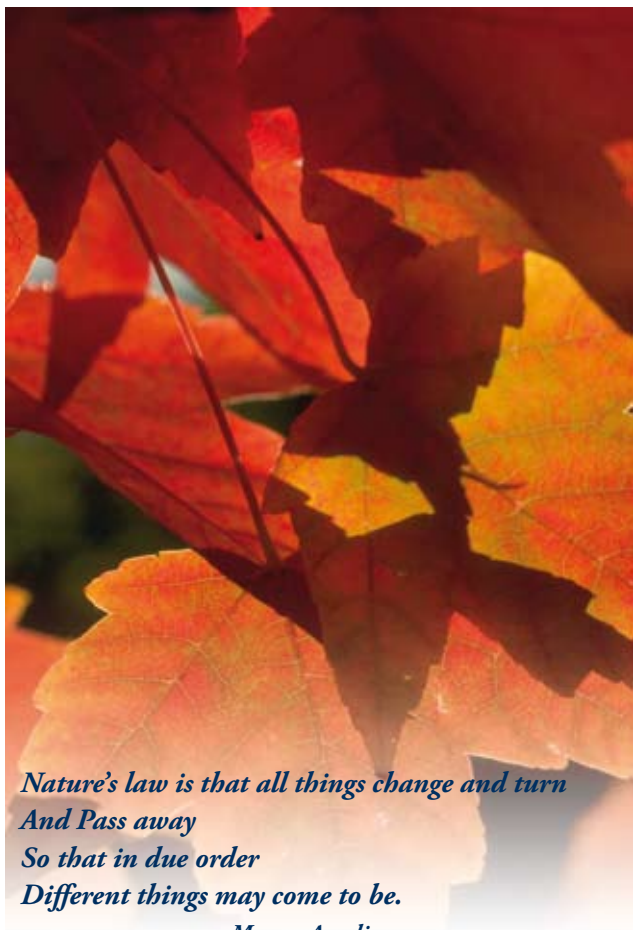




**humanist
society
scotland**

To Celebrate A Life





*Nature's law is that all things change and turn
And Pass away
So that in due order
Different things may come to be.*

– Marcus Aurelius

Humanists understand that in nature's cycles, the end of life is as much a part of existence as the beginning. The wonder of life is what happens in between, and it is a wonder that deserves to be celebrated.

The Humanist Society of Scotland maintains a network of celebrants with the training, expertise, and experience to help bereaved families. By conducting the funeral (burial, cremation, or memorial) that puts the loved one and their family's wishes at the centre of the ceremony, we can help create an occasion that will mourn a loss, but more importantly, celebrate a life.

Bereavement, and the accompanying grief, is often hard to bear. It is our experience that great comfort can be derived from a ceremony that honours and celebrates a life.

A personal tribute

As Celebrants, we have usually not known the person concerned. However a family visit is arranged and we sensitively gather the information that will enable us to compose a dignified and meaningful tribute to the life that has passed. The celebrant will usually meet with the family, but in exceptional circumstances this preliminary stage can be conducted by phone, email, or fax.

Our ceremonies focus on the value of the life we are celebrating. They may take account of foibles, albeit tactfully, perhaps even humorously. Tears may play their part, but laughter and smiles too are fundamental to the cycle of life, and thus to our celebration of life.

Making the arrangements

Your Humanist Celebrant will explain the general format of a Humanist ceremony. To opt for one is to choose an entirely secular non-religious ceremony – that is one without Hymns, prayers or other religious

content. Within the constraints of the venue and time, this allows for a degree of flexibility to fit in with your own wishes, but is always highly personal. Your celebrant will be happy to co-operate by including for example, a favourite poem, as well as suggesting possible appropriate readings, whether poetry or prose. A family member or friend may contribute should they wish to do so.

Personal taste in music is always catered for: classical, jazz, pop, Scottish etc, can all be included in the ceremony. It is also usual for a humanist ceremony to include a short period for quiet reflection to focus on the life of the person concerned. There is no such thing as a standard humanist ceremony: we pride ourselves on composing each one in a way that is appropriate to the person and for the family concerned. Our aim is always to provide a ceremony that is movingly sympathetic and uplifting for those present. The constantly increasing demand for our ceremonies is evidence that we are achieving that aim.

Some comments we have received

“We opted for a Humanist ceremony at my grandfather’s funeral recently. All the family found the tribute very apt, personal and moving. It really was a celebration of his life and a chance for us all to say goodbye.”

“The Celebrant took a great deal of trouble researching my mother’s life, and provided a sensitive, respectful and upbeat ceremony which I and others found very satisfactory. I would certainly have a Humanist ceremony again, and would have no hesitation in recommending it to others.”

“I had the pleasure, yes pleasure, of attending a funeral conducted by one of your Celebrants for a friend’s father who had died. It was one of the saddest, happiest, and for definite, one of the most moving funerals I have ever attended.”

Planning for the future

Many people now choose to make their own funeral arrangements while in good health, and either your Funeral Director, or the Humanist Society of Scotland will be happy to arrange for a celebrant to visit and discuss ceremony options with you at any time.

Practical points

- Try to contact the Celebrant before the time and place, to ensure that he or she is available.
- The book **Funerals without God** is a practical guide to non-religious funerals. It is available from www.humanism-scotland.org.uk/books.html or any of our Coordinators.
- Celebrants or Funeral Directors will explain the fees and any extra expenses that might be incurred when you first contact them, and the Funeral Director will normally add it to the disbursements.
- Humanist Celebrants can also conduct memorials, weddings, same-sex commitments and other ceremonies. Marriage ceremonies performed by our Authorised Celebrants are fully legal.

What is Humanism?

Humanism is a diverse movement with ancient roots that reflects the views of millions of people around the world. Stated simply, Humanists believe that we can lead good and worthwhile lives guided by reason and compassion rather than religion or superstition, and that there are more things that unite humanity than divide it. Or, as we say in Scotland, “We’re a’ Jock Tamson’s bairns” – we’re all the same under the skin.

To find out more

To find out more contact your local coordinator

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** Calls to 07010 numbers cost 35p per minute at all times*

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