Rite for use with a mother after an abortion

The following is an example of a rite which may be used with a mother who has had an abortion by a pastor or fellow Christian. It may be adapted to particular circumstances, and a similar rite may be used for the father, or for the parents together. The rite should normally be used only after appropriate counselling. The rite assumes the Biblical teaching that abortion is the taking of a human life, but also acknowledges the difficult circumstances under which this decision may have been made.

A lit candle may be placed on a table with a small vase of flowers. A second unlit candle, with matches or lighter, may be placed there as well. The candles should be used only if the mother wishes to use them.

The mother may choose the Scripture reading and/or a hymn or song with the help of the pastoral carer.

### Greeting

\_\_\_\_, the peace of the Lord be with you.

**Amen.**

### Introduction and naming

\_\_\_\_ , you have suffered the trauma of an abortion, in which *the life God gave to you has been taken from you/you have permitted the life God gave you to be taken from you.*

If the mother wishes the child to be named, the leader asks:

What is the name of the child?

**His/her name is** \_\_\_\_**.**

**WORD OF GOD**

Hear the word of the Lord as it is written in Isaiah chapter 49.

Before I was born, the Lord chose me and appointed me to be his servant. [The Lord says:] Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you. I have written your name on the palms of my hands*.*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

The leader may comment briefly on the reading.

### Candle

(only with the consent of the mother)

If you wish, say farewell to \_\_\_\_.

The mother may say her own words of farewell to the child. These may include expressions of love, words of sorrow and regret for the abortion, and pleas for pardon. Words such as the following may be said: ‘Dear God, thank you for the brief life of my child. \_\_\_\_, I love you dearly, and my love for you will never die. Please forgive me for ending your life through abortion.’

The earthly life that the Lord gave to \_\_\_\_ /this child is now over.

The mother or another person extinguishes the first candle.

The second candle is lit.

Jesus says: My sheep listen to my voice. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No-one can snatch them out of my hand.

### Hymn/song

A suitable hymn or hymn verse or song, may be sung or said.

### Prayer

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, have mercy on \_\_\_\_. Forgive her all her sins (and for having had an abortion),

make her clean from her sins, and reassure her of your love for her in Jesus Christ and your

acceptance of her as your dear child. Protect her from the accusations and condemnations she

may face. Help her to trust in your grace and rest on your support. Remind her that all things are

in your hands. Uphold her in the days ahead, and give her strength to cope with her difficulties.

Carry her through her grief, and shine on her darkness with the light of your presence; through

Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours**

**now and forever. Amen.**

### Entrustment to God

Lord God, heavenly Father, we entrust \_\_\_\_ to you and place him/her into your everlasting arms. (Take him/her into your loving care. May light eternal shine on him/her.)

**Amen.**

### Blessing

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (†), be with you/us.

**Amen.**

Go, \_\_\_\_, in the peace of the Lord.

**Amen.**

If the rite takes place in a hospital, and it is customary to place the aborted child in a proper container for disposal, the mother may hand the container to the hospital attendant for removal as the words of entrustment are said.

If candles have been used, the mother takes the second candle and the flowers with her when she leaves. She may use this candle to commemorate anniversaries of the child’s death.

*This rite has been adapted from that in ‘Rites and Resources for Pastoral Care’ prepared by the Commission of Worship of the Lutheran Church of Australia, and distributed by Australian Church Resources.*