

Service for the dedication of Karen's Tree

We are here this evening as Karen's family and friends and representing the whole village of Weare Giffard.

We'll remember Karen as we dedicate this tree in her memory and continue to pray for her and all her family and friends. We'll also give thanks for the great contribution she made to all our lives and to the collective life of the village.

It is 18 months since Karen died and we are all still missing her a great deal. I know for myself in the WGYG during my second year of chairmanship how much I missed her sound judgement and wise counsel as the fledgling club in which she played such a pivotal role continued to grow and develop, and I know that we all miss her friendship and humour.

For her family and close friends that loss is multiplied many times over.

Grief – the process of losing someone we love and beginning to learn how to live with that loss – is a journey that is different for everybody. I hope that our ceremony of dedicating this tree in Karen's memory might enable us to take another small step along the way.

The planting and growing of a tree, especially one that blossoms as this one will, is a great act of creation.

Each spring, as it comes into leaf and flower it will signify new life and new hope in the centre of our village, and as it grows and blossoms we can think of all that grows and blossoms in our lives as a result of Karen's life. Of the love, passion and enthusiasm that she shared with us and offered to us. Her organised mind and practical skills that she

brought to both business and youth club. Her nurturing love as mother, wife and daughter. Her continuing generosity to our youth group, enabling new ideas and new training to be put into practice.

So I thought now we might just share aloud – or in silence – some of those things we personally would like to thank her for or that we especially appreciated her for. And if you'd like to, during this time, please place a flower in one of the jars by the tree in symbolism of your thoughts.

End with ...

Father in heaven, we give you thanks for your servant Karen. We praise you as we recollect her life and cherish her memory. We bless you that in bearing your image she has brought light to our lives; for we have seen in her friendship reflections of your compassion, in her integrity demonstrations

of your goodness, and in her faithfulness glimpses
of your eternal love.

Grant to each of us, beloved and bereft, the grace
to follow her good example, so that we with her may
come to your everlasting kingdom; through Jesus
Christ our Lord, who died and rose again and
opened the gate of glory, to whom be praise for all
eternity. Amen.

As we think of the tree blossoming, and Karen's
love blossoming in our lives, I am reminded of some
words from the Song of Solomon,

10 My lover spoke and said to me,
 "Arise, my darling,
 my beautiful one, and come with me.

11 See! The winter is past;
 the rains are over and gone.

12 Flowers appear on the earth;
 the season of singing has come,

the cooing of doves
is heard in our land.

13 The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.
Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me."

God called Karen to arise and come to him and he calls us to arise and live lives that blossom with love. I hope that as we watch this tree grow we will be reminded both of Karen, and our call to love, as she loved, and as God loves us.

And so we come to the blessing of the tree ...

Creator of life and Sustainer of seed and soil, of tree and flower, you have created this world and all that lives in it. It is to You that we come in this prayer of dedication and blessing, for you are the giver of life and the sustainer of all that lives. We come to you to dedicate this tree in memory of

Karen who you continue to hold in your generous grace. We give you thanks for her life and come to you in our tears and sorrow. May this tree remind us of this one whom we love and who is held forever in your never ending love. May this tree dig deep roots and grow wide branches to bear witness to your abundant love and grace made known in our sister Karen. We ask for you blessing upon this tree and upon us who mourn, that life might dwell and bear witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

And a final prayer from the Celtic church ...

Do not hurry as you walk with grief, it does not help the journey.

Walk slowly, pausing often. Do not hurry as you walk with grief.

Be not disturbed by memories that come unbidden. Swiftly forgive: and let Christ speak for you unspoken words. Let unfinished conversations be resolved in him. Be not disturbed.

Be gentle with the one who walks in grief. If it is you, be gentle with yourself. Swiftly forgive. Walk slowly. Pausing often.

Take time as you walk in grief.

Final Blessing

May God give you his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy, in this world and the next; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen**