



Readings & Music for End of Life Ceremonies

READINGS

All of these readings would be suitable for any end of life ceremony: living wake, memorial service, or funeral. The headings are just a guide to give the list some structure, they aren't meant to be limiting. There are many other readings to choose from including religious odes, classical texts, and haikus, so take the below suggestions as inspiration for your own research. Websites like Poets.org may be useful.

Funeral/Memorial Service

"[Loss](#)" by Winifred M. Letts

"[Death Is Nothing At All](#)" by Henry Scott-Holland

"[Death Be Not Proud](#)" By John Donne - spiritual

"[Immortality](#)" (Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep) by Clare Harner

"[Warm Summer Sun](#)" by Mark Twain

"[Consolation](#)" by Robert Louis Stevenson

"[Ae Fond Kiss](#)" by Robert Burns (Scottish)

Living Wake

"[Let Me Go](#)" by Christina Rossetti

"[On Death](#)" by Kahlil Gibran - spiritual

"[On Friendship](#)" by Khalil Gibran

"[On Joy & Sorrow](#)" by Khalil Gibran

"[Crossing The Bar](#)" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

"[Perhaps the World Ends Here](#)" by Joy Harjo

Young Death/Death of a Child

"[Nothing Gold Can Stay](#)" by Robert Frost

"[Little Box](#)" by Marilyn Nelson

"[My Mother and Lucille Clifton Have Tea](#)" by Parneshia Jones

Grief

"[Funeral Blues](#)" by W. H. Auden

"[The Courage That My Mother Had](#)" by Edna St. Vincent Millay



MUSIC & SONGS

Any song loved by the deceased is appropriate at a funeral or memorial service.

Living Wake

I'm Gonna Live 'Til I Die by Frank Sinatra

My Way by Frank Sinatra

Three Little Birds by Bob Marley

River by Bill Staines (country)

You'll Never Walk Alone by Gerry & The Pacemakers

Funeral/Memorial Service

Traditional/Classical

Amazing Grace (many versions, including classical and gospel/soul)

Time to Say Goodbye by Andrea Bocelli & Sarah Brightman (in Italian and English)

Contemporary

Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen (acoustic or instrumental version)

Somewhere Over the Rainbow" by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole

Nostalgic

You're My Best Friend by Queen

Unforgettable by Nat King Cole – or duet with Natalie Cole

Uplifting

What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong

Loss of a Parent

You Raise Me Up by Josh Groban

Wind Beneath my Wings by Bette Midler

Everything I Own by Bread

Young Death/Loss of a Child

Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton

See You Again by Wiz Khalifa ft. Charlie Puth

Dancing In The Sky by Dani and Lizzy