The Altar of Remembrance by Myrtle Morrison, WM 1997-98

(The WM, Treasurer and AP enter from the North, while the WP, Secretary and AM enter from the South and assume their stations. They are followed by Esther, Martha, Electa, Chaplain and Assoc Conductress from the North and Ruth, Adah, Marshal and Conductress from the South. The last two groups form a line across the West. The Conductress is holding the altar drape, the Chaplain holding the Bible, the Marshal holding the 'vTeath and the Star Points each holding flowers appropriate to their station.)

WM: Another year has passed into silence and again we come to this solemn hour to bow in humble submission to the inevitable of God’s will and we pause to pay tribute to those who have passed to the Great Beyond. Life is a garden where flowers bloom to bless and to give us happiness for a time, then God’s finger touches them and they are taken to His garden above for they are needed there.

(the Conductresses march along the marching line to their stations, then turn and march to the altar. They drape the altar and step back to the circle of officers as Worthy Patron reads.)

WP: As we drape the altar gently
For the loved ones gone before
Who have crossed the Silent River
And arrived on the Golden Shore
We shall see them in His likeness
When we too have passed beyond
Hand in hand around God’s altar,
When our work on earth is done.

(When the WP has finished, the Chaplain enters the labyrinth and places the Bible and steps back into circle. The Marshal enters the labyrinth and places the wreath and steps back into the circle.)

WM: Let us unite in prayer. (Calls up chapter, and Chaplain kneels and gives prayer.)

Chaplain: Our Father who art in Heaven as our thoughts turn to our departed members, give us the courage and strength to continue with unfaltering efforts to do the work which is left for our hands to do. We thank thee for the lives of our departed loved ones and in honor of their memory we consecrate ourselves anew to thy service, comfort those who mourn and give them faith to believe that there is no death, for after the sunset comes the dawn of a new day with life everlasting. AMEN.

(Conductresses, Chaplain and Marshal return to their stations.)
WM: Sister Secretary, you will read the names of our sisters and brothers whose names are engraved upon the scroll.

Secretary: These are the names of our sisters and brothers who have left us since our last Memorial Service: (Insert names, including PGM and PGP)

When finished, the Secretary goes to the altar and places the memory book or scroll.

(As the Secretary goes to the altar to place the scroll on it, the Worthy Patron reads.)

WP: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

(As Secretary places the scroll on the altar she says:)

Sec: In loving memory of the dear departed members of Grand Chapter, Past Grand Matrons, Past Grand Patrons, and all our sisters and brothers I place this scroll on the Altar on Remembrance.

(As Secretary returns to her station the Organist plays "Amazing Grace")

(As Adah advances to a position near her station at the altar, the Worthy Patron reads:)

WP: "For lo, the winter is past, the snow is over and the flowers appear on the earth". It is the time of Hope and Promise. We liken this season to the fidelity and faithful efforts of these dear members who were true to their obligations, loyal in service and sincere of purpose.

ADAH: Jepthah's daughter, Adah, died bravely to preserve her father's honor and to be faithful to her convictions of right and duty. The blue ray of our star represents her love and fidelity. As Adah, I dedicate this blue flower to the memory of these Sisters and Brothers. (May wish to insert some of the name or names)

(As Ruth advances to a position at the altar near her station, the AP reads:)
AP: The glowing beauty and warmth of the summer sun are reflected in Sister Ruth's flower and the golden hues of ripening grain. The sun and soft summer rain mirror the season of fulfillment. Yellow symbolizes constancy and the patient industry of our departed sisters and brothers.

RUTH: Ruth humbly followed and cared for her aged mother-in-law, Naomi. The yellow ray of our star represents her constancy and faithfulness to the demands of honor and justice. As Ruth, I dedicate this yellow flower in memory of these Sisters and Brothers. (Or may wish to insert the name or names of some of the members.)

(As Esther advances to a position at the altar near her station, the WP reads:)

WP: Soon the splendor of summer gives way to autumn, providing myriad bounty of God's gift to us. In token of sincere affection Sister Esther lends her flower of white. It symbolizes the purity and joy of dedication and the love for kindred and friends that was manifest in the love of our departed sisters and brothers.

ESTHER: Queen Esther risked the loss of her crown and life to save her people from death. The white ray of our star represents the purity of her love of kindred and friends. As Esther I dedicate this white flower in memory of these Sisters and Brothers. (Or may wish to insert a name or names.)

(As Martha advances to a position at the altar near her station, the AP reads:)

AP: The winter season brings wondrous frost and the continuing miracle of snowflakes falling silently from the sky to weave a feather like blanket upon the ground. Seedlings and bulbs are aslumber in deep repose awaiting the warm, sweet breath of spring again. The Season of the Evergreen, Nature's Life and Beauty is Sister Martha's tribute.

MARTHA: Martha beside the grave of her beloved brother avowed her trustful faith and hope of immortal life. As Martha I dedicate this green flower in memory of the departed family members of our own ____________________ Chapter sisters and brothers.

(As Electa advances to a position at the altar near her station the Worthy Patron reads:)

WP: Our dormant winter world will be called forth to life again, and renew our faith in Heaven's Eternal Spring. Sister Electa offers her flower of red as a tribute of our love and respect for our departed Fifty Year members. These loyal Golden Stars have more than exemplified the glory of love and their service to God and to our beautiful order.
ELECTA: Electa was pre-emanate in charity and heroic in endurance under the wrongs of persecution. The red ray of our star represents the love, fervency and zeal of Electa. As Electa, I dedicate this red flower in memory of our departed Golden Stars.

(When Electa has placed her flower on the altar the Star points back around their stations and are seated.)

(After Star Points are seated)

AM: Let us remember with love our dearly departed sisters and brothers and be comforted by the knowledge of immortal life. In this memorial service, may the light of our Eastern Star shine as an inspiration to us to keep the faith. Let us go forward with the inspiration of new hope and earnest purpose of our lives.

WM: Our lives as in nature are a cycle of seasons: planting, growing, reaping, resting. No year or season stands alone. There is a continuity of all seasons in Nature and in Man. As the links of the golden chain that represents our life on earth have fallen away in death, may we be joined again in the world where death comes not in the land where it is Eternal Spring. The greatness and goodness of God is evident in each day’s sunrise and sunset. The sunrise is a reminder that “today is the first day of the rest of your life”. The sunset is a radiant ending to any day, no matter how that day might have been.

(The ORGANIST plays “Sunrise, Sunset”. The officers quietly retire.)