

MEMORIAL AT SEA / COMMITMENT OF ASHES

STEVEN R. VAN HOOK, PHD

SEA CAPTAIN AND CHAPLAIN

<http://islandweddings.us>

steven@wwmr.us

SAMPLE SERVICE AND RITES

Welcome

We are gathered today in memorial of (the deceased) – in sadness for what is no more, but also in joyful remembrance. For while death may take hold of our bodies, it cannot take from us what remains forever in our hearts.



In Remembrance

Brief biography of the deceased

Words from Family and Friends

Brief comments and remembrances from those present.



Reading

(Family Selection – see samples below)

Sounding of Eight Bells



In a custom deeply rooted in maritime tradition, the sounding of eight bells signifies the end of a watch, and a duty completed. It also signifies that all is well, and that we may rest easy.

And so now we sound eight bells as a farewell for the passing of one of our own, and also as a herald of the memories we will hold for the days to come.

Committal of Ashes

And so we are now to commit the earthly remains of [Full Name] to the Deep.

From the waters, all life arises. And the waters now will take back its own.

As a stream flows into a river, as a river flows into the sea, may [his/her] spirit now flow with the Pacific waters at peace.

Nothing is ever lost – it only transforms. And as each molecule – each atom – of (deceased) mixes with the wind and the waves, a piece of (deceased) will be spread to each ocean and sea of earth.

And anytime you stand at a shore's edge, in a very real way, a part of (deceased) will always be near.



Captain's Benediction

In the old days of the tall ships alone far at sea, a common log entry was "no land in sight – sailed onward." There are times when we may all feel adrift, lost in an endless expanse, no familiar landmark for our bearing.

That is the time we simply sail onward, hold our bearing straight and true, confident in the knowledge that just beyond that horizon, there is indeed land, friends, family, comfort and home.

(Music Selection)



Options for Readings and Rites

Military Tribute

O God of mercy, peace, and love,
we call to remembrance all veterans
who served in the Armed Forces of our Nation and
contributed to the greatness of our national
defense. And we remember before You in this moment
a man (woman) of service, (name).
We recall with abiding gratitude and
respect what he (she) stood for in this life. Help
us to live in the companionship of his (her) spirit.
May we be kind to the friends and family he (she)
loved; devoted to the community in which he
(she) lived; and loyal to the causes which he (she)
served. Thus, in our life, may he (she) live on, to
our great comfort, to the betterment of Your
creation, and to the furthering of Your most Holy
Will. Amen. (Taps)

Catholic Prayer for Burial at Sea

Lord God, by the power of your Word
you stilled the chaos of the primeval seas,
you made the raging waters of the Flood subside,
and you calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee.
As we commit the earthly remains
of our brother/sister
[Full Name] to the deep,
grant him/her peace and tranquility
until that day when [name]
and all who believe in you
will be raised to the glory of new life
promised in the waters of baptism.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Protestant Traditional Prayer for Burial at Sea

We therefore commit the earthly remains of
[Full Name] to the deep,
looking for the day of resurrection
when the sea shall give up her dead;
and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep there
shall be changed, and made unto a glorious body;
according to the mighty working. Amen



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

And Death Shall Have No Dominion

Dylan Thomas

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may seagulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
When their bones are picked clean and
the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they sink through the sea they
shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Benediction: Numbers 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

