

Liturgy / Sermon: Preacher Holger Tietz – Reading: N.N – Cantor: N.N
Memorial service for Donald McIntyre – Mon, 8 Dec. 2025 – Munich Artists' House –
Liturgy 3

1.1 Vote and greeting

Holger: We celebrate this service

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

All: Amen

Holger: May the Lord be with you
and with your spirit

Dear Bettina, dear family and dear friends,

We have gathered here at the Munich Künstlerhaus to say our final farewells today.

Farewell to Donald McIntyre, who passed away on 13 November 2025 at the age of 91.

Let us be silent and gather our thoughts:

Dear God, today we bid farewell to Donald McIntyre.

For many – not only in the world of opera – his name was a household name

and stood for the highest artistry and professionalism in singing.

Don was respected, admired and loved by so many people.

The many people who shared his life were bound to him in love.

Now Don is no longer with us.

The encounters with him, the conversations with him, are over.

We miss his advice.

Dear God, surround us in this hour of farewell

with your closeness and kindness.

Let us be open to your words of comfort.

Let us feel your strength.

Amen

My name is Holger Tietz. I am a lay preacher for the Protestant Regional Church in Baden. Being a lay preacher is an honorary position for which one undergoes approximately two years of theological training – in theory and practice – at the Protestant University in Freiburg. Following my calling, I am often asked to lead church services or accompany the deceased on their final journey.

Bettina's family and mine have been very close for a very long time. Despite all the professional and personal changes in our lives, we have always stayed in touch – with birthday calls and Christmas cards.

And, of course, there were family celebrations that brought Bettina and us together at regular intervals, which we used as an opportunity to catch up and exchange news.

And then at some point we found out that a famous opera singer had entered Bettina's life – Don.

I still remember quite well the first time I met Don in person.

In 2010, my wife and I invited family and friends to a big party to celebrate our joint 100th birthday. The party took place on New Year's Eve in the vaulted cellar of the baroque castle in Weinheim an der Bergstraße, the town where we still live today.

Numerous relatives and friends came to our pre-party.

Bettina and Don also joined us for the pre-celebration, with sparkling wine and beer, small canapés and savoury snacks.

And so we saw Don in person for the first time. Don was someone who radiated an impressive presence. It wasn't just his large, muscular stature, his distinguished head with its white, well-groomed beard, his intelligent eyes that sparkled boyishly and formed a striking contrast to his full head of white hair.

Don always had a special glow about him. Just like in the photo behind me.

Don was very eloquent, especially when you could speak English with him; he was then very talkative and interested in many things. He made the people around him laugh, or at least he always brought a smile to the lips of his conversation partners... One of Don's special traits was that he enjoyed talking to pretty women and exuded his incredible charm on them too.

The last major celebration we were able to enjoy together with Don and Bettina in Weinheim was at the turn of the year 2017 to 2018.

Martina and I had prepared an extensive programme for our guests. In addition to a New Year's Eve party in a quaint pub right on the market square, the cultural highlights included a historical city tour and an excursion to Worms. There, a city guide was waiting for us the next day and showed us the most beautiful corners and

nooks of the old cathedral city on the Rhine.

At that time, however, Don was probably already showing the first signs of dementia.

His steps began to become more unsteady as we walked through Worms. But thanks to Bettina, the two of them were able to enjoy this trip and others.

And yet Don even gave singing lessons in his Munich flat. What a man!

Dear family, friends and mourners here at the Munich Künstlerhaus.

Don lived to be 91 years old. That is a wonderful age – for each and every one of us.

Perhaps we too wish to live to be as old as Don.

91 years is really not something to be taken for granted.

You have all accompanied Don through the various phases of his long, eventful and moving life. At times, you were more closely involved in the fate of this very special man, at other times less so.

Like all of us in our professional lives, Don experienced highs and lows, successes and failures, joyful encounters and sad disappointments during his unique stage career – and, of course, this also applies to the numerous ups and downs in his private life, which we all know from our own experience.

And so it is good to know that there are people by our side

- who stand by us no matter what happens,
- who support us,
- who carry us, even when it seems like we can't go on.

We have just heard from Paul and David about the people who stood by Don during his lifetime. In recent years, this was primarily Bettina.

Don was blessed with a long, rich and certainly fulfilling life. In recent years, however, life became increasingly complicated and fraught with hardship. As Don's physical and mental strength waned, he became more and more dependent on good and loving care.

Bettina organised his care in their own rather spacious flat in Munich.

It became necessary for carers to be able to find space in Don and Bettina's togetherness for 24/7 service. The men who came as carers had to be integrated as new family members, with all their quirks and idiosyncrasies, and unfortunately this did not always go smoothly.

Bettina made sure that Don's daily routine was always well structured and organised... with doctor's appointments, physiotherapists, outpatient carers and many other good souls. Of course, this also included the lovely neighbours, who were always ready to step in when needed.

Bettina was undoubtedly the linchpin for all the activities Don needed to lead a safe and secure life, even in his final years. Don's increasing dementia meant that he became more and more fixated on Bettina, his "Bettina Lady". Bettina could hardly leave the flat without Don calling out for her...

In the last years of his life, Don received endless time, care and affection from Bettina in this way. Anyone who visited the two of them in Munich in recent years will be able to confirm this. Regular visitors included, for example, my youngest brother, Rainer, and his wife Martina, who managed to visit Don and Bettina at home on call, arrange to go for a walk together or simply spend time with them so that Bettina could see, hear and experience something different for a change...

Jesus Christ says:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Bettina had chosen these well-known words from the New Testament for Don's farewell today.

Was Don perhaps also a light in the world?

After everything we have heard about Don again today, I dare say: "Don was a gifted singer on the opera stages of the world, Don was a celebrity and touched people with his art. Don was a patient and determined teacher who tried to push his students to new limits – 'the only way is up'... Don's statement referred to the next higher note on the musical scale and an attitude towards life.

But can we, the grieving bereaved who knew Don and will miss him, really judge

- whether Don was at peace with himself when he passed away?
- whether the thousands of decisions Don made in his life, voluntarily or under pressure, always brought him joy?
- whether these decisions may have led to unintended developments that he then

regretted?

- whether Don was a happy and contented person in his professional and private life?

And finally

- Was Don's life a successful, fulfilled, accomplished life?

Fortunately, and thank God, it is not up to us humans to decide whether a life was a successful, fulfilled and complete life.

Of course, we have an opinion on this question and a view on it – but we should never presume to evaluate and judge whether a life was valuable, even if we think we know that person very well.

We only ever see or hear the outward appearance of that person. We may experience a dazzling personality, as Don undoubtedly was in our collective perception, but we only see this Don from the outside.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

These words hold deep hope for us Christians. We firmly believe that it is not we who will have to draw conclusions about our lives at the end of our days / at the end of all days.

We believe that this task is performed by Christ. And because Christ experienced and suffered all the highs and lows of human existence in his life, we have hope that a good and just judge will ultimately decide...

Dear Bettina, dear family and dear friends.

When you entered the Künstlerhaus, you took a candle from the bowl next to the picture.

It reminds us of Jesus' words: "I am the light of the world." You lit a tea light there and set it down.

- It is a light in memory of Don. We will miss him and think of him often.
- But the light is also a sign that we do not want to resign ourselves to the darkness of our days, to the threats in the world, to the fear of what tomorrow will bring.
- It is a light that should shine on us all in the here and now and illuminate our path.

Our path through life, which we want to shape with as much love, goodness, beauty and positivity as possible, also in memory of Don.

We believe that no matter what happens to us, we can never fall deeper than into God's good hands. And with thoughts of the light of the candles, we bow before you once again, dear Don. We commend you and your soul into God's hands.

And so, at the end of our devotions, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples and that we still pray today:

I ask you to stand and include Don in your words:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord's blessing be upon you – a blessing for all that we have experienced today and will yet experience, a blessing for the coming time of mourning and comfort, and a blessing for each new day on our journey through life.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace. Amen