



Vigil music at the bedside creates a calming and peaceful atmosphere for those who are nearing the end of their lives.

**569-1723 and 471-0590**  
**(Leave a message at both numbers)**

### ***The Benefits of Music for Those Who Are Dying***

Music can nurture a peaceful death.

It may enhance the effectiveness of pain medications in the relief of suffering.

It supports an atmosphere of love and security at the bedside.

Music lends relaxation, peace, and sacredness to the moment.

It creates a bridge of easy non-verbal communication between the loved one and the caregivers.

Music is one of the most beautiful ways to release your loved one and guide them lovingly on toward death.

### ***About Us***

It is the goal of Songs for the Journey to offer music as a comfort and a guide for the dying in their passing. Journey Companions are also available to provide a loving presence and abide with the dying who would be alone.

Songs for the Journey is a ministry that is independent of any one hospice or health care facility. We are not affiliated with any one church.

We are volunteers who are called to serve at the request of family and health care professionals. We provide this service within the health care facilities and private homes of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

An average ministry lasts about 30 minutes, but this can vary due to patient or family circumstance. We typically sing in teams of two or three.

If you would like us to return to minister again with comforting music, ask your health care professionals to contact us. You are also welcome to contact us.

## ***Can the Unresponsive Person Really Hear?***

The ear is the first organ to develop in the womb. The auditory system usually functions until death. For those who are hard of hearing, know that the skin is part of the auditory system and is capable of picking up the soothing vibrations of the music. The skeletal system also serves to conduct vibrations throughout our body.

## ***The Style of Music that Best Supports Those Who Are Dying***

This music will be very soft and VERY slow. This compliments the patient whose body processes have begun to slow down naturally for passing. It may encourage those who are laboring with rapid breathing or rapid heart rate to relax and slow down.

## ***Get Comfortable***

This is an opportunity for you to relax as well. If you cannot find a chair, ask us to bring you one.

## ***Music Can Move us Emotionally***

Beautiful and moving music may bring about the release of our emotions. This release may be through tears – yours or those of others in the room. Music enables us to bring our feelings to the surface and then carries us on to a place of peace and acceptance.

## ***Your Freedom in this Music***

You may ask that the music be stopped at any time. You do not have to offer a reason for this request. Feel free to leave the room during this music at any time you so desire.

## ***Humming or Singing Along***

You are welcome to hum or sing along with us. You are also welcome to sit in silence. Whatever you choose, this music will minister to you as well. Should you decide to sing with us, be mindful of the need to stay with us in the music.

## ***Are Other Family Members en Route?***

You may know of other family members who are en route and hurrying to get to your loved one's side to share in last moments with him or her. Know that vigil music can encourage the life/death transition of those who are nearing the end. It is not uncommon for dying patients to pass either during the music or soon after it.

## ***Which Music to Select?***

We sing from five different repertoires: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Gospel & Spiritual, and Secular. If your loved one is responsive, ask if he or she would like to hear religious music/hymns or just some relaxing secular music. If unresponsive, answer that question as you feel he or she would have answered it just before becoming unresponsive. If in doubt, always select the relaxing secular music.

Familiar music you know your loved one enjoys can be very comforting. Playing unfamiliar songs with soothing melodies can also be very relaxing. You are welcome to select the songs to be sung from a categorized listing contained on the colored pages (see front and back of pages) in the back of our songbooks. If you do not wish to select songs, we will be happy to select for you. We just ask that you guide us somewhat if we are doing the song selection. We do not want to sing a song that your loved one either does not like or a song that might evoke a sad memory. Just ask that we then select another song.

## ***In Appreciation***

The "peace bird" art on this brochure is the inspired work of Monarca Lynn Merrifield.

[www.monarcalynn.com](http://www.monarcalynn.com)

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