Memory's Altar

Characters:
Worthy Matron, Associate Matron, Secretary, Conductress, Associate Conductress, Chaplain, Adah, Ruth, Esther, Martha, Electa and Soloist.

Time:
Fifteen Minutes.

Costumes:
White.

Properties:
Drape of white cloth with evergreen festoons for the altar; Small broken column of white flowers; Rope of arilax; 5 Fern sprays; Sufficient number of flowers for the deceased; Copies of - "Lead Kindly Light", "One Sweetly Solemn Thought", "Asleep in Jesus".

Scene:
Chapter Setting.
Throughout this life, with all of its joys, there comes a measure of sadness. Silent as the dawn, mysterious as the night, yet, certain as Truth the messenger comes, and whether from the North, the South, from the East or from the West, we, none of us can tell - yet, one by one our friends are drifting over the breast of the silent sea and one by one we too, shall cross the river to "That city not made by hands."

"Let us drape the altar gently
For the loved ones gone before;
They have crossed the silent river;
We shall see them here no more.
Place a wreath upon the altar;
It will fade and be no more,
But the loved ones have only gone
To the bright celestial shore."

("W.M. - calls up the Chapter)

(The Associate Conductress and Conductress advance from their stations - turn square corners as they turn to march west, march west just far enough to make an acute angle between the chairs when approaching the altar. The Conductress approaches the altar between Ruth's and Esther's chairs, and the Associate Conductress between Martha's and Esther's chairs, make a low bow together.

The Associate Conductress lifts the Bible from the altar and steps to one side, the Conductress then places the drapes over the altar; the Associate Conductress replaces the Bible, steps back and they both make the sign. -- The Conductress takes her position between Ruth's and Esther's chairs and Associate Conductress between Martha's and Esther's chairs.)

(Soft music should be played during this work. The drapes should be of white cloth festooned with evergreen, large enough to cover altar.)

Prayer by Chaplain-

O Thou Divine Architect of our earthly labyrinth, look down in compassion upon the members of our Order here assembled, and let the glory of Thy righteousness so light our pathway, that we may heed the warning admonition "Lean not unto thine own understanding." O Thou Great Teacher, whose emblematic Star did guide the destinies of our departed Sisters and Brothers to that Chapter in the Great Bryond, be Thou a lamp unto our feet, and may Thy guardian angel guide us safely past all evils that beset the road of life, and lead us safely as Thou hast
led those who have preceded us to that New Jerusalem. O may the sacred memory of their good deeds be an inspiration to us, and cause us to want to live better lives, and Father, upon this service in honor of that sweet memory of those who have gone to that fairer shore, we ask Thy benediction. Amen.

Response- "So may it ever be."

Solo- "Lead Kindly Light."

"(W.M. approaches the altar from the east, carrying a small broken column of white flowers. The Associate Matron approaches the altar from the west, carrying a rope of smilax.)"

Worthy Matron- Places the broken column on table placed on east of altar and says:

"God's great love entwines about our lives, and His sweet voice speaks peace unto the soul, and on life's broken column we may rear the altar of our trustful hearts, and He will make them whole."

Associate Matron- Entwines the smilax around the column and says:

"The evergreen whose color never fades is Nature's promise of immortality. As a testimony of our belief in the life un-ending, we will garland this broken column with this rope of green, realizing that our fraternal chain, though severed here, will one bright day be perfected, when we shall miss no broken links in that heavenly home beyond the sorrows and the parting."

"(W.M. and A.M. step towards the East, taking positions in line between Adah and Electa, facing the west.)"

Worthy Matron- (To Star Points)

"Sisters of our floral Star what offerings do you bring?"

Adah-

"A token of fidelity to the memory of our departed members."

(A. steps forward, places spray of ferns at base of broken column and steps back to place.)

Ruth-

"A token of loyalty to the friends who have gone before."

(Ruth steps forward, places spray of ferns at base of broken column and steps back to place.)
Esther-

"A token of the purity of the ties that bind us to each other."

(Esther steps forward, places spray of ferns at base of broken column and steps back to place.)

Martha-

"A token of the expression of our belief that -- 'There is no death'."

(Martha steps forward, places spray of ferns at base of broken column and steps back to place.)

Electa-

"A token of the fervency of our esteem for those we mourn today."

(Electa steps forward, places spray of ferns at base of broken column and steps back to place.)

(The Secretary reads the name or names of the deceased and the Conductresses step forward. If there is only one name to be read the Conductress will place a spray of white or pale pink flowers at the base of the broken column. If there are several names to be read each will have the flowers previously counted out so that there will be a flower for each one and the Conductresses will alternately bank them upon the green sprays just placed by the Star Points.)

Associate Conductress-

"Fast as the rolling seasons bring
The hour of fate to those we love,
Each Pearl that leaves the broken string
Is set in Friendship's crown above."

Conductress-

"As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain,
But those are stars that beam on high."

Solo- "One Sweetly Solemn Thought."
"Worthy Matron—

"We shall see Him in His likeness
Then we, too, have passed beyond,
Hand in hand around God's altar
Then our work on earth is done.

"We have draped the altar gently
For the loved ones gone
Let us kneel in supplication
As we say 'Thy will be done'."

(The officers having speaking parts and assembled about
the altar will step back in a circle formation and during this
last verse by the "Worthy Matron will clasp hands and kneel as
the words are spoken.)

Solo— "Asleep in Jesus"

(Officers arise and go to their stations. Slow music.)