

*A Customary and Planning
Guide*

*for Christian Burial
All Saints' Episcopal Church*

4201 W. Washington Ave

Las Vegas, NV 89107

702 878-2373



**The Rev. Eldwin M. (Ed) Lovelady, Rector
The Rev. Bede J. Parry, Music Director/Assisting Priest
Ms. Angelica Morse, Parish Secretary**

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The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* advises: "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. Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church. The service should be held at a time when the congregation has opportunity to be present." (BCP 490).

A Note About Christian Burial 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."

Why do we practice Christian Burial? Central in the Christian faith is the belief that the death of our physical bodies is not the end of our existence, but a new beginning in the sharing of the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian burial proclaims and shows forth this faith and allows us to commend the deceased to God's grace. Christian burial is also a ministry to the living, to share in and express grief, both individually and in community. It is an opportunity for the community to share in the grief over the loss of a member of the community; to share in the remembrance of the life lived among them; and to celebrate our faith in the resurrection.

Is Grief Unchristian? Grief is an important part of our humanity and is both inevitable and necessary when a loved one or member of our community dies. Grief is a natural process and is in no way unchristian. Our example is our Lord Jesus Christ at Lazarus' tomb, when he wept over the death of his friend. The love we have for one another in Christ causes grief when one we love dies. 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. (BCP 507)

When Should the Priest be notified of a Death? If at all possible, the rector should be notified before death occurs to allow an opportunity to minister to the dying person and their family. If this is not possible, the death of a member of the Christian community should be reported to the minister as soon as possible. This is both to arrange with the minister for the funeral and to allow for pastoral care for the family and friends of the deceased.

Who is properly buried from the Church? Members of All Saints' parish, having been nurtured in the church are properly buried from the church. The service should take place in the All Saints' church and be scheduled at a time that allows the congregation to be present. The church is most appropriate for a vigil and wake, and as a place where the congregation can extend their sympathy to the bereaved. Persons who are not members of All Saints' parish or immediate family of members may be buried from All Saints' with the Rector's permission.

The Burial Liturgy Is a public service of worship open to all. All Funerals/memorial services in All Saint's Church will be conducted according to the Burial Rites of The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, and officiated by a clergy or licensed lay person of the Episcopal Church. The rector is normally the Officiant/celebrant; other clergy may participate or officiate with the rector's permission.

Unless the deceased has made prior arrangements, the rector will determine the order of service regarding liturgy. The family may be asked to help choose Scripture readings from the readings listed in the Book of Common Prayer as appropriate for Burial, and may be asked to help choose hymns and music.

Caskets and Urns The body or cremains should be present in the church during the service, unless the Committal is done before the service. The coffin is to be closed before the service and remain closed thereafter. The coffin or urn is covered with a pall. This is

specified in the Book of Common Prayer and is the tradition in the Anglican Church. If the family desires, the Internment in a cemetery or columbarium may be done before the Burial service.

Should we Sing Hymns during the Service? Yes. Hymns, anthems and instrumental music are very appropriate. Music is an important part of Christian Worship and keeps its importance during a burial service. Music for the service is chosen by the rector or music director in consultation with the family during the service planning. Only Music and texts authorized by the Church may be used. The Music Director is normally the musician for funerals.

What costs are involved in having a Service in the Church? For active and contributing members of All Saints' Parish, there is no charge for a funeral or memorial service in the church. There is usually a fee of **\$100** paid to the organist and a **\$100** donation to the officiating clergy's Discretionary Fund,

If a reception is desired, arrangements are made through St. Margaret's Guild, who will determine the cost. (Contact the parish office for the name and number of the chair of St. Margaret's Guild).

For non-members, inactive, and non-contributing members, there are additional fees for a funeral in All Saints' Church. Talk to the parish office for more information.

What about Memorial Gifts? Memorial gifts can be made for whatever purpose the deceased desired or at the desire of the family. The family should determine to whom gifts should be given and that information will be printed in the service bulletin.

Should the Service include Holy Communion? Holy Communion is the principal act of Christian Worship and in the life of the parish. As such it is very appropriate to include the Communion in the burial service for members of the Christian community. The planning of the service is done by the rector in consultation with the family, at that time the determination about including Communion is made.

What about Church Decorations? The decorations in the church

will be comparable to those used for a Sunday service. If flowers are desired, they will be limited to the vases placed in a normal place in the church sanctuary. Other flowers may be placed in the columbarium or in the parish hall if there is to be a reception.

How may family members and friends who are not part of the church staff participate in the service? It is most appropriate that laypersons read the lessons from the Old Testament and Epistle. The homily is normally given by the Celebrant, or with prior arrangements with the rector, may be given by someone else. Family and friends may also present the bread and wine at the offertory. Eulogies, testimonies, or reflections are not appropriate in the context of the Burial Office. The Homily allows for comments about the deceased and provides, a focus on the Christian Hope of Resurrection to Eternal Life with God and with loved ones who have died before. If the family desires to have an opportunity for other testimonies or reflections, arrangements should be made for a wake or reception allowing further comments about the deceased.

Internment The body or cremains should be interred in the cemetery or columbarium as soon as practical after the burial service. The Officiant at the burial service should accompany the family for the internment to conduct the service of Committal.

Can we have Masonic, fraternal or military rites? Yes, but not as part of the burial service. If such rites are desired, they must be done before the service in the Church, or before the committal at the place of burial.

Reception after the Burial Service: If the family desires to have a reception after the service, contact the St. Margaret's Guild, through the parish office.

May a Christian be Cremated or be an Organ Donor? Yes. There is no theological reason why either choice is not acceptable. We do not believe that it is necessary to preserve our physical bodies

in order to guarantee resurrection. Organ donation is a very important way to give life and health to others. If desired the service of Committal may be used prior to cremation

What kind of Coffin is recommended? A simple, inexpensive coffin is most appropriate so as to keep the cost at a minimum. Extravagant funeral expenses are simply not good stewardship. The purpose of the pall used to cover the coffin is to demonstrate that in death we are all equal and an expensive coffin serves no practical purpose.

Final goodbyes. The last goodbye to a loved one is difficult at best. Consider gathering the family in the funeral home, before any public visitation, in the company of your priest, to offer prayers and have a time of goodbyes; after which the casket is closed, not to be opened again.

What about Pre-planning for your Own Funeral? This is a very good idea and is very helpful to the family. Pre-planning should include such things as determination about burial or cremation, organ donation, and to whom memorial gifts should go. Information about financial and personal affairs is also an important part of pre-planning.

What about Help dealing with Grief? The rector is available to help with dealing with grief. It is important that survivors be allowed to grieve and have the support of the community.

What about other questions? You should contact the rector about any questions about funeral planning or pre-planning.

Some important things to consider

Do you have a will? Every adult should have a will, regardless of marital status or dependents. This is the only way you can assure your wishes for care of minor children and disposal of assets is carried out. Without a will, the state may make these critical decisions for you. Consult your lawyer about what kind of will you need to have.

Are you an Organ and Tissue Donor? This is a gift of sharing your life with others after your death. Make sure your physician and your family knows of your wishes. You may also donate your body for anatomical study. Consult your physician and your priest about organ and tissue donation.

Do you have a Durable Power of Attorney for Medical Decisions? If not, make one. This appoints someone you trust to act on your behalf and see that your desires about the use of artificial life sustaining methods and administration of nutrition and fluids if you're unable to make your desires known due to illness or injury. Consult your lawyer and physician about these decisions. Your physician also should have a copy of your medical power of attorney.

What about cremation? Cremation simply accelerates the natural process of decomposition. It can significantly reduce funeral and burial costs, and there is nothing in Christian theology or doctrine that prevents cremation. Niches are available in All Saints' columbarium for members of the parish and their immediate family. Talk to the Rector about a columbarium niche.

Talk to your loved ones! When considering all these issues, talk with your family, including your children so that everyone knows and understands your wishes. This also provides an opportunity to discuss anything that might cause concern among your survivors. It is much easier on your family if you have already made some of these necessary decisions before your death.

Talk to your physician, lawyer, funeral director, and your priest. There is nothing morbid about talking about your own death. As Christians we believe that death is not the end, but a new beginning of life with God for eternity. Funeral directors encourage pre-planning as does the Church. You will probably find that serious consideration and decisions about these issues will be good for your mental and spiritual health.

All Saints' Episcopal Church Burial Service Information

Burial Service Planning

This information is for pre-planning one's own service or for planning after death has occurred by the family or others. If you wish this as pre-planning, we will keep a copy in our parish records if you wish.

Personal Information:

Full Name (First, Middle, Maiden, Last):

Address:

Date of Birth: _____

Service to include Holy Communion: YES / NO.

Selection of Readings:

The following BIBLE READINGS and Psalms are appropriate for the burial office. Normally four lessons are used; one from the Old Testament, a Psalm, one from the New Testament, and one from the Gospel.

From the Old Testament: Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever); 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)

From the Psalms: 23, 27, 42:1-7, 46, 90:1-12, 106:1-5, 116, 121, 130, 139:1-11.

From the New Testament: 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); 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal); 1 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).

From 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)

List your selections here:

Old Testament: _____

Psalm: _____

New Testament: _____

Gospel: _____

Do you have persons who wish to read a lesson or lead the psalm?

Music and Hymns: It is appropriate that congregational hymns be sung during the service. Hymns are selected from the Hymnal 1982, if other hymns or songs are desired, discuss this with the rector. Easter Hymns (Hymnal 1982 # 174-213) are the most appropriate as the burial office is an Easter Liturgy. Other hymn suggestions are: (Hymnal 1982) # 300-347, 354-358, and 287, 376, 410, 556, 613-625, 637,

671, 680, 688. Four Hymns are normally used in the office with Holy Communion.

I would like the following hymns:

Other arrangements:

- Altar Flowers for Burial Service (arranged through the parish altar guild)
- Organist (the organist usually plays a prelude, postlude, any congregational hymns, and/or anthems)

Other Information:

Date and time of service: _____

Officiant/Celebrant/Preacher:

Date of Death: _____ Age at death: _____

Cause of Death:

Funeral Home name & phone number:

Person making funeral arrangements:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Will the body (cremains) be present at the service?

yes no

Will there be a Committal service? yes no; If so,
date/time/location:

Do you wish Veterans, Masonic or other Ceremonies?

yes no