

IN THE GRIEVING
After the fires

You will need:

A large bowl of water

A small leafy branch

A basket of leaves and cut flowers

Opening Sentences

As we gather here today in grieving,
our hearts cry out the hard questions for God.

“Why?” we ask into the heavens.

“Why would this happen to the people and the land?”

Our tears are joined in loss and pain,
as we look around us and see the ruins of life.

Our faith trembles in confusion,
as we try to hold onto certainties,
in the midst of the challenges to hope.

Where are you, loving God?

***Come to us now and weep with us
as we face the harsh realities of this time.***

A silence is kept

Our tears and the tears of all the people
are joined with the tears of God.

A bowl of water is lifted high and placed on the Communion Table

Hymn

Prayers of confession

O God, who understands the deepest fears in our souls,
when tragedy strikes and the innocent suffer,
we cannot help but struggle.

What will others ask of us, who are your people?

Will we know what to say if they talk with us about you?

How can we interpret the universal upheavals before us
and the terrible despairs that spread abroad in our lives?

Silent reflection

Forgive us as our faith falters, O God.

May we honour what lies before us,
rather than trying to offer easy answers or trite responses.

***Stand beside us, Jesus Christ
and heal us, Holy Spirit, we pray.***

Amen

Assurance of pardon

The minister takes the branch,

dips it into the bowl of water

and walks down the aisle sprinkling water on the people.

We are never separated from the love of God.

Jesus Christ has walked our way, with all its realities.

The tears of God will become the water of life,

for us, and for the world.

Thanks be to God.

Readings

Sermon

Hymn

Affirmation of faith

Let us stand and say what we believe:

We believe that we are never left alone.

*God, the Holy Parent,
holds us in the hollow of a loving hand
and cradles the whole world in compassion.*

*Christ, the Human One,
walks beside us and bears within,
every grief and pain which is ours.*

*The Holy Spirit hovers like a dove of peace,
breathing healing and kindness
over the stricken people.*

*This is our God,
the One whose life is never defeated.*

*Soon we will see before us
the rising of good and hope.*

This we believe.

From this will we live.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us lift our lives to God

and pray for all those

who long for those they have lost,

for treasures which they will never see again,

for homes which are nothing but smouldering ashes

and for the land itself as it mourns this day.

As we make our prayers,

let us place these flowers and leaves

in and around the bowl of tears,

as a sign of the renewing of the people and the earth

which is to come.

The people bring their prayers

O God, in Christ Jesus,

as you experienced in your journey on earth,

there are times when it is hard to believe

that life will ever rise in strength again.

Grant us the faith to believe that this will come, O God.

Make us your true witnesses to love and grace.

Amen.

Hymn

Let us go from here

As the bush springs green again,
restoring its beauty to us as a gift,
as the seeds are broken open by the fire
for the beginning of new life,
and as we bring together all that is among us
for the future in this place:

*Let us go from here,
stronger than when we came,
holding on to those who have lost the most,
ready for all that is to come
and walking firmly into a new day.*

Let us go in courage, hope and peace,
surrounded by the love of God.

BLESSING

And may the Holy God surprise us on the way,
Christ Jesus be our company
and the Spirit lift up our feet.

Amen.

With love and prayers from Dorothy McRae-McMahon