

**Funerals**  
at  
**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
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## **FACING DEATH AND GRIEF**

### Planning A Funeral at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

It may be that you are reading this page because someone you love has died. Or, perhaps, you are yourself facing death. In either case, the sorrow that comes with leaving this life has now come near you. It is not surprising that many people don't want to talk of such things: we love this world, and can hardly bear the thought of leaving it. By avoiding the topic, we hope somehow to keep death at bay—even though we know perfectly well that it comes to all of us.

The central truth Christians proclaim is that this life isn't all there is. There is more to human life than its bodily span. When the pain of separation is freshly visited upon us, it can be hard to derive much comfort from this Christian hope; we are blinded by our pain. That is when the gathered community stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the bereaved, together affirming the ongoing life of those who have died, gladly bearing the burden of its proclamation for people who are just too wounded to do it all by themselves. We are not intended to go through these times alone. The people of St. Stephen's join you in your grief, honoring the goodness of the gift of life on the earth -- for however long it endures -- and looking in hope to eternal life together, forever, with Christ our Lord.

Death, for a Christian, is the gateway to a larger life in Christ, and while we mourn and will be mourned, we place our grief in the context of the Paschal mystery: that Christ has died and so shall we, that Christ is risen and so are we.

The funeral service itself is a specific rite focused on a specific purpose, to proclaim the central Christian hope of the risen life. It is appropriately supplemented by social gatherings at which friends and family may support one another and honor the earthly life which has ended.

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### ***Notes About the Funeral Service***

The rite of Christian burial is described in **the Book of Common Prayer**, beginning on page 491. It begins with the Proclamation of the Word of God. Assuming the body (or ashes) is present, it concludes with the moving Commendation of the Body.

The service is traditional and ancient, encompassing 5,000 years of Judeo-Christian tradition. It is richly symbolic and yet speaks with clarity and simplicity.

## ***The Holy Eucharist***

In the Episcopal Church, the Holy Eucharist—also called the Mass, Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper—is frequently celebrated as part of funeral and memorial services. The Holy Eucharist is our central sacrament, celebrating Christ's death and resurrection. A celebration of the Holy Eucharist as part of a funeral or memorial service reminds us that we also share with Christ his death and resurrection. In the Eucharist, we also share in the heavenly banquet with the deceased and with those who have gone before. The Holy Eucharist is strongly encouraged for members of the congregation.

## ***Readings***

Readings at the service are from the Bible. If they are desired, poetry, devotional or philosophical readings may be read at the reception following the funeral. The funeral service concentrates solely upon the Christian teaching about the risen life: that we must face death, that Christ has conquered death, and that his victory can become ours.

## ***Words of Remembrance***

The qualities of a person's life are most appropriate privately and personally at gatherings before and after the funeral. Sharing those thoughts is an important ministry which friends and family have to one another. In the funeral, we concentrate upon the deceased's new life through Jesus Christ, not upon the life that has ended. Instead of a eulogy, the priest will take some time to consult with the family and friends and will give a short homily, offering words of hope and strength. If words of remembrance are still requested, they can be shared at the reception following the funeral.

## ***Photography***

The hope is that everyone will be fully present and participating in the service, rather than taking pictures or recording and perhaps distracting others by doing so. Photography, video and audio taping are not permitted during the liturgy.

## ***Memorabilia***

Pictures of the deceased, or other memorabilia, may be displayed in the Entry Way (Narthex) to the church, or at the reception. Please note that the church is a public building and we cannot assume responsibility for the security of such items.

## ***Pall***

A pall covers the casket or the container of ashes. This is provided by St. Stephen's. A flag or flowers may be placed on the casket once the casket leaves the church.

### ***Military or Other Honors***

Military or other honor services may be done at the end of the funeral service. In the event of military honors, the casket or urn will be taken outside of the Church, the pall removed, the American or other national flag placed on the casket, and then appropriate honors done.

### ***Pall Bearers***

It is appropriate when a casket is present to have six to eight persons escort the casket from the funeral hearse to its resting place in the sanctuary, and then from the hearse to the place of burial. There may also be honorary pallbearers for ashes. Pallbearers may be women or men.

### ***Music***

The music at funerals must be sacred in nature. Hymns are normally drawn from the 1982 Hymnal. Hymns not found in the 1982 Hymnal may on occasion be used if the music can be secured and if copyright permission is granted. The organist of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church plays at all funerals unless he gives permission for another organist to play. Vocal and instrumental solos must be approved by the Priest-in-Charge and the Organist. Music from tapes, compact discs, or karaoke-style music is not permitted.

### **A List of Suggested Hymns for Funerals**

*The following list suggests hymns that seem especially suitable, but other hymns may be suitable as well.*

#### **Metrical Versions of the Psalms**

*Used between the lessons and the Commendation at the end of the service*

Psalm 23 645/646 The King of love my shepherd is

664 My Shepherd will supply my need

Psalm 42 658 As longs the deer for cooling streams

Psalm 46 687/688 A mighty fortress is our God

Psalm 90 680 O God our help in ages past

#### **Anthem at the Commendation**

358 Christ the victorious

#### **Easter Hymns**

178 Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord 180 He is risen, he is risen

194 Jesus lives, thy terrors now 208 Alleluia! The strife is o'er

#### **All Saints Hymns**

287 For all the saints, who from their labors rest 526 Let saints on earth in concert sing

618 Ye watchers and ye holy ones 620 Jerusalem, my happy home

625 Ye holy angels bright

#### **Communion Hymns (A Selection)**

303 I come with joy to meet my Lord 335 I am the bread of life

339 Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness 357 Jesus, Son of Mary, fount of life alone

#### **Other Hymns**

390 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation  
397 Now thank we all our God 447 The Christ who died and rose again  
482 Lord of all hopefulness 487 Come my Way, my Truth, my Life  
488 Be thou my vision 490 I want to walk as a child of the light  
517 How lovely is thy dwelling place 522 Glorious things of thee are spoken  
623 O what their joy and their glory must be 636/637 How firm a foundation  
671 Amazing grace! 686 Come, thou fount of every blessing  
690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah 692 I heard the voice of Jesus say

### ***Payment***

No one will be excluded from the ministry of the church for financial reasons. The financial charges serve as guidelines. All fees should be paid at the time of the funeral. Checks should be made out to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

For parishioners, there is no fee for the use of the sanctuary, or for clergy. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and the priest's Discretionary Fund is always appreciated.

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### ***Information for non-members***

St. Stephen's engages in ministries to the community beyond our congregation and one of our ministries is to provide funeral services for those who desire them. We encourage you to speak to the Priest-in-Charge to get the support and help you need at a time of loss and grief. You will also find that the members of our congregation are willing to stand with you in your grief.

For those whose previous experience of funerals is based on movie images and secular traditions, our funeral practices may seem confusing at first. Funerals at St. Stephen's are not characteristically sentimental, and though we acknowledge our grief, it is always moderated by the strength of Christian hope. These pages provide a detailed explanation of our funeral practices. In all cases, we invite you to call the Reverend Jamie Parsley for additional advice and counsel.

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## FUNERAL INSTRUCTION FORM

### *Planning Guide*

This form is designed to assist in making funeral plans. Begin by reading the previous pages about funeral planning. When you have read them, we encourage you to complete the form below, discuss it with the Priest-in-Charge, and return it to the priest when complete. It will be kept in a secure file for the time when it is needed.

The rite of Christian burial is described in **the Book of Common Prayer**, beginning on page 491, consisting of the Proclamation of the Word of God, the Celebration of Holy Communion, and the Commendation of the Body.

This rite assumes the following points, which should be considered in your planning:

- The funeral is held in the church, not in the undertaker's place of business.
- The body is present. "Body" here includes cremated remains as well.
- The funeral should be held at an hour when the greatest number of members of the congregation, family and friends have the opportunity to gather.

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1. Have you made pre-need arrangements with a funeral home? Which one?

2. Do you plan cremation?

3. Do you wish the body/ashes to remain in the church overnight with opportunity for friends and family to keep a vigil?

4. Excessive floral display is discouraged. For the funeral service, there may be two vases of flowers in the sanctuary.

Do you wish flowers? \_\_\_\_

If so, have you made arrangements for flowers?

5. Flowers from friends and family cannot be displayed at the church.

Please designate a place where those flowers can be sent? Please instruct friends and family accordingly.

6. Have you chosen a charity to receive gifts in your name and memory? If so, what charity? We encourage you to remember St. Stephen's Memorial Fund at this time.
7. Do you have a day or time of day which you think preferable for the funeral?
8. The Priest-in-Charge of the congregation is normally the celebrant; however, it is appropriate to involve other clergy in addition to the Priest-in-Charge.
- Are there other clergy who should be involved? If so, please indicate their names and provide contact information.
9. Are there hymns, or other sacred music, which you would prefer?  
If not, you may allow the Priest and Organist to make suitable selections at the time.
10. Here are the readings for funerals. If you have a preference, select one reading from each of the three lists.

**From the Old Testament:**

- \_\_\_ Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever)
- \_\_\_ Isaiah 6:1-3 (To comfort those who mourn)
- \_\_\_ Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 (The Lord is good to those who wait for him)
- \_\_\_ Wisdom 3:1-5,9 (The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God)
- \_\_\_ Job 19:21-27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)

**After the First Lesson:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hymn or anthem \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 42:1-7 *My soul longs for God as a deer for the water-brooks*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 46 *God is our refuge and strength*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 90: 1-12 *Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 121 *My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 130 *Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm 139:1-11 *Lord, you have searched me out and known me*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm \_\_\_\_\_ said or \_\_\_\_\_ sung?

**From the New Testament**

- \_\_\_ Romans 8:14-19,34-35,37-39 (The glory that shall be revealed)
- \_\_\_ I Corinthians 15:20-26,35-38,42-44,53-58 (The imperishable body)
- \_\_\_ II Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal)
- \_\_\_ I John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)
- \_\_\_ Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)

\_\_\_ Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

**After the Second Lesson:**

\_\_\_ Hymn or Anthem \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Psalm 23 *The Lord is my shepherd*  
\_\_\_ Rite I: The 1928 Prayer Book version (page 476 top) or  
\_\_\_ King James version (page 476 bottom)  
\_\_\_ Psalm 27 *The Lord is my light and my salvation*  
\_\_\_ Psalm 106: 1-5 *Remember me, O Lord*  
\_\_\_ Psalm 116 *I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living*  
\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Psalm \_\_\_ said or \_\_\_\_\_ sung?

**The Gospel:**

\_\_\_ John 5:24-27 (He who believes has everlasting life)  
\_\_\_ John 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will come to me)  
\_\_\_ John 10:11-16 (I am the good shepherd)  
\_\_\_ John 11:21-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)  
\_\_\_ John 14:1-6 (In my Father's house are many rooms)

11. Are there members of the family or this congregation who should be asked to read scripture lessons at the funeral?

If so, who?

12. Do you have a preference for who should preach?

If so, who?

13. Do you have a favorite Eucharistic prayer?

\_\_\_ "A" page 360 of the BCP  
\_\_\_ "B" page 367 of the BCP  
\_\_\_ "C" page 369 of the BCP  
\_\_\_ "D" page 372 of the BCP

14. Have you selected pallbearers?

If so, who?

15. Will there be a graveside service or a service of committal of the ashes?

If so, where will this be?

If it is out of North Dakota or Minnesota, have arrangements been made for a priest, or do you wish St. Stephen's to take care of this?

16. Is there anything else which the Priest-in-Charge should know in planning a funeral service for you?

When you have completed this form, discuss it with the Priest-in-Charge. A form similar to the one that follows will then be filled out. When you and the Priest-in-Charge have signed the form, it will be kept in a confidential file in the church office against future need.

## **BURIAL INFORMATION**

Full name:

Contact person/ next of kin:

Phone:

Funeral Home:

Contact person:

Date of Birth:

Date of Death:

City of Last Residence:

Baptized  Confirmed  Communicant of St. Stephen's

Place of Service:

Date of Service:

Time of Service:

Cremation  Yes  No

Place of Burial:

Participants in service:

Celebrant:

Assisting clergy:

Deacon:

Acolytes:

Lector 1:

Lector 2:

Organist:

Soloist:

Altar Guild Person notified:

## **SERVICE INFORMATION**

Rite I  Rite II

Eucharist  Yes  No

### **MUSIC**

Prelude:

Postlude:

Opening:

Gospel Hymn:

Offertory:

Communion:

Closing:

Service Music:

### **LESSONS**

Old Testament:

Psalm:

New Testament:

Gospel:

Homily  No  Yes; Delivered by:

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

Reception; served by:

Food served by:

Location:

Family to provide for altar flowers

Florist:

Pallbearers:

Other special requests:

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signature

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**date**

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**signature of Priest-in-Charge**

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**date**

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**date filed**