

## When Life-Sustaining Care Is Ended

*This order is intended for use when a person gathers with others (family, friends, caregivers) to mark a transition from life-sustaining care to palliative care, when a life-support system is to be withheld or discontinued, or during a time of discernment about such decisions.*

*When death is expected immediately following the withholding or discontinuing of treatment, Commendation of the Dying may be used, and resources from this section may be incorporated within it.*

### Gathering

*The leader greets those present with one or both of the following sentences or in similar words.*

We are gathered to entrust name to the care of God,  
who alone is our life,  
whose steadfast love endures forever.

*The leader continues with one or more of the following or another appropriate prayer.*

Let us pray.

O God our creator and sustainer, receive our prayers for name.  
We thank you for the gifts of love and companionship shared with *her/him*.  
Give us grace now to accept our limitations  
as we commend name to your merciful care.  
Strengthen us in this time of trial,  
and help us to continue to serve and care for one another;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### Word

*One or more of the following or other appropriate passages of scripture may be read.*

*A reading from Isaiah:*

But now thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob,  
who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. (*Isaiah 43:1-3*)

*A reading from the Psalms:*

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.  
Incline your ear to me;  
make haste to deliver me.  
Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,

for you are my crag and my stronghold;  
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.  
Into your hands I commend my spirit,  
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth. *Psalm 31:1-3, 5)*

*A reading from Romans:*

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*(Romans 8:35, 37-39)*

*Silence for reflection may follow the readings.*

*A hymn may be sung.*

## **Prayer**

*The following litany or other appropriate prayers may be prayed.*

With the faithful of every time and place,  
let us place ourselves in God's hands [saying, "We put our trust in you."].

With Sarah and Abraham, who set out from home for a land unknown:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With Moses, who prayed for his people before going up the mountain to die:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With Ruth, who pledged faithfulness until death to her mother-in-law, Naomi:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With the disciples, who left their nets to follow Jesus:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With Mary the mother of Jesus, and the women who watched at the cross:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With our Lord Jesus, who commended himself into your hands when he breathed his last:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

With name, whom we now place into your strong arms, confident of your grace and mercy:

God of the promise,

**we put our trust in you.**

*Other prayers may be added.*

*The prayers conclude with these or similar words.*

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all.*

*A hymn may be sung.*

*The following prayer may be said.*

Let us pray.

Faithful God, give comfort and strength to name

as *she/he* follows Christ in the path that is now set before *her/him*.

Give wisdom and faithfulness to all of us who are companions along this way,

that we may journey beside our loved one,

watch and wait with *her/him*, and, with your help,

bear witness by our presence and prayers to the love of Jesus Christ,

your Son, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*The leader concludes the service with these or similar words.*

Glory to God whose power, working in us,

can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine;

glory to God from generation to generation in the church

and in Christ Jesus forever and ever.

**Amen.**

*Those present may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say Peace be with you or similar words.*

*After this, life-sustaining treatment may be ended in accordance with the circumstances.*

*Commendation of the Dying may follow at a time when death is imminent.*

## NOTES ON THE SERVICE

When Life-Sustaining Care Is Ended offers resources for circumstances that have become more common as the capacities of medical technology have continued to evolve. The service is intended to include whenever possible the participation of the one whose life-sustaining treatment will be ended.

The resources provided here may be adapted to accommodate the variety of circumstances in which they may be used. For example, a simple order might consist of the opening sentence and prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and the concluding prayer and blessing.

Or, the resources may be combined with those of other orders in this volume and elsewhere. After the prayers within this service, the Meal section of Sending of Holy Communion or of Holy Communion in Special Circumstances may be inserted. The service may then conclude with the Sending provided here. From the Brief Order for Healing, laying on of hands [and anointing] may be included after the prayers, whether or not holy communion is included in the service. An order for confession and forgiveness may also be included as appropriate.

A litany is provided as one form for the prayers. If participants do not have the service before them, the leader may cue the response as part of the invitation to prayer. For other prayers that may be used in place of or in addition to the litany, see Readings and Prayers Related to Ministry at the Time of Death and Readings and Prayers Related to Ministry in Sickness and Health.