



## St. John's Episcopal Church, Pensacola, Florida Funeral Customary

*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.... This, 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 Book of Common Prayer

The death of a loved one, whether suddenly and unexpectedly, after a long-term illness, or having lived a natural life span, is a traumatic time in the lives of those left behind. While still grieving, families and loved ones are called on to make decisions with little time to prepare. The following pages are designed to facilitate the planning of a funeral during a very difficult time, and establish guidelines and policies designed to make it easier for family and friends to prepare for the funeral and interment of their loved one.

There are provisions in the Book of Common Prayer for the appropriate readings, psalms, and hymns for a funeral service.

We at St. John's stand ready to assist you in making decisions for a beautiful and meaningful service. With that in mind, all arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with the officiating priest. In the Episcopal Church, a funeral is a celebration of resurrection.

### **The Burial Service**

Subsequent to a death, surviving family members and/or those responsible for making the funeral arrangements should contact St. John's Episcopal Church and consult the parish priest. This is especially important if no prior planning or contact has been made with a funeral home. Your priest will help guide you toward making appropriate and reasonable decisions regarding the funeral.

Selection of a time for the service should be based on the needs of the family, the expectation or lack thereof of out-of-town mourners, and the availability of the clergy and church. **This should be done in consultation with the priest prior to establishing a day and time with the funeral home.**

St. John's uses The Book of Common Prayer for all services. The Holy Eucharist is customarily celebrated at funerals; however, it is not required. The Prayer Book Service of The Burial of the Dead with Communion takes approximately 45 minutes to an hour, depending upon the number of people receiving communion. A homily (a short sermon) is preached at all funerals at St. John's.

The coffin or urn may be already in place in the Church or may be a part of the opening procession. A coffin is always closed in the church and is covered with a pall, a hanging placed over the casket, instead of flowers or a flag.

## **Participating Clergy**

The parish priest who has helped the family members prepare for the funeral is the appropriate priest to preside at the burial rite. If an Episcopal priest other than the one from Saint John's is desired to assist (or officiate), the permission and invitation of the Rector is required according to The Canon Law (Title III, Canon 21, Section 5a). The location of the funeral other than in the parish church changes nothing; non-parochial priests may only function with the permission and invitation of the Rector of the parish. Guest clergy (other than Episcopal priests and deacons) are invited from time to time to read the lessons and lead prayers.

## **Readings from Scripture**

During the service, one to three readings from the Bible are read. You can choose a reading from the Old Testament, a psalm (read by the congregation as a whole), a reading from the New Testament, and a reading from the Gospel. The parish priest will assist you in selecting the readings. A deacon, priest, or bishop reads the Gospel. Lectors available from the church can read from the Old Testament and the New Testament. If the family would like a family member or friend to read a lesson, please take into careful consideration the emotional state of that person in respect to the deceased. A friend or family member may also offer some reflections on the life of the deceased. The following readings are authorized for The Burial of the Dead; if there is a particular piece of scripture desired outside of these options, please consult with the officiating priest..

### **Old Testament:**

Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death in victory)

Isaiah 61:1-3 (To comfort all that mourn)

Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 (The Lord is good unto them that wait for him)

Wisdom 3:1-5, 9 (The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God)

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

### **Psalms:**

Psalms 23, Psalm 27, Psalm 42, Psalm 46, Psalm 90, Psalm 106, Psalm 116, Psalm 121, Psalm 130, Psalm 139.

### **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 (Raised in incorruption)

II Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things which are not seen are eternal)

I John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)

Revelation 7:9-17 (God shall wipe away all tears)

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

**Gospel:**

John 5:24-27 (He that believeth hath everlasting life)

John 6:37-40 (All that the Father giveth me shall 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 mansions)

**Music at the Funeral**

There is a wealth of beautiful and appropriate sacred music that is suitable for use in the context of the Burial of the Dead. Suitable times for music are at the opening procession; before the Gospel reading; as the altar is prepared during the offertory; and at the end of the service. The musician of St. John's will charge a base fee of \$200. If musicians (soloists or instrumentalists) other than St. John's musicians are used, arrangements need to be made with the St. John's clergy.

**Reserved Seating**

Pews will be reserved at the front of the church for the family and pall bearers, if present. Please let the priest know ahead of time how many pallbearers there will be and how many family members will be seated in the reserved area.

**Flowers at the Service**

St. John's is blessed with a competent Flower Guild, which will provide flowers at the altar during the funeral. Floral sprays and decorations sent by family and friends may be displayed in the church outside of the altar area. These should, more appropriately, be sent to a family member's home or to the funeral home. When the funeral is on a Friday or Saturday, the altar flowers will be used on Sunday morning.

**Visitations**

Visitation is appropriately done at the funeral home, where the casket may be open and family and friends can have a time of goodbyes. The casket is never open during the church service.

**During the Service Itself**

Members of the family will be seated prior to the beginning of the service (or can gather at the back of the church as the body is received at the church door). This will be explained and discussed by the officiating priest in the course of preparations for the funeral. The congregation will be invited to stand, sit, and kneel as full participants in the service following the rubrics of the Prayer Book, and will be invited to receive communion at the appropriate time and place.

**Service Bulletin**

It is our policy that service bulletin for the funeral be produced in-house, by the staff of St. John's.

**Guest Book**

The funeral home (or family) normally provides a guest book for attendees to sign.

## **Ushers**

Ushers at the funeral fulfill two important responsibilities: seating of guests, and ushering of the congregation to the Altar Rail to receive Holy Communion. We will provide ushers at all funerals that include Holy Communion.

## **Memorial Gifts**

Gifts to the church may be made by individuals or by the family of the deceased.

## **At the Graveside/Columbarium**

The committal service is brief. It is normally held after the church service. Family and friends may choose for this to be a private service or may open the service to all. Extra-liturgical ceremonies, such as military honors or those conducted by fraternal organizations, may be held subsequent to the church's Committal Service.

## **Receptions in the Parish Hall**

It is our gift to the family to offer a simple reception following the funeral. The church will provide the drinks. (Alcoholic beverages will not be served.) The family is responsible for any food to be served; a fee of \$150 is required if the family would like the church to provide food. The church will provide servers and supplies. This reception should be no longer than an hour.

## **Cremation**

Cremation is an acceptable practice within the Episcopal Church. St. John's has a columbarium for the interment of ashes. If the ashes are to be present at the service, please coordinate the delivery of ashes to the church with the officiating priest. It is custom that following the service, ashes are either interred in a committal service, or returned to the family for a later committal. If you wish for more information about the columbarium, please call the church office at 850-453-9076.

## **Fees**

Normally, there are no fees for burial from St. John's Church, aside from the musician's fee (\$200) when music is requested, and the fee if food is to be provided by the church at the reception (\$150). However, if a burial occurs on a Friday or Saturday, our sexton (custodian) will have to work overtime. Thus, we request that he be paid by the family for his services. Donations made to the parish are deeply appreciated. Unless otherwise specified, donations will be placed in the church's memorials and gifts fund.

*“All we go down to the dust;  
yet even at the grave we make our song  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”*



# Preparing the Funeral Service

## General Information

Full Name of deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Funeral Home handling the details: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person at Funeral Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of primary person handling funeral service details: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for primary person:

(cell phone number) \_\_\_\_\_ (email) \_\_\_\_\_

(mailing address) \_\_\_\_\_

## Service Information

Preferred date and time of service: \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer the service to be:

\_\_\_\_\_ Rite I (traditional language, see *Book of Common Prayer* 469)

\_\_\_\_\_ Rite II (contemporary language, see *Book of Common Prayer* 491)

Do you prefer to have Holy Eucharist at the service (yes or no)? \_\_\_\_\_

Priest to preach the homily: \_\_\_\_\_

Will someone offer a remembrance (yes or no): \_\_\_\_\_

*(If remembrances are desired, please limit to one person – two at most – and 3 minutes maximum)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Any preferred participants in the liturgy (crucifer/Altar server, chalice bearer, etc.)?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Will there be a casket or cremains present? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, which: \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferences for Readings:** *(see back of page for suggested readings):*

**Preferences for Readers:**

Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

*(read by priest)*

**Preferences for Music / Hymns:**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Hymn No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Hymn No. \_\_\_\_\_

Will there be any special music? \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Special music requests must be cleared by the Clergy and Parish Musician prior to the service)*

What is the special music? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is/are the musician(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferences for Flowers:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where will Interment / Committal Service occur?** \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Will there be a reception (yes or no)?** \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, location: \_\_\_\_\_

If at St. John's, would you like the church to provide the food (\$150 fee)? (Drinks, supplies and servers are provided.) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form to Kirsten Efird, Communications Director, [communications@stjohnspensacola.org](mailto:communications@stjohnspensacola.org).*

**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
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