

Notes on the Service:

1. Scripture and Reflections: Rather than a full sermon, we opted to do readings with some 3 shorter reflections on John 11. Lazarus' illness invites some reflection on a time of a dangerous virus and widespread pandemic. Jesus' strange delay in arriving, his not being there initially, was a way to speak of the separation we've experienced around Covid illness and deaths. But finally, of course, Jesus does come. He weeps and grieves with Mary and Martha, which prompts reflection on the value of gathering and grieving, even if strangely delayed. But Jesus also comes to speak and enact words of tremendous hope and a triumph over death. This was the turn at the end of the service towards hope in Christ's resurrection, and an "all saints" emphasis.
2. Sharing Memories: Here we had a few people planning to share, but also provided some open mic time. Had I known how many would come and share, I might have split this up into a couple of times of sharing and put a hymn or reading between them. But it was still really worthwhile.
3. Song and Prayer: We borrowed from a previous service and did an interweaving of "Abide With Me" as a duet with spoken prayer.
4. Candle-Lighting: We wanted to invite some kind of action, and this worked out pretty well. We had people send in pictures and a few details about their loved ones and these were scrolled through on the screen while some music played. And people were invited to bring a candle or oil lamp to the service to bring forward and light. We also had candles available.