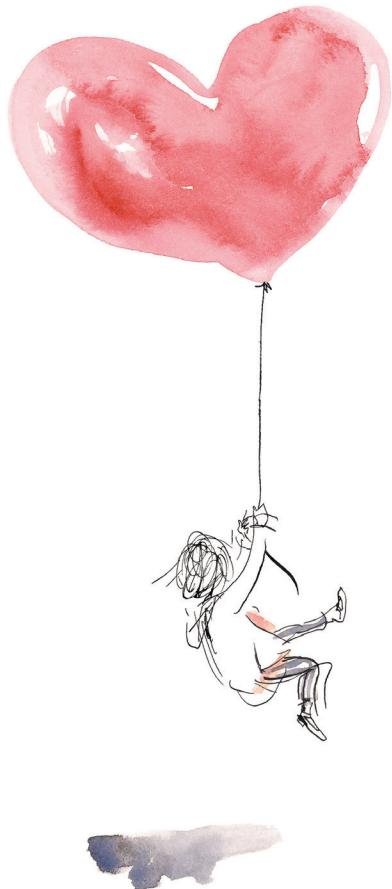


Victorian Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

15 October 2019 • Melbourne Museum Main Foyer • 7.00 pm

Order of Service



"You have my heart"





Prelude

Susannah Fletcher

Harpist

Welcome to Country

Welcome

The Honourable Jenny Mikakos MP, Minister for Health

Introduction

Cheryl Holmes OAM, CEO Spiritual Health Association

Opening song

Lean on Me - Hallelujah

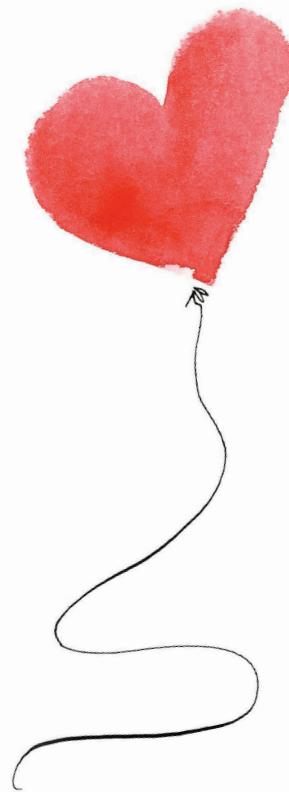
Pop Choir



Reading 1

♥ “Forgotten One” by Margaret Polacska (bereaved of Noah)

The march of time didn't wait for you
It passed you by and dragged us with it.
You stayed suspended in a moment
Whilst life pushed us forward
Whether we liked it or not.
Yet a part of you stayed in our veins
And courses through our blood
Imprinted on our souls until time ends
In a way no one else knows.
Never seen, but always here.
The loss of you bigger than one can absorb
Thinning our vulnerability
Worn weaker with each threatening wave.
Exposing us to what we cannot control.
Because of you we know the loneliest sorrow,
The most piercing fear,
The deepest empathy and compassion
And the true meaning of unconditional love.
What it is to be purely human,
Exposed, terrified, bursting with love, present,
self-sacrificing, angry, exhausted
And at times fearless warrior
With sword drawn ready to slay.
Each day your sister and brother mirror you,
Reminding us of who you could have been.
Their vibrant and loving energy
Help us to keep breathing
And find meaning in life.
Today we remember you
For the short time we held you
And the journey you've travelled through us, with us, in the fabric of our being.
Never forgotten and forever mourned.



Reading 2

♥ “Overflow” by Rebecca Gelsi (bereaved of Luca)

Contact your funeral director.

My what? I was having a baby, not a funeral.

A boy actually, Luca Frank.

We just missed him really.

A day... a decision... a moment.

Five weeks pregnant: I imagine my perfect two-child life.

Feeding baby in the garden while big sister plays.

20 weeks: It's a boy. Imagine that, I always thought I'd have two girls.
What will I do with a boy?

33 weeks: Christmas Day. Feeling happy and glowy and self-important - about to bring new life forth.

35 weeks: A still heart on an oversized ultrasound display.
The full stop in my pregnancy.

A night of labour and he slips quietly into the world without really coming into it at all.

Holding him at the intersection of birth and death.

Steve and I are sitting with Luca lying between us. His arm falls from the side of his body. We both gasp and then look sheepishly at each other.
No I didn't - did you? Oh no, of course I knew he wasn't really...

Then grief, an all-consuming grief that gets worse just as everyone thinks it's getting better.

A well-meaning parade of people saying hurtful things. I want to tell them he was not too beautiful for this world; he was not needed in Heaven; and they do not know how I feel because their cat died.

With Steve at the deserted beach.

I let my pain out in a loud, guttural, grotesque moan.

He is startled and turns away.

Walking along. Trees, pavement, cars.

Thinking that since Luca should never have died, I can surely bring him back, if I only concentrate hard enough.

Envy, anger, debilitating shame, weighting on me so heavily, so physically that it's hard to put one foot in front of the other.

I see an energy healer, even though I probably don't believe in them.

I don't tell anyone, not even Steve - especially not Steve.

They (you know, they) say I need to mother Luca even though he's not here.

I scrapbook even though I'd scoffed at it as a stupid, girly pastime.

Blogged even though everyone knows it's a Boring Load of Garbage. And now, ten years later, I'm writing poetry. I hate poetry.



Candle lighting ceremony

The first candle represents grief, read by Anne-Maree Polimeni (bereaved of Rafael)

The burning down of this candle marks time. It helps us remember that the gaping hole of grief will diminish. It also reminds us that our love, our memories and a sense of loss remains. We are forever changed as a result of what our babies brought to our lives.

The second candle represents love, read by Nick Xerakias (bereaved of Angelo)

Without love there cannot be grief. This candle represents our never-ending love for our babies. The unconditional love of a parent never lessens whether our child is with us or not. This candle acknowledges that love above all else sits at the core of our parenthood.

The third candle represents memories, read by Rosie Leontaris (bereaved of Terry James)

Remembering can be hard as it brings back pain, but it also ensures our babies are not forgotten. We remember the joy and anticipation as we prepared for the birth of our babies. We remember the dreams we had of what their lives might be. We remember the times we cried and mourned their death. All that our babies' lives meant and all that they have given us lives on in our memories.

The fourth candle represents hope, read by Adriana Care (bereaved of Chiara)

In my dreams you are alive and well precious child, in my mind I see you clear as a bell precious child. In my soul there is a hole that can never be filled, but in my heart, there is hope cause you are with me still.

The fifth candle represents courage, read by Marilyn Ryan (bereaved of granddaughter Amy)

The agony is great and yet I will stand it. Had I not loved so much I would not hurt so much. But goodness knows I would not want to diminish that precious love by one fraction of an ounce. I will hurt. And I will be grateful for that hurt for it bears witness to the depth of our meaning. And for that I will be eternally grateful.

The sixth candle represents support, read by Ben Weinberg (bereaved of Rafael)

Grief can be made worse when other people turn away, as if they are overwhelmed and don't know what to say. There are no words that will make this okay, there is no special magic "just choose to stay"



Reading

Mary Klasen, Mercy Hospitals Victoria, Pastoral Care Manager

"You have my Heart" by Corinne Fenton and Robin Cowcher

(Harp music will be played during the reading)

Wave of Light

Cheryl Holmes

(Harp music will be played during the Wave of Light)

A moment to remember

Silence

We invite you to write the name of your
baby on the heart provided

Closing song

Lanterns

Pop Choir

Closing words followed by
refreshments





Acknowledgment

Thank you to the parents and family members who so generously and courageously shared their words and stories for this service.



Thank you to Corinne Fenton and Robin Cowcher who kindly allowed us to tell their story and share the pictures from "You have my Heart" and to Hardie Grant publishing for giving permission for the illustrations to be used.

24/7 support is available:

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