6, 16-19
1	Psalms 18:4-6, 16, 19
3	Psalms 19:1-4, 14
1	Psalms 22
1	Psalms 22:1-5, 9-10
212	Psalms 23
4	Psalms 23 (portions)
1	Psalms 23 (modified)
6	Psalms 23 (NRSV)
5	Psalms 23 (responsive)
1	Psalms 23 (Scottish Psalter)
1	Psalms 23 (unison)

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
3	Psalm 23:1-6
1	Psalm 24:1-6
1	Psalm 26
11	Psalm 27
1	Psalm 27 (portions)
1	Psalm 27:1-6
1	Psalm 27:1, 13-14
1	Psalm 30
1	Psalm 41:10
4	Psalm 42
1	Psalm 42:1-5
1	Psalm 42:1-8
6	Psalm 46
1	Psalm 46:1-3, 10-11
1	Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11
1	Psalm 46:1-7
1	Psalm 46:1-7, 10-11
1	Psalm 46:1-7; 10-11
1	Psalm 51:6-12
1	Psalm 78:1-7
8	Psalm 90
2	Psalm 90 (portions)
1	Psalm 90:1-4
1	Psalm 90:1-4, 9-12, 13-17
2	Psalm 90:1-6, 12-17
1	Psalm 90:1-6,12-17
3	Psalm 91
2	Psalm 91:1-7, 9-16
1	Psalm 98 (responsive)
3	Revelation 7:9-17
1	Revelation 21:1-4
1	Revelation (portions)
1	Revelation 14:13
3	Revelation 21 (portions)

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
1	Revelation 21:1-3
8	Revelation 21:1-4
3	Revelation 21:1-5
2	Revelation 21:1-5a
7	Revelation 21:1-6
6	Revelation 21:1-7
1	Revelation 21:3-4
1	Revelation 21:3-6
1	Revelation 21:3-7
1	Revelation 21:3b-4
4	Revelation 21:6; 22:13, 1:17-18
1	Revelation 22 (portions)
1	Revelation 22:1-5
1	Revelation 22:1-7
1	Revelation 22:1,2,13,16,17
1	Romans 1:2,11,14,17-18,31-32,35-39
1	Romans 5:1-5
19	Romans 8 (portions)
1	Romans 8: 31-39
4	Romans 8:1, 28, 38-39
1	Romans 8:1,28, 38-39
1	Romans 8:18-19, 22-26, 31-39
1	Romans 8:28-29
1	Romans 8:28, 35, 37-39
1	Romans 8:28, 38-39
1	Romans 8:31-32, 35, 37-39
1	Romans 8:31-32, 35, 37-39 (responsive)
2	Romans 8:31-35, 37-39
1	Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 (responsive)
1	Romans 8:31-38
11	Romans 8:31-39
1	Romans 8:31, 32, 37-39
2	Romans 8:32-35, 37-39
1	Romans 8:35-39

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Scripture as listed in bulletin</b>
7	Romans 8:35, 37-39
1	Romans 8:35,37-39
3	Romans 8:38-39
1	Romans 8:9-11,31-39
1	Romans 9
1	Romans 9 (portions)
1	Romans 12 (portions)
1	Romans 12:1-3
2	Romans 12:9-18
1	Romans 14:7-9
2	Romans 14:8
1	Romans 15:13
1	Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-7

## **2. Location of the Sermon (delivered by the Minister)**

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
97	Not listed (no Sermon indicated)
36	Middle (unclear where in relation to Remembrances)
71	First (before Remembrances)
128	Last (after Remembrances)

## **3. Descriptor Title of Sermon (delivered by the Minister)**

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
90	No title
43	Meditation
30	Sermon
25	Homily
21	Eulogy
14	Reflection
8	Pastoral Reflection
6	Words of Remembrance

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
6	Words of Resurrection
6	Words of Hope
5	Words of Remembrance and Appreciation
5	Remembrances
5	Message
5	A Message
4	Reflections
4	Words of Faith
4	Meditation and Words of Remembrance
4	Words of Assurance
3	The Words of Thanksgiving
3	Eulogies
3	Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving
3	Pastoral Reflection & Prayer
2	Words of Memorial
4	none listed
2	Pastoral Message
2	A Message of Resurrection Hope
1	The Meditation
1	A Message of Hope
1	Words of Thanksgiving
1	A Time of Remembrance
1	Meditation by [name of pastor]
1	A Message of Resurrection and Hope
1	Words of Reflection
1	Words of Comfort and Hope
1	The Eulogy: Words of Comfort and Hope
1	Words of Comfort
1	Scripture and Thoughts
1	Remarks

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	A Time of Sharing
1	Eulogy and Remembrance
1	A Reflection
1	Time of Thanksgiving and Reflection
1	A Time for Sharing
1	Meditation & Eulogy
1	Pastoral Response
1	Meditation on N's Life
1	Words of Eternal Life
1	Message of Eternal Life
1	A Word of Hope
1	Homily and Pastoral Prayer
1	“Royal Hearted”

#### **4. Location of the Remembrances (delivered by friends or family)**

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
128	First (before the Sermon)
85	Middle (unclear where in relation to the Sermon)
70	Last (after the Sermon)
49	Only (no Sermon listed)

#### **5. Descriptor Title of Remembrances (delivered by friends or family)**

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
121	Words of Remembrance
44	none listed
23	Remembrances
11	Remembrance
7	Remembering N
5	Words of Remembrance and Appreciation
5	Eulogy
5	Shared Memories

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
5	Personal Words
5	Meditation and Words of Remembrance
4	Reflections
4	Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving
4	Eulogies
3	Family Remembrances
3	The Words of Thanksgiving
3	Remembrance and Reflection
3	A Time for Remembering
3	A Time of Remembrance
2	Words of Memorial
2	Words of Remembrance by Family
2	Memories
2	Shared Reflections
2	Words of Remembrance and Celebration
2	Personal Reflections
2	Time of Remembrance
2	Words of Thanksgiving and Remembrance
2	Words of Remembrance and Hope
2	Reflections and Remembrances
2	Remembrances and Reflections
2	Family Remembrance
2	A Time for Sharing of Life Stories
2	Eulogy & Remembrances
2	Family Reflections
2	The Sharing of Memories of N
1	Sharing of Memories & Stories
1	Words of Remembrance/Sharing our Stories
1	Time of Sharing
1	Remembrances and Commendations
1	Musical Memorial
1	Eulogy/Shared Meditations
1	Time of Remembrance and Celebration of N
1	Words of Remembrance by Family & Friends

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Words of Remembrances
1	Family Remembrance, then Community Remembrance
1	Personal Memories
1	Remembrance and Reflection: A Family Letter
1	Acknowledgments & Expressions
1	Acknowledgements and Expressions
1	We Remember N with Love
1	Words of Remembrance
1	Personal Remembrances
1	A Time of Sharing
1	Reflection and Remembrances
1	Reflection and Remembrance
1	Celebrating N's Life
1	Reflection
1	Time of Thanksgiving and Reflection
1	Memories from [the decedent]
1	Words of Remembrance & Celebration of Life
1	A Time for Sharing
1	Speaker, Remember
1	Family Tribute
1	Memories Shared
1	Remembering N
1	A Remembrance
1	Remembrances/Sharing of Friends
1	The Shared Memories
1	The Sharing of Memories
1	Words of Remembrance and Thanksgiving/Family Remembrances
1	Remembrances by Family
1	Remembrances by Friends
1	Words of Remembrance and Invitation to Speak
1	Invitation to Speak

<b>Count</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Words of Remembrance and Invitation To Speak
1	Readings of Celebration
1	Reflections of N's Life

## APPENDIX C

### HYMNODY

#### 1. Hymns listed by frequency

Frequency	Hymn title
94	Amazing Grace
56	In the Garden
41	How Great Thou Art
35	On Eagle's Wings
24	For All The Saints
24	In The Bulb There Is A Flower
23	Eternal Father Strong To Save
23	Morning Has Broken
22	The Old Rugged Cross
21	Abide With Me
20	O (Our) God, Our Help in Ages Past
19	For the Beauty of the Earth
18	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
16	Be Still My Soul
13	Here I Am Lord
12	Blessed Be The Tie That Binds
11	What a Friend We Have in Jesus
9	Now Thank We All Our God
8	Just a Closer Walk With Thee
8	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
7	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
7	All Things Bright and Beautiful
7	Rock of Ages
6	It Is Well With My Soul
6	Thine Is The Glory
5	Blessed Assurance
5	Great Is Thy Faithfulness

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title</b>
5	I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
5	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
4	Be Not Afraid
4	Because He Lives
4	Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
4	God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again
4	Holy, Holy, Holy
4	I Would Be True
4	O Beautiful for Spacious Skies
4	Onward Christian Soldiers
4	Shall We Gather at the River
4	Softly and Tenderly
3	God of Grace and God of Glory
3	Hymn of Promise
3	I'll Fly Away
3	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
3	Let There Be Peace on Earth
3	Lord of All Hopefulness
3	Nearer My God To Thee
3	O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee
3	The Church's One Foundation
3	The King of Love my Shepherd Is
3	The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want (CRIMOND)
3	This Is My Father's World
3	This Little Light Of Mine
2	Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er
2	Battle Hymn of the Republic
2	Be Thou My Vision
2	Christ the Lord is Risen Today
4	Faith of our Fathers/God of Our Fathers
2	Go Tell It On The Mountain
2	He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought
2	He's Got The Whole World In His Hands
2	His Eye Is On The Sparrow

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title</b>
2	I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry
2	Just As I Am
2	My Life Flows On in Endless Song
2	Now the Day is Over
2	O Jesus I Have Promised
2	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
2	This Is My Song
2	We Gather Together
2	When The Saints Go Marching In
1	All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
1	Auld Lang Syne
1	Ave Maria
1	Be Now My Vision
1	Be With Me, Lord
1	Beneath The Cross Of Jesus
1	By The Waters Of Babylon
1	Children of the Heavenly Father
1	Come To Me, O Weary Traveller
1	Crown Him with Many Crowns
1	Fairest Lord Jesus
1	Give Thanks for Life (SINE NOMINE)
1	Go Now in Peace
1	God Will Take Care Of You
1	God, When I Came Into This Life
1	Great Is Your Faithfulness
1	Happy the Home When God Is There
1	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
1	How Firm A Foundation
1	I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say
1	I Love to Tell the Story
1	I Saw the Light
1	I Surrender All
1	In The Bleak Midwinter
1	In The Cross of Christ I Glory

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title</b>
1	Jesus Loves Me
1	Joy to the World
1	Land of Rest
1	Let Us Break Bread Together
1	Lift High The Cross
1	Lord, When You Come
1	Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace
1	May The Circle Be Unbroken
1	Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory
1	Numbered, but not named. Hymnal unknown.
1	O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing
1	O Happy Day
1	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
1	O Canada
1	Old 100 <sup>th</sup> (Hymn or words not listed)
1	Open My Eyes, that I May See
1	Praise To The Lord The Almighty
1	Precious Memories
1	Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart
1	Safe in The Arms Of Jesus
1	Silent Night
1	Simple Gifts
1	Sing Praise To God Who Reigns Above
1	Spirit Song
1	Standing On The Promises
1	Steal Away To Jesus
1	Still, Still With Thee
1	Surely the Presence
1	The Happy Wanderer
1	The Lord Is My Shepherd
1	The Lord's Prayer
1	The Marine Corps Hymn
1	The Strife is O'er
1	Threefold Amen

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title</b>
1	Trust And Obey
1	We Would Be Building
1	We're Marching to Zion
1	When Morning Gilds the Skies
1	Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown

## **2. Hymns listed alphabetically**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title by alpha</b>
7	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
21	Abide With Me
1	All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
7	All Things Bright and Beautiful
2	Alleluia! The Strife Is O'er
94	Amazing Grace
1	Auld Lang Syne
1	Ave Maria
2	Battle Hymn of the Republic
4	Be Not Afraid
1	Be Now My Vision
16	Be Still My Soul
2	Be Thou My Vision
1	Be With Me, Lord
4	Because He Lives
1	Beneath The Cross Of Jesus
5	Blessed Assurance
12	Blessed Be The Tie That Binds
1	By The Waters Of Babylon
1	Children of the Heavenly Father
2	Christ the Lord is Risen Today
1	Come To Me, O Weary Traveller
1	Crown Him with Many Crowns
4	Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
23	Eternal Father Strong To Save
1	Fairest Lord Jesus

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title by alpha</b>
4	Faith of our Fathers/God of Our Fathers
24	For All The Saints
19	For the Beauty of the Earth
1	Give Thanks for Life (SINE NOMINE)
1	Go Now in Peace
2	Go Tell It On The Mountain
4	God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again
3	God of Grace and God of Glory
1	God Will Take Care Of You
1	God, When I Came Into This Life
5	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
1	Great Is Your Faithfulness
1	Happy the Home When God Is There
1	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
2	He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought
2	He's Got The Whole World In His Hands
13	Here I Am Lord
2	His Eye Is On The Sparrow
4	Holy, Holy, Holy
1	How Firm A Foundation
41	How Great Thou Art
3	Hymn of Promise
1	I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say
1	I Love to Tell the Story
1	I Saw the Light
5	I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
1	I Surrender All
2	I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry
4	I Would Be True
3	I'll Fly Away
3	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
1	In The Bleak Midwinter
24	In The Bulb There Is A Flower
1	In The Cross of Christ I Glory

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title by alpha</b>
56	In the Garden
6	It Is Well With My Soul
1	Jesus Loves Me
1	Joy to the World
18	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
8	Just a Closer Walk With Thee
2	Just As I Am
1	Land of Rest
3	Let There Be Peace on Earth
1	Let Us Break Bread Together
1	Lift High The Cross
3	Lord of All Hopefulness
1	Lord, When You Come
5	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
1	Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace
1	May The Circle Be Unbroken
1	Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory
23	Morning Has Broken
2	My Life Flows On in Endless Song
3	Nearer My God To Thee
9	Now Thank We All Our God
2	Now the Day is Over
1	Numbered, but not named. Hymnal unknown.
20	O (Our) God, Our Help in Ages Past
4	O Beautiful for Spacious Skies
1	O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing
1	O Happy Day
2	O Jesus I Have Promised
1	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
3	O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee
1	O, Canada
1	Old 100th
35	On Eagle's Wings
4	Onward Christian Soldiers

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title by alpha</b>
1	Open My Eyes, that I May See
1	Praise To The Lord The Almighty
8	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
1	Precious Memories
1	Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart
7	Rock of Ages
1	Safe in The Arms Of Jesus
4	Shall We Gather at the River
1	Silent Night
1	Simple Gifts
1	Sing Praise To God Who Reigns Above
4	Softly and Tenderly
1	Spirit Song
1	Standing On The Promises
1	Steal Away To Jesus
1	Still, Still With Thee
1	Surely the Presence
2	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
3	The Church's One Foundation
1	The Happy Wanderer
3	The King of Love my Shepherd Is
1	The Lord Is My Shepherd
3	The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want (CRIMOND)
1	The Lord's Prayer
1	The Marine Corps Hymn
22	The Old Rugged Cross
1	The Strife is O'er
6	Thine Is The Glory
3	This Is My Father's World
2	This Is My Song
3	This Little Light Of Mine
1	Threefold Amen
1	Trust And Obey
2	We Gather Together

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<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Hymn title by alpha</b>
1	We Would Be Building
1	We're Marching to Zion
11	What a Friend We Have in Jesus
1	When Morning Gilds the Skies
2	When The Saints Go Marching In
1	Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown

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APPENDIX D

SOURCES AND READINGS

1. Liturgical Sources cited by Church (if provided, see Appendix 1, Table 4)

Church name	Church number	Sources cited
First Congregational Church of Ansonia	30	United Church of Christ (UCC) <i>Book of Worship (BOW)</i> , 1986
First Congregational Church of Bethel	90	none cited
First Congregational Church Bloomfield	110	none cited
The Bolton Congregational Church	120	UCC <i>BOW</i> Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA) <i>Book of Common Prayer (BCP)</i> , 1979 Original materials
First Congregational Church of Branford	130	none cited
First United Church of Christ Bridgeport	160	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) <i>Book of Common Worship (BCW)</i> 1993
United Congregational Church of Bridgeport	190	none cited
First Congregational Church of Bristol	220	UCC <i>BOW</i> , then personalize
First Congregational Church of Deep River	490	<i>United Methodist Hymnal (UMH)</i> , 1992 <i>United Methodist (UMC) Book of Worship (BOW)</i> , 1992 UCC <i>BOW</i> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) <i>Book of Worship (BOW)</i> 1978 <i>Book of Worship</i> of the Church of the Brethren Online resources
First Congregational Church of East Hartford	580	UCC <i>BOW</i> (Opening Sentences only)
First Congregational Church - Old Stone Church - East Haven	600	none cited.  <i>Pilgrim Hymnal (PH)</i> , 1958 or <i>New Century Hymnal (NCH)</i> , 1989 is noted for reading and hymns.  UCC <i>BOW</i> suspected
Ellington Congregational Church	640	none cited, but UCC <i>BOW</i> words appear in several places in his scripts. No citations of other sources, but it seems as if this pastor is quite poetic and writes a lot of his own material.

Church name	Church number	Sources cited
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church	690	none cited, but <i>PH</i> is used for responsive reading, (Ps. 139) and hymns
Gilead Congregational Church UCC	760	none cited
First Congregational Church of Granby	800	None cited, but the opening words appear to be from the UCC <i>BOW</i> .
South Congregational Church Granby	810	none cited
First Congregational Church of Griswold	860	none cited
Groton Congregational Church	880	none cited
First Congregational Church Guilford	890	none cited
The Mt. Carmel Congregational Church	935	UCC <i>BOW</i> Pastor says that he usually uses the ECUSA <i>BCP</i> for other things.
Asylum Hill Congregational Church	980	none cited
Faith Congregational Church Hartford	1010	none cited
The First Church of Christ in Hartford	1020	none cited
Kensington Congregational Church	1110	none cited
First Congregational Church Kent	1120	Proposed Services of Memorial and Thanksgiving, Test Document 1982 (UCC Office of Church Life and Leadership - This was a precursor document to the UCC <i>BOW</i> and was never approved for use.
The First Congregational Church of Lyme	1210	Abingdon Funeral Manual UCC <i>BOW</i> (only as a supplement) Collection of poems assembled by the pastor
First Church of Christ in Mansfield	1270	<i>Death</i> (Collegeville Press: Collegeville. Liturgical Press 1988.)
Marlborough Congregational Church	1280	none cited, but some of the UCC <i>BOW</i> texts appear in all bulletins.
Center Congregational Church Meriden	1290	UCC <i>BOW</i> PCUSA <i>BCW</i> (particularly for the communion service)
First Congregational Church Meriden	1300	none cited
Middlebury Congregational Church	1310	none, but its clear that the UCC <i>BOW</i> is used closely. <i>PH</i> and <i>NCH</i> .
First Congregational Church of Middletown	1340	UCC <i>BOW</i> , edited (too wordy!) ECUSA <i>BCP</i>
Mystic Congregational Church	1430	none cited
First Church of Christ New Britain	1450	UCC <i>Services of the Church</i> - The Order for the Burial of the Dead, 1969
South Congregational Church New Britain	1460	none given, but UCC <i>BOW</i> apparent

Church name	Church number	Sources cited
First Church of Christ in New Haven (Church On-The-Green)	1550	none cited
Second Congregational Church New London	1630	UCC <i>BOW</i> <i>A Service Book</i> - National Selected Morticians 1925 <i>1972 Congregational Book of Worship</i> Personal notes
The First Congregational Church New Milford	1640	UCC <i>BOW</i> Reformed Church in America <i>Book of Worship</i> (pastor's home denomination)
Niantic Community Church	1670	United Church of Canada <i>Celebrate God's Presence</i> Specifically does not use the UCC <i>BOW</i>
Church of Christ Congregational Norfolk	1680	none cited
North Branford Congregational Church	1690	ECUSA <i>BCP</i> Specifically does NOT use the UCC <i>BOW</i> .
North Canaan Congregational Church	1695	none cited
Congregational Church of North Stonington	1740	UCC <i>BOW</i> Words I Wish I Wrote - Robert Fulghum Iona Abbey Worship Book A World of Blessing - Geoffrey Duncan
Park Congregational Church Norwich	1780	<i>A Rumor of Angels: Quotations for Living Dying and Letting Go</i> , eds. Gail Perry and Jill Perry.
Union Congregational Church Oakville	1800	UCC <i>BOW</i>
Orange Congregational Church	1820	none cited
Oxford United Church of Christ Congregational	1830	UCC <i>BOW</i> for the Greeting, Prayer, Prayer of Commendation.
The Plantsville Congregational Church	1860	UCC <i>BOW</i> <i>Sourcebook for Funerals</i> (vols. 1,2,3)
First Congregational Church Plymouth	1870	UCC <i>BOW</i> ECUSA <i>BCP</i> Covenant Church <i>Book of Worship</i> <i>Chalice Worship</i> <i>Worship Sourcebook</i> <i>Sourcebook of Funerals 3</i>
First Congregational Church Portland	1900	UCC <i>BOW</i> <i>Sourcebook of Funerals</i> - Communication Resources
Congregational Church of Salisbury	2030	UCC <i>BOW</i>
First Church of Christ Congregational Old Saybrook	2040	none cited

Church name	Church number	Sources cited
Huntington Congregational Church Shelton	2090	UCC <i>BOW</i> <i>For All Who Minister</i> - Brethren Press <i>In Memoriam</i> - Skinner House Books (Unitarian Universalist) <i>A Funeral Manual</i> - Eerdmans (Presbyterian) Online resources
Somers Congregational United Church of Christ	2120	<i>The Worship Book</i> WJKP Philadelphia, 1970 ECUSA <i>BCP</i> UCC <i>BOW</i>
South Britain Congregational Church Southbury	2140	none cited
First Congregational Church of South Windham	2220	none cited
First Congregational Church Stamford	2270	none cited
Union Memorial Chapel Stamford	2295	never has consulted the UCC <i>BOW</i> .
Storrs Congregational Church	2330	UCC <i>BOW</i> PCUSA <i>BCW</i> ELCA Leaders's Desk Edition <i>Renewing Worship Vol. 4 - Life Passages</i> (A provisional resource put out by the ELCA before their new book.)
First Church of Christ Suffield	2360	UCC <i>BOW</i> Mary Oliver poetry family resources
First Church of Christ Congregational Unionville	2510	none cited
Warren Congregational Church	2560	UCC <i>BOW</i> A Service of Death and Resurrection (ISBN 0-687-38075-8)
First Congregational Church Watertown	2640	UCC <i>BOW</i> ANZ <i>BCP</i> <i>Complete Book of Christian Prayer</i> (Continuum) <i>Book of Prayers</i> (Harper-Collins) <i>Baker's Funeral Handbook</i>
First Congregational Church Westbrook	2670	none cited
The First Congregational Church of Willimantic	2800	UCC <i>BOW</i>
Wilton Congregational Church United Church of Christ	2820	none cited
Winchester Center Congregational Church	2830	UCC <i>BOW</i> ECUSA resource for the death of an infant/stillborn
The First Church in Windsor	2850	UCC <i>BOW</i>
First Congregational Church and Ecclesiastical Society Woodbury	2920	none cited
North Congregational Church Woodbury	2930	UCC <i>BOW</i> Copy of his book sent, with parts he uses flagged.

Church name	Church number	Sources cited
Woodmont United Church of Christ Milford	2940	none cited
East Woodstock Congregational Church	2960	UCC <i>BOW</i> Poems and other resources collected over time.

## 2. Non-Scriptural Readings Listed

Title
"Description of N in Sunday Digest," David C. Cook Publishing Co. November 1 1953.
#17 - The Prophet - Kahlil Gibran
A Gathering of Relatives - Grace Ayer
A letter to Mom - Norman Purdum
A Man For All Seasons
A Mother's Love - Helen Steiner Rice
A Parable of Immortality - Henry Van Dyke
A Parable of Life
A Prayer of Emmanuel Swedenborg
All Is Well - Canon Henry Scott Holland
An Excerpt from [the decedent's] Journal
Apostle's Creed (2)
Away - Robert Frost
Blessing for a Family Gathering - unknown
Crossing the Bar - Alfred Lord Tennyson (2)
Daffodils - William Wordsworth
Dawn on the Maasai Steppe
Dear Gift of Life (uncited)
Death is Not the End
Death is Nothing at All - Nancy Cobb (2)
Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep - Mary Frye (5)
Don't Grieve for Me, for Now I'm Free
Don't Wear Black - Elaine Parlman
Dream of A Blessed Spirit - W.B. Yeats
El Malei rachamim
Endymion (excerpt) - John Keats
Footprints in the Sand (2)
God Smiling at Me

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Title
God's Garden (uncited) (3)
Gone From My Sight - Henry van Dyke (2)
Good-Night - Robert Taylor
Grampy's Hands - uncited
Heaven - Renee Smith
Hopi Grief Prayer (2) (Misidentified in the texts. This is actually Mary Frye's poem.)
Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead - Anne Morrow Lindbergh
However painful it is to bid farewell to one who has died . . . - Anonymous
i carry your heart - e.e. cummings
I Feel So Fortunate - S.P. Schutz
I Will Not Die An Unlived Life - D. Markova
I'm Free - Shannon Lee Moseley (5)
In Paradisum
in time of daffodils - e.e. cummings
Lessons from the Sea - Ellen Taylor
Life's Completeness - S.G Fisher
Lord's Prayer
Love Lives On - A. Bradley
Masonic Service
Memories - uncited
More Fruits of Solitude - William Penn
My Barn - uncited
My Lord, My God, I have no idea where I am going . . . - Thomas Merton
Nicene Creed
Nicene Creed
O Captain! My Captain! - Walt Whitman
On Death - Kahlil Gibran
On the Death of the Beloved - John O'Donohue (2)
One Winter Afternoon - Megan LaPorta (original, unpublished)
Prayer of St. Francis
Reluctance - Robert Frost
Scatter Some of My Ashes (uncited)
Sea Fever - no citation
Serenity Prayer

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<b>Title</b>
She Is Gone - Laura Davis
Standing on the Seashore (uncited) (4)
Tao #23
The Blessing of Memory - Gates of Prayer, The New Union Prayerbook (Reformed Judaism)
The Energies of the Spirit of God
The Final Piece/Peace - original poem by Olivia Robinson
The Next Place - Warren Hanson
The Prayer of St. Francis (3)
The Road Not Taken - Robert Frost (2)
The Traveler
Their Hearts Were Full of Spring - uncited
There Is No Night Without Dawning - Helen Steiner Rice
To A Skylark - uncited
To Those I Love - Isla Paschel Richardson (3)
Tomorrow - St. Francis de Sales
We Are Not Alone
We Give our Loved One Back to God - Rossiter Worthington Raymond
What is Dying?
What Makes A Dad?
When Death Comes - Mary Oliver
When Great Trees Fall - Maya Angelou
When I am Dead, My Dearest - Christina Rossetti
Where The Sidewalk Ends - Shel Silverstein

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## APPENDIX E

### LETTER OF CONSENT



**Boston University School of Theology**  
**745 Commonwealth Ave.**  
**Boston, MA 02210**  
**[www.bu.edu/sth](http://www.bu.edu/sth)**

May 19, 2011

Dear Colleagues;

I wonder if you might help me with my D.Min. thesis? I have a very simple request. I would like you to send me (in the enclosed return envelope) copies of the bulletins from the last five funerals at which you have presided.

In one section of my thesis, I will be examining the use (and adaptation) of the *“Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died”* and the *“Order for Committal”* in the UCC Book of Worship...and this is where I need your help so that I might look at what you are doing in your congregations. It does not matter if *you* actually use the UCC BOW, or make major adaptations; I want to see what you’re doing. I am sending this request to the pastors of every congregation in Connecticut. If there are multiple pastors on your staff, and they preside at funerals, send along bulletins from each pastor.

If you’d like, on the back of this page, indicate (without identifying yourself) what other resource(s) you draw from when planning a service for someone who has died, and return it with your bulletins. (e.g. The Book of Common Prayer, the Star Book, or you’ve created it yourself...). This information will be correlated with the bulletins you return, but will not be identified with you personally in the final draft of my thesis.

All of this will, of course, remain confidential and anonymous. I will not identify specific churches or pastors in my final thesis. A copy of my final, approved thesis will be archived at the Boston University School of Theology Library. Another copy, along with all copies of bulletins sent in will be archived at the Congregational Library in Boston. All other information you provide to me will be destroyed at the completion of my project. You may contact me directly after December 2011 for an executive summary of my findings for this portion of the research. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you so much for your assistance with my thesis. One last thing, if you could return your response to me before June 21<sup>st</sup>, that would be superb. I look forward to your responses.

The Rev. James J. Olson  
Center Congregational Church, Meriden.  
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