

Funeral Guidelines

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church

Laytonsville, MD

The clergy and people of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church extend their prayers and condolences to you upon the death of your loved one. We hope that these guidelines help you to plan a funeral service within the liturgy of the Episcopal Church that comforts you and your family at this time. To assist you, the priest has developed the following step by step Funeral Planning Guide, which includes suggested readings and hymns.

General Overview:

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church will provide a funeral for anyone. The family or the deceased do not have to be a member of St. Bartholomew's, an Episcopalian or a baptized Christian. Everyone deserves to have a dignified burial service. We will use one of the Burial services provided in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and choose prayers and hymns that your family agrees to hear, sing and say. A funeral is held in the sanctuary, with or without Holy Communion. St. Bartholomew's has a seating capacity of 125. The priest will coordinate the date and time of the funeral with the director of the funeral home that the family has contracted. Funeral services in Funeral Homes are discouraged, but will be permitted under special pastoral circumstances. The family makes arrangements for a burial plot through the funeral home. A reception in the undercroft following the funeral service may be arranged, but the family or friends must provide the refreshments or contract with a caterer. Fees are due to the Organist and Custodian, and offerings to the Church and priest are appreciated.

From the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer:

"When a person is near death, the Minister of the Congregation should be notified, in order that the ministrations of the Church may be provided." (p. 462)

"It is appropriate that the family and friends come together for prayers prior to the funeral." (p. 465)

"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; 490).

"Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church. The service should be held at a time when the congregation has opportunity to be present." (p. 468; 490).

FIRST – Contact the priest near or immediately after the death.

It is helpful and important to contact the parish priest when a loved one is near death or as soon as possible after the death, so she may pastorally assist the family in responding to the death of the loved one, in making decisions, and to prepare for the funeral service. The rector of St. Bartholomew's is expected to officiate at all worship services in the church, unless permission and invitation has been extended to another clergy person.

SECOND – Make arrangements with a Funeral Home.

A commitment of the time and place of the service should not be given to the Funeral Home without the express agreement of the Rector of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church.

The following decisions are made by the family or friends of the deceased:

- selection of a casket or urn,
- arrangements for interment or cremation,
- the Funeral Director will help prepare an obituary and place it in requested newspapers.
- the Director will take care of parking arrangements with appropriate police agencies, if necessary.
- Funeral Homes also offer a variety of other services and their personnel will offer helpful suggestions, such as driving the immediate family to the church service and the graveside.

THIRD - Plan the funeral service with the priest:

The Liturgy –

The emphasis of the funeral service is a celebration of the life of the deceased and the hope of a resurrected life with Christ. The order of service for funerals is according to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, which has two

funeral liturgies. Rite I service uses traditional Elizabethan English, while Rite II service uses contemporary English language. The Administrative Assistant will prepare a bulletin for the service so that the congregation may easily follow the order of service.

Eulogies for the deceased are not permitted in the context of worship. The priest will preach the good news of God's love and our salvation, making reference to the life of the deceased. However, one or two family members or friends may each speak for 5 minutes at the beginning of the funeral service, following the opening hymn. The reception is a fitting time for friends and family to share their stories of the deceased.

Choose Scripture Lessons and Readers- Lessons from Holy Scripture are read at funeral services, and a list of suggested passages will be provided from which you may choose two or three. These readings are read by a friend or family member, or a member of St. Bartholomew's. The Gospel lesson is read by either the priest.

Choose 3-4 Hymns –

Music at funerals must be sacred in nature. Hymns are normally drawn from the *1982 Hymnal, Lift Every Voice and Sing* or *Wonder, Love and Praise*. Hymns not found in these hymnals may on occasion be used if the music can be secured and copyright permission is granted. The **Organist** and Music Director at St. Bartholomew's will play the organ and/or the piano at all funerals unless the organist and rector give permission for another organist to play. Vocal and instrumental solos must be approved by the Director of Music. Music from tapes, compact discs, is discouraged.

Altar –

The liturgical color for funerals is white. White is the color used for many of the great feasts of the Church and symbolizes the joy of the Resurrection. The frontal on the altar, the hangings on the lectern, the pall on the casket, and the minister's vestments are all white. The paschal candle, which is lit at Easter, baptisms, and funerals, is placed by the body to symbolize the presence of Christ and the victory of light over darkness.

Order Altar Flowers –

Two arrangements of live flowers that fit the brass containers and the space at the Altar are needed for the celebration of the life of the deceased. Family or friends of the deceased may order them from the Only Olney Flower Shop 301-774-0190. Additional flowers in the service are not necessary and there is no space for them. Flowers are not placed on the casket in the church service. Additional flowers may be used for a reception or at the graveside.

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 celebration of Holy Eucharist adds an additional 20 minutes to the length of the service. All baptized Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation are invited to share in the Lord's Supper. **Ushers** will assist the congregation, pew by pew, in proceeding to and from the altar rail.

The Body –

The body of the deceased is always treated with dignity and respect. When the casket is present for the funeral, it is closed prior to the funeral and covered with a white cloth called a pall. The pall reminds us of the white garment of baptism and that the promises of baptism are fulfilled at our death. The cross and clergy lead the casket into the church and family members may follow it, if they wish, or they may be seated prior to the beginning of the service. At the conclusion of the service, prayers of commendation are offered around the casket and the clergy leads the casket out of the church with the family following. A funeral service without a body is properly called a Memorial service. It is conducted in the same way as a funeral service with the exception that the prayers of commendation over the body are not used.

Cremation -

This is an acceptable and dignified way of treating the deceased's body. In a sense, cremation merely hastens the natural process of returning a body to ashes and dust. When the ashes, sometimes called "cremains," are present during the service, they are treated the same way as a body in a casket. They are placed on a table at the front of the church and covered with a small pall. They may be processed in and out of the church or they may be placed on a table before the service begins. The ashes may be interred before or after the funeral service or at a later date.

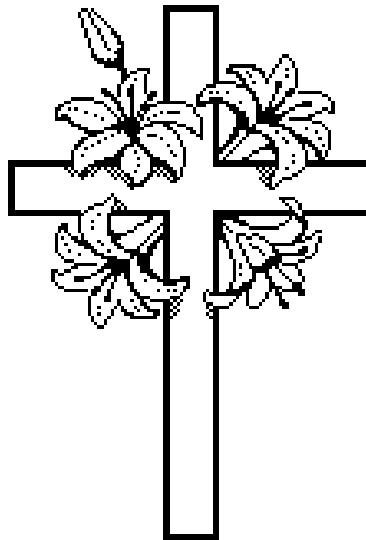
Reception in the Undercroft -

Following the funeral service, a reception may be arranged, but the family or friends must provide the refreshments or contract with a caterer. There is an additional fee for the use of the undercroft and the custodian's additional work following the reception. St. Bartholomew's has a good working relationship with a caterer in Olney, "Gourmet Your Way" 301-924-6656. They are familiar with the kitchen and their food is nicely presented and delicious.

Fee Schedule -

- * Since the time to prepare and play at a funeral service is in addition to the time contracted with the Organist, a **\$250** fee is paid directly to the Organist by the family or through the Funeral Home.
- * If a custodian is needed to clean the church before or after a large service, the fee is **\$ 50**, paid directly to the custodian.
- * The priest is usually not paid, but an honorarium for the additional time needed to prepare for the service is appreciated.
- * The Church is available without charge to contributing members of St. Bartholomew's Church. Non-contributing members or non-members of the church requesting a funeral service are expected to make a donation to St. Bartholomew's Church.

9-08



*I am the resurrection
and the life.*

John 11:25

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters
He revives my soul
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me
You spread a table before me in the presence of those
who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.
Surely your 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 23