

CHRISTIAN BURIAL



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Concerning Christian Burial

Physical death will come to all of us, perhaps suddenly, perhaps following a long illness, perhaps at the end of the natural course of life; but it will come. As Christians, we need not be afraid of death, of talking about it or preparing for it. Throughout the Christian Year, we are reminded time and time again of the uncertainty of life and, at the same time the certainty of Christ's power over the final enemy, death. During Advent, we recall the story of the Bridegroom who "*Comes like a thief in the night*," having encouraged us to be ready with lamps lit. On Ash Wednesday, we are signed with ashes on our foreheads with the words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." As we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, we repeat the words from St. Paul, "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over Him... So also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord," Jesus tells His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am you might be also." To be a responsible, faithful Christian is to be ready, always prepared to live in Christ now and be ready for the life to come.

An important task in being prepared is the making of burial arrangements before death occurs. It is a measure of our own spiritual health and awareness of our Christian hope. It is also one of the most loving gifts we can provide for our surviving family members because of the many decisions that surround death and burial. The decision making categories include business, practical, and theological, all of which are best realized without the added burden of emotions that accompanies the death of a loved one. If arrangements are made in advance, the family is free to mourn in peace knowing our wishes are being acted upon.

This booklet has been published to assist you in making informed and prayerful decisions concerning your death and burial. Please feel free to meet with a priest for any further discussion in order to fill out the enclosed Burial Instruction Sheet. When it is completed, please turn it in to the church office to be kept on file.

Planning a Funeral

DEFINITIONS

Funeral – also called a “Requiem” is a burial service that is celebrated in the context of the Holy Eucharist with the body or ashes present.

Memorial Service – a burial service with or without the body or ashes present.

VIGIL AT THE MORTUARY

It is appropriate that the family and friends come together for prayers prior to the funeral. Book of Common Prayer Page 465. If you choose to have a viewing of the body at the mortuary the day before the funeral, it is appropriate to schedule a time for the Prayers for a Vigil at a time when family and friends can gather.

BURIAL FROM THE CHURCH

Baptized Christians are properly buried from the Church. Book of Common Prayer, page 490. The appropriate place for burial rites to be celebrated is the local parish church. The church is the place consecrated to the glory of God where the people of God gather to celebrate the sacramental life in communion with Christ, beginning with birth and Baptism and continuing with Confirmation, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, Marriage, and finally, Christian Burial. As we gather before the altar of God for the Burial Rites of the Church, the Paschal Candle burns during the liturgy as a reminder that through baptism we share in Christ's Resurrection.

In order to help you decide whether to use the church building or the chapel, please note that the seating capacity is as follows:

Church – 250

Chapel – 75

THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY

Under normal conditions, the body will be present in the church for the Funeral. The earthly body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and is therefore holy in the sight of God. The body is to be prepared for burial with the utmost respect just as the crucified body of Jesus was by the holy women. The same body, carried as an infant to the Church to celebrate new life in the Sacrament of Baptism, is properly brought a final time to the Church in celebration of the transition to eternal life in the sacramental act of burial. At one time washed in the waters of baptism and granted a new life in Christ, the body is once again sprinkled with the holy water as a sign of entrance into eternal life. The presence of the body enables the Church to tangibly commit one of her members to the Communion of Saints. It also helps the family and friends who mourn bid farewell and affirm their grief and sense of loss.

When the casket arrives at the church, it will be met at the lychgate by the chapel. The casket will not be opened once it arrives and will remain closed from then on. It will be covered with a pall, a beautiful cloth used for all members of the Church, signifying equal honor and love of God for each person.

Although the burial of the body is a full and powerful sign, an acceptable alternative is cremation. Because of the high cost of burial, cremation offers a more affordable, practical, yet respectful option. The ashes should be brought to the church for the same reasons mentioned above. The ashes are placed on a stand before the Paschal Candle and covered with a suitable cloth.

Because of the sacredness of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Church would discourage the recent practice of dividing the ashes for burial based on human sentimentality. Just as the body itself is buried intact, so the ashes, if cremation is desired, should be afforded the same sacred care and respect.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST FOR THE DEPARTED

As a baptized person, you are entitled to the full burial rites of the Church. The Book of Common Prayer envisions the Holy Eucharist as the appropriate service for the burial of the dead. It is the sacred meal which anticipates the Heavenly Banquet. It is the medicine of immortality, a feast which transcends time and space and joins as one the Communion of Saints, the living and the dead, all who are in Christ. We meet our loved ones at the altar rail at every Eucharist. Under most circumstances, at both a funeral and memorial service, the Burial Office is within the context of the Holy Eucharist.

THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

The service should be held at a time when the congregation has the opportunity to be present (Book of Common Prayer, page 490). The participation of the local congregation provides a believing, loving, and supportive presence. It is the Body of Christ at worship providing comfort and hope for those who mourn through their prayers and praises.

IF A EULOGY IS DESIRED

The priest will offer a homily (sermon) on Christian Hope during the Burial Rite. It is up to the family and friends to offer the eulogy if it is desired. The eulogy may be done from the lectern and will be included at the end of the Service.

FLOWERS

Altar flowers will be arranged by the Flower Guild. Two (2) vases of flowers are placed on the flower shelves on either side of the altar and will remain in the church or chapel. Any memorial flower arrangements will be displayed outside the church/chapel door with the exception of one appropriate arrangement that may be placed by the stand if ashes are present or if a picture is displayed in the absence of ashes.

Flower Fee – \$200

(make check payable to St. Michael's)

MEMORIAL GIFT

Although some people like to send flowers as an expression of their condolences, an option that provides a lasting remembrance is the establishment of a memorial fund at St. Michael's in lieu of flowers. The provision can be announced through the obituary notice. The Church office will acknowledge all gifts and inform the family of the name of the donors. A memorial will be selected by the Rector and the family.

MUSIC

The liturgy for the dead finds all its meaning in the Resurrection of Christ. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we too who are in Christ, shall be raised. The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This joy, however, does not make human grief null and void. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus Himself wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus. So, while we rejoice that the one we love has passed through the gate of death into the nearer presence of God, we also weep with those who mourn. Honesty in our human condition and hope in the resurrection of the dead are the ingredients of FAITH. The Church, therefore, uses appropriate hymns of Faith at Christian burial.

You may make up to four (4) music selections for a funeral or memorial service. The selections may include all hymns, one or more solos, or a combination of both. The music director will help in the solo selections. If the parish soloist is not used, an additional fee will be charged because of the additional rehearsal time needed to prepare. Other prelude and postlude music selections will be made by the organist. Only the parish organist, or those approved by him may be used. If contemporary Christian music is desired with other than organ accompaniment, the music and musician must be approved by the priest.

Hymn Selections

From the 1940 Hymnal. Amazing Grace and other appropriate hymns may be selected from the 1982 Hymnal or from alternate available sources.

- 282 - Praise my soul the King of heaven
- 301 - Immortal, invisible, God only wise
- 304 - There's a wideness in God's mercy
- 345 - The King of love my shepherd is
- 346 - Fairest Lord Jesus
- 385 - Glorious things of thee are spoken
- 396 - The Church's one foundation

409 - Just as I am
479 - Love Divine
551 - A mighty fortress is our God
564 - How firm a foundation
585 - Jerusalem, my happy home
599 - Ye watchers and ye holy ones

MUSIC FEES

Organist	\$175
Violinist	\$125
Organist when soloist performs	\$200
Soloist	\$150

We recommend our own staff singers as soloist. If a soloist other than those provided by the parish are desired, the soloist must meet with the organist several days before the service for approval and/or rehearsal.

CLERGY HONORARIUM

No fee is charged for burial services. If you wish to make an offering, the donation should go to the priest's discretionary fund. Make checks payable to St. Michael's (Note: Discretionary Fund)

Scripture Lesson Selection

Old Testament Lessons

Choose one

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISIAH (ISAIAH 25:6-9)

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISIAH (ISAIAH 61:1-3)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS (3:22-26, 31-33)

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never comes to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM (WISDOM 3:1-5,9)

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself.

Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his elect, and he watches over his holy ones.

Psalms

Choose one

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd,*
I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,*
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul,*

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his
Names' sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death, I will fear no evil;*

for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:,*
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;,*
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALM 42

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks,*
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God:,*
while they daily say unto me Where is now thy God?

Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by
myself;:*

for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth

into the house of God;
In the voice of praise and thanksgiving,*
among such as keep holy-day.
Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my Soul?*

and why art thou so disquieted within me?
O put thy trust in God;*

for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my
countenance, and my God.

PSALM 46

God is our hope and strength,*
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved*
and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof rage and swell,*
and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.
There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city
of God,*
the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most Highest.
God shall help her, and that right early.
Be still then, and know that I am God;*

I will be exalted among the nations,
and I will be exalted in the earth.
The LORD of hosts is with us:*

the God of Jacob is our refuge.

New Testament Lessons

Choose one

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship.

When we cry, “Abba! Father:” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (1Corinthians 13: 1-13)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith,

so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect, and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9)

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it

on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION (REVELATION 21: 2-7)

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give the fountain of the water of life without payment. He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.

The Gospel Lessons

Choose one

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (JOHN 6:37-40)

All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." LORD.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (JOHN 10:11-16)

As I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock one shepherd.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (JOHN 11:21-27)

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been there, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life;

he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (JOHN 14:1-6)

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going" Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me."



ST. MICHAEL'S
by-the-Sea episcopal church

www.stmichaelsbythesea.org

Adapted from Saint Augustine's Prayer Book.