

FROM THE BURIAL LITURGY IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant(s) with thy saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Thou only art immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto earth shall we return. For so thou didst ordain when thou createdst me saying, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." All we go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. (p.482)

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though this body be destroyed, yet shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For if we live, we live unto the Lord; and if we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors. (p.469)

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

AN OUTLINE OF PARISH CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES



ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
300 S. MAIN STREET
PENNINGTON, NJ 08534

609-737-0985
www.stmatthewspennington.org

CREMATION

Cremation is perfectly acceptable to the Episcopal Church. It is preferred, however, for reasons both pastoral and liturgical, that the cremation take place after the funeral. The reasons for this preference are beyond the scope of this pamphlet, although the clergy would be pleased to discuss them with any interested person.

THE USE OF OUR MEMORIAL GARDEN

St. Matthew's is blessed with a garden in which ashes may be interred.

First preference for the Memorial Garden is reserved for individuals and their families who are, or have been, parishioners of St. Matthew's.

In the garden, ashes will be interred directly into the ground. The deceased's name is inscribed on a stone which marks where the ashes are interred.

FLOWERS

It is not required to place flowers on the altar for a funeral. If they are desired, they **can be ordered from The Pennington Quality Market** (609-737-0058). All other flowers are discouraged in the church.

It is very appropriate, as well as helpful, for a family to announce that in lieu of flowers it would like contributions made to the Memorial Fund of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, in memory of the person who has died. The family is informed of any such contributions.

USE OF THE PALL

When a casket is received by the clergy at the door of the church, it is covered with a vestment called a pall. The pall also serves to remove the distinction between the quality of caskets (mahogany, pine, or felt-covered plywood), thus emphasizing that in death and before God we are all equal.

For those who have served in the military, or who have held government office, an American flag may be used in place of the pall.

The use of flowers on the casket should be reserved for the funeral home and the cemetery.

FEES

The church building is maintained, and the clergy are supported through the stewardship pledges of parishioners. There is, therefore, no charge either for the use of the church or for the services of the clergy for pledging members of the parish. **Any honorarium which the clergy receive is placed in a discretionary fund and used in their pastoral ministry.** (make checks payable to Rector's Discretionary Fund) It is appropriate, whenever possible, that the family of a deceased member who has not been a parishioner, make a contribution to the maintenance of the church. For all funerals the organist receives a fee of \$200.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
300 S. Main Street
Pennington, NJ 08534

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

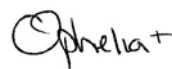
The death of a family member or friend is often not only difficult emotionally and spiritually, but the arrangements for a funeral and burial are often confusing. This pamphlet is prepared to assist parishioners of St. Matthew's in the making of the funeral arrangements for a member of their family or friends.

While all funerals at St. Matthew's are conducted according to the Book of Common Prayer, what follows is an outline of our parish customs and the liturgical options offered in the Prayer Book.

This pamphlet is not intended to take the place of a conference between the family and a member of the clergy, but rather to facilitate such a conference. In writing this I am well aware that it addresses only the practical matters involved. The more important emotional and spiritual questions will be addressed in private conversation, not only at the time of death, but as appropriate in the months and years that follow.

It is my hope that what follows will be helpful to our lives together in Christ and to those who mourn the death of a loved one.

Yours in Christ,



The Reverend Ophelia Laughlin, *Priest-in-charge*

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

An outline of parish customs and practices

AT THE TIME OF DEATH

The Prayer Book directs that “the death of a member of the Church should be reported as soon as possible to, and arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with, the Minister of the Congregation” (p.468). This is important for many reasons, not the least of which is that it provides the clergy with the opportunity to offer their pastoral ministry as well as that of the parish. Under no circumstances should the day and time for a funeral be set without first consulting with the clergy. Failure to do so in the past has resulted in confusion and unfortunate circumstances. It should be pointed out also that the Prayer Book states that “Baptized Christians are properly buried from the Church” (p. 468). Although burial from the Church is the norm, exceptions are made for pastoral reasons.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

While there are, indeed, many ways of structuring the events which lead up to the funeral, the following order has proven the most satisfactory here at St. Matthew’s.

1. The time of the service is set in consultation with the clergy.
2. After the body has been prepared for burial by the undertaker, it is brought to our Chapel where it rests in state until the time of the funeral.
3. If the family would like to have visiting hours, the Chapel would be open at the designated times and arrangements made for the family to greet friends either in the parish library or in Belmont Hall.
4. If the family would like to have a private service, the night before the funeral (p.465), they are encouraged to make their desire known to the clergy. The casket remains closed at all times in the Church with the exception that after this service it may be opened privately for the family.

a good idea, therefore, to select those hymns which are most widely known. The following hymns are suggested:

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|-------|--|
| 174 | At the lamb’s high feast, we sing |
| 194 | Jesus lives! |
| 208 | The strife is o’er |
| 287 | For all the saints |
| 339 | Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness |
| 376 | Joyful, joyful we adore thee |
| 397 | Now thank we all our God |
| 460 | Alleluia, sing to Jesus |
| 483 | The head that once was crowned with thorns |
| 494 | Crown him with many crowns |
| 608 | Eternal Father, strong to save |
| 618 | Ye watchers and ye holy ones |
| 625 | Ye holy angels bright |
| 637 | How firm a foundation |
| 645-6 | The king of love my shepherd is |
| 671 | Amazing Grace |
| 680 | O God our help in ages past |
| 688 | A mighty fortress is our God |

Mark 15:33-39, 16:1-8
(The death of Jesus)

Matthew 11:25-30
(Jesus thanks his Father)

D. One of the following psalms is suggested to be read
between the lessons:

Psalms 42:1-7; Psalm 46; Psalm 90:1-12; Psalm 121; Psalm 130; Psalm
139:1-11; Psalm 23; Psalm 27; Psalm 106:1-5; Psalm 116

When the Eucharist is celebrated, one lesson must be from the Gospel and be read by a member of the clergy. Other lessons may be read by a family member or friend. From the list of scripture passages above, the following are proper liturgical combinations of lessons: at a Eucharist one from A, B and C or one from A or B and C. At a burial office without a Eucharist: one from A, B, and C or one from any two categories may be selected. It is proper that a psalm be said between the lessons at either form of service.

The officiant of the funeral service would be pleased to call upon a member of the family or a friend to stand before the congregation and offer his or her reflections upon the life of the deceased should the family so desire.

MUSIC

Music is not required at a funeral, however, if the family would like music, it is under the direction of our organist and choir director, Mark Dolan. Organ pieces may be played before and after the service as well as at appropriate times during the service.

It is very fitting to sing a hymn or two during a funeral service, although hymns should be selected with care from the following list and in consultation with one of the clergy. The idea of singing someone's "favorite" hymn is discouraged except when that hymn, both in text and in music, captures the spirit of the liturgy for the dead. It is also helpful to bear in mind that those who attend a funeral service at St. Matthew's are not necessarily acquainted with the hymns from our Episcopal Hymnal. It is

5. After the funeral, it is fitting, although not required, for the family and friends to follow the casket to the door of the Church where the casket is placed in the hearse and taken either to the cemetery or the crematorium.
6. Should the family desire it, our parish hospitality committee is prepared to arrange for a simple reception in Belmont Hall following the service so as to provide an opportunity for the family to greet those who have attended the funeral.

ABOUT THE SERVICE

While certainly not required, it is most fitting that the Eucharist be celebrated as part of the burial rite. In it we celebrate, together with "the whole company of heaven," our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection and God's victory over sin and death in the person of our Lord. When the Eucharist is celebrated at a funeral, all who have been baptized with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who are able to receive the sacrament in their own Church, are invited to make their communion.

A note on page 507 of the Prayer Book expresses the spirit in which we approach a funeral:

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the Resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, 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 unchristian. 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. So, while we rejoice that one, we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

The following is the list of the appropriate scripture passages as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer:

A. FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11a

(Everything has its time)

Isaiah 25:6-9

(He will swallow up death)

Isaiah 40:21-31

(They shall mount up with wings like Eagles)

Isaiah 61:1-3

(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)

B. FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Romans 5:5-11

(Reconciled to God through Jesus Christ)

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39

(The glory that shall be revealed)

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

(The imperishable body)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

(The gift of love)

2 Corinthians 4:16, 5:9

(Things that are unseen are eternal)

Ephesians 3:14-19

(Prayer for the Readers)

1 John 3:1-2

(We shall be like him)

1 Peter 1: 3-9

(A living hope)

Revelation 7:9-17

(God will wipe away every tear)

Revelation 21:2-7

(Behold, I make all things new)

C. THE GOSPEL:

John 10:11-16

(I am the Good Shepherd)

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 11:21-27

(I am the resurrection and the life)

John 14:1-6

(In my father's house are many rooms)

Luke 7:11-16

(Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain)