WM: Let us pause to pay tribute to all Eastern Star members in our own jurisdiction and other jurisdictions who have passed away during this year.

There is an ancient poem which describes death as the end of a long pilgrimage. It tells of a pilgrim, old, worn and spent, who, as his life is drawing to a close wanders down into a valley. On all sides of him are high bleak mountains and the sky is black overhead. He does not know which way to go. He is confused and unutterably weary. As his eyes become accustomed to the shadows of the valley he looks about and sees a gate in the rock. He wends his way up the rugged path to the gate and finds above it the words, "The Gate of Death." It falls to his touch and he passes through to find his journey has ended, for as the gate swings closed behind him he looks up and finds above it the words, "The Gate of Life."

So our Sisters and brothers have gone down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death and passed through the gate of death into Life Eternal. They loved the Order of the Eastern Star and will find those same colors represented in their new life.

Adam: For looking about they see all is fair, read their part.

There are no clouds of doubt and care,
All these have vanished, the sky is blue
With all of life's sorrows and troubles they're through.

Ruth: All glittering and golden are the streets and
Rectful to their weary feet.
Patient industry is rewarded now,
They'll labor no more by the sweat of their brow.

Ruthen: Their robes no longer are tattered and torn
But angels minister and will them adorn
In garment white, no shining and fair,
Ah, what a joy to imagine them there!
MARTHA: And plainly around God's throne can be seen,
A huge rainbow of emerald green.
All who come beneath its verdant rays,
Remain to live with God and sing His praise.

ELIZABETH: And in their veins RED blood will run,
And love, reflected from God, the Son
For drawing them upward to the throne,
He says: "My Children, Welcome Home."

WH: "We sometimes wish that life was not so bitter and thorns did not beset the path we trod, but could we understand the hidden meaning, the all-wise purpose of a loving God, if we could see beyond the veil of sorrow, so often clouded by our falling tears, we might discover the reasons for these partings, which come to all who travel down the years."

CHAIRMAN: Father in heaven, to Thee we turn who art more than all else. Our times are in Thine hands. "Thou hast set the sun and stars in the sky." Thou hast made one brighter than the morning, and fairer than the day. May its light lead and guide us into the harmonies of law and grace, that we may become responsive to every touch of nature, every whisper of truth, every appeal of humanity. So fit us to serve Thee in the spirit of Him whose star in the east has taught us to know Thee, to do Thy will on earth as it is done in heaven. AMEN