

OPENING WORDS  
Ian Turner  
Sunday, December 10, 2017

Last month my father died. He was in hospice at my sister's house after many years of poor health. I was in the house when he stopped breathing, and ran to him and cried for him to hang on just a little while longer. Just one more day! After a while, when he did not respond, I sat with him until his body got cold.

Good morning, and welcome to All Souls. My name is Ian Turner, and I'm so grateful to have this church community to call home. This is a place to bring your joys, your sorrows — your whole person. Here you can share your brightest triumph and your darkest loss.

My dad lived the last 20 years with a challenging dementia. In the last few years, he had little to say during our conversations, and by the end I felt that I had already lost him, in spirit if not in body. Two years ago I cried for him, and in the years since, I grieved for him, so that I thought when he actually did die, it would be easy, just the end of the credits after a long film. I was wrong.

Losing him for real is among the hardest things I've ever experienced as an adult. I've shed so many tears and yet the reservoir remains full. By the end, we barely had a relationship, and yet the thought of his death still puts a lump in my throat. I'm so glad to have this church with which to share my loss. Rest in peace, Mike.

And now, please stand as you are willing and able, and join me in repeating the bond of union:

*In the freedom of the truth  
And in the spirit of love  
We unite for the worship of God  
And the service of all.*