

Concerning the Service:
The Burial of the Dead

GUIDELINES FOR FUNERALS



The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew
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The Book of Common Prayer states that Baptized Christians “are properly buried from the church.” A church funeral acknowledges and celebrates the life and faith of the departed and looks forward with confidence to that person’s welcoming into the presence of Jesus Christ.

In the Episcopal Church, the service for the Burial of the Dead offers both comfort and joy, empathy and hope. Scripture readings, hymns, and prayers with Holy Eucharist, both acknowledge the mourning of those who are left behind, as well as celebrate the great gift of new life even in the face of death, won first by our Savior Jesus Christ, and still experienced by the faithful today. The service is solemn but not mournful, even as it moves from the church to the final resting place of the deceased, where we commend the spirit to God.

We at the Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew are honored and blessed to be a part of this important, though difficult, time for you and your family.

Please take some time to carefully review the information in this brochure, and be sure to take it with you when you meet with the clergy, especially if you have any questions.

Frequently Asked Questions about a Church Funeral

How does the service get scheduled?

Immediately following the death, if a member of the clergy was not present, the church office and your selected funeral director should be called. Usually, services are scheduled by the clergy and the funeral director in consultation with the family.

What decisions do we have to make about the service?

There are several suggestions for scripture readings, which may be chosen with guidance of the clergy. You are invited to select readers from among family and friends. You may request special hymns or music, and the participation of other clergy.

May there be speakers from our family and friends?

It is customary that the priest gives a brief homily, which most find comforting and enlightening. On some occasions, one or two persons may be asked to offer brief words of Remembrance.

May the casket remain open for the funeral?

In the Episcopal Church, the casket is closed before, during and after the service, and is covered with a beautiful damask cloth called a Pall.

How does cremation affect the service?

The service is exactly the same, except that rather than the casket being present, a container with the ashes, covered with a pall is borne out of the church at the conclusion of the service.

Must there be communion?

The Holy Eucharist at a funeral is the norm for a communicant of the Church. However, there are some instances when, in consultation with parish clergy, it may be omitted. It should be noted however, that all present at a funeral in Saints Andrew and Matthew are invited to receive communion.

Are grave side funerals or memorial services acceptable?

The normative ritual for the burial of the dead is the church service with the remains present, held within the week of death, and followed immediately by burial or interment. However, there are occasions when grave side funerals or later memorial services are considered.

Can burial be delayed?

When interment is to take place at a distant location or burial arrangements are not complete, burial may be delayed. After the service the remains are in the custody of the Funeral Director.

May burial of ashes take place in the Garden of Praise?

The Garden of Praise is available free of charge to members of SsAM for the burial of ashes. Special biodegradable containers must be used. Although the graves are not marked, the name of each person whose remains are buried in the Garden is placed on a bronze tablet which is prominently displayed in the garden. While the Garden is free of charge to members, a donation for Garden maintenance is requested. The Rector may, for pastoral considerations, authorize other burials in the Garden.

Is there a policy about flowers?

Excessive floral displays are not encouraged. Normally, two vases of flowers are used in the sanctuary. You may request the Parish Altar Guild to arrange for the flowers. If a commercial florist is to arrange flowers, they must use SsAM's vases. We recommend asking for gifts in lieu of flowers, for medical research, to the dead person's favorite charities, or to the Saints Andrew and Matthew Memorial Fund.

May we have a reception at the church following the service?

It is possible to hold receptions in the Auditorium or Crypt. Outside catering should be arranged by the family. The fee for the use of the space is \$150.

Are there any fees for the funeral?

The church does require a fee for communicant members. There is a cost for flowers if arranged for by the parish. You will be advised of their cost. A gift to Saints Andrew and Matthew would always be welcomed. Many give gifts in the range of \$200.00 to \$500.00. An honorarium to the officiating clergy is appropriate. Cost for music depends upon the nature of the service, number of singers, etc., and should be discussed with the clergy and Director of Music at the time of planning the service.

THE SERVICE

The Episcopal funeral service begins with the entrance of clergy and the casket or ashes (if present). The Officiant begins the liturgy with spoken “anthems” (see page 469 or 491 of the Prayer Book [BCP]) after which a hymn is typically sung. After the hymn, a prayer (“collect”) is offered by the clergy followed by the readings

Before the reading of the Gospel, brief Words of Remembrance may be offered. This is completely optional. If the family desires Words of Remembrance, they should designate one or two persons to deliver them.

Family or friends are encouraged to read lessons and psalms (the exception is the Gospel reading at a Eucharist service, which is read by a member of the clergy). Following are the Bible readings that the Episcopal Church recommends. Others may be substituted, particularly a passage held dear by the deceased.

Suggestions 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 (Apocrypha) (*The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God*)

Job 19:21-27a (*I know that my Redeemer lives*)

A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow the reading.

The congregation usually joins in saying the psalm, either responsively (back and forth), or in unison. When the choir is present, it may be requested for the choir to sing the psalm.

Suggested Psalms: (page numbers refer to the Book of Common Prayer)

23 (page 612), **27** (p. 617), **42:1-7** (p. 643), **46** (p. 649), **90:1-12** (p. 717),
106:1-5 (p. 741), **116** (p. 759), **121** (p. 779), **130** (p. 784), **139:1-11** (p. 794).

From the New Testament

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 (*Nothing can separate us from God*)

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 Gospels (A Gospel reading is required at all services with Eucharist)

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*)

After the readings, the service continues with a homily (short sermon); prayers for the departed and the bereaved; the Eucharist, if desired (strongly recommended if the family is Christian; all denominations are welcome to receive Communion); the Commendation of the person's body or ashes, if present; a blessing and the dismissal.

The COMMITTAL of the casket or ashes to its final resting place may follow, usually immediately after the service.

MUSIC FOR THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The Music Director serves as music coordinator and consultant under the direction of the Rector for all funerals at SsAM. He will help you to understand the musical options available and to customize the liturgy to suit your wishes.

The SsAM ADULT CHOIR, which is made up of professional and volunteer singers may be available to sing at most funerals, however the family must cover the cost of the paid members of the choir. The cost may be anywhere from \$160 to \$320 depending upon how many professionals are needed and how many singers are available. The choir may lead the singing of the hymns and service music as well as provide psalms, anthems and motets. They also may sing the COMMENDATION. The Music Director will provide you with a list of suitable anthems that are currently in the choir's repertoire.

A VOCAL or INSTRUMENTAL soloist may also be engaged. Please contact the Music director if you would like to learn more about these options and their cost.

HYMNS are appropriate at all funerals. They offer an opportunity to express our emotions while recalling the faith of the church: that death is not victorious over those who belong to God. If you are uncertain of what hymns would be best (with both a meaningful text and a sufficiently familiar tune) please ask the clergy or the Director of Music for suggestions.

At a typical funeral liturgy, hymns may be sung in the following places:

- At the entrance
- Between the lessons
- At the "offertory" (*preparing the altar for Communion; no money offering is taken*)
- During/after Communion, before the Commendation
- After the Dismissal
- A hymn may be sung as the family and friends process to the Garden of Praise

The following is a list of some suitable hymns. Others may be appropriate as well.

- “A mighty fortress is our God” - Hymn # 688
- “Alleluia, the Strife is O’er, the Battle Done” - Hymn # 208
- “Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain” - Hymn # 199
- “O God our help in ages past” - Hymn # 680
- “Amazing Grace” - Hymn 181 (LEVAS II)
- “How Great Thou Art” - Hymn # 60 (LEVAS II)
- “It Is Well With My Soul” - Hymn # 188 (LEVAS II)
- “Shall We Gather at the River” - Hymn # 141 (LEVAS II)

The Organist will be prepared to play appropriate music before and after the liturgy (prelude and postlude), and during Communion as needed.

THE SERVICE LEAFLET

Service leaflets will be created by the church staff and produced in house or sent to the printer depending upon the length and complexity of the liturgy (is a color photo being requested?). The Rector and Music Director work together to create the liturgy and the Executive Assistant produces the copies of the leaflets. If you would like a picture of the deceased on the cover, the family must provide a photograph.

LITURGICAL DECISIONS TO BE MADE BY THE FAMILY

- A) Decide if Words of Remembrance should be given?
- B) Choose 2-3 Lessons and a Psalm
- C) Choose friends and family members who will give the Remembrances and read the Lessons
- D) Choose several Hymns in consultation with the Clergy and the Music Director