

Funerals
at
The Church of the Good Shepherd

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd

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Give rest, O Christ, to your servants with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of humanity; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created me, saying, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servants with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Concerning the Service

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.

The coffin is to be closed before the service, and it remains closed thereafter.

It is appropriate that it be covered with a pall or other suitable covering.

If necessary, or if desired, all or part of the service of Committal may be said in the church. If preferred, the Committal service may take place before the service in the church. It may also be used prior to cremation.

A priest normally presides at the service. It is appropriate that the bishop, when present, preside at the Eucharist and pronounce the Commendation.

It is desirable that the Lesson from the Old Testament, and the Epistle, be read by lay persons.

When the services of a priest cannot be obtained, a deacon or lay reader may preside at the service.

At the burial of a child, the passages from Lamentations, 1 John, and John 6, together with Psalm 23, are recommended.

It is customary that the celebrant meet the body and go before it into the church or towards the grave.

The anthems at the beginning of the service are sung or said as the body is borne into the church, or during the entrance of the ministers, or by the celebrant standing in the accustomed place.

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 468 and 490

Notes:

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.

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 507

WHEN DEATH OCCURS

If the Rector or other clergy is not present at the time of death, please call the Rector or other clergy in charge as soon as possible. The number to reach the Rector in emergencies is **716-863-4009** (Cell Phone).

DEATH

Death is a process rather than a moment in time. All body functions, pulse, respiration, brain waves, cease to function permanently, but not all at the same time. Death happens when the body begins to disintegrate. Defining the precise moment is not important. At death, we give our lives back to God; our personality will enter a new environment that is different from the space/time environment we know on earth. In that new environment we will be welcomed and will flower into our most wonderful form. For many persons of faith, death is a coming home, the culmination of a journey from home to home. Dag Hammarskjöld once defined home as a “place where life resounds, a clear pure note in the silence.”

Death is a fact of life. Talking about death, knowing what to expect, can lessen our fear of it, help us to accept its reality and die in peace and dignity when it is time. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama once said, “As death appears to be inevitable, perhaps we should consider it now.”

Christians believe that death is a bridge between this life and the next, but no matter how strong our faith is, we still need help when we are told that we, or someone we love is going to die. When confronted by that reality, many of us discover that beliefs we once took for granted are now called into question.

- From *Chrysalis* by Val Hillsdon-Hutton, Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati, OH (1998).

DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

There are three basic options for the disposition of the body, all fully acceptable in the tradition of the Episcopal Church:

1. Donation of the body to science and/or parts of the body for transplant.
 2. Burial or entombment of the body.
 3. Cremation, with several options for the disposition of ashes.
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1. Donation – ask your physician for arrangements for donation of the body or donation of organs for transplant. This must be arranged prior to death. The **Upstate New York Transplant Society** at **716-853-6667** or www.unyts.org can provide further information.
 2. Burial – The body may be buried in a cemetery or entombed in a mausoleum. Funeral homes can provide all of the information needed, as well as the costs for burial or entombment.
 3. Cremation – Cremation reduces the body to ashes. The ashes may be disposed of in a number of ways, including burial, placement in a columbarium, or scattering.

The **Church of the Good Shepherd** has a **columbarium** for the placement of ashes. The cost is \$350 for a niche, plus the price of the brass plate. Please call the parish office for more information.

An urn for the ashes is not necessarily a requirement. For example, the columbarium at the Church of the Good Shepherd uses its own containers for the ashes, and cannot have urns.

What is **important** is that plans are made for the disposition of the body, or at least wishes be made known, ahead of death. An important part of our Christian commitment is to make appropriate preparations for our death.

WILLS

Another aspect of planning for death is the **will**, which directs what will happen to one's estate upon death. It is important to have a will, in that an individual has a clear say on who receives the estate, rather than the state making the determination. When making out a will, please remember the Church of the Good Shepherd.

A **living will** is a notarized, written document that states how we wish to be treated if we become incapacitated by illness, injury or old age. It is extremely important that one's health care providers and family members know of your living will and have copies available in the event of sudden illness.

A **health care proxy** is a written instrument by which one person appoints another as an authority or agent, and gives that agent the authority to act in the person's place for matters related to health care.

VISITATION

It is important that family members and friends have the opportunity to visit the immediate family after a death. This may be done by an **open house** after the death and before the funeral, by a **formal visitation time** in either a funeral home or Church, or by a **time before the funeral** when family members are present. The gift of visitation is that extended family members, parishioners, and friends can express their sympathy personally and have the time to grieve and reflect with others. It also helps to grasp better the reality of death.

At the Church of the Good Shepherd, the Chapel is often used as a respectful place for visitation prior to the funeral. Either the body or the container of ashes can be placed before the altar, and people can visit the immediate family. If a casket is present, the casket is **closed** – there may be a private viewing with only immediate family members present. If family members wish to have a viewing of the body, a funeral home would be a more appropriate place to do this. The Paschal Candle is lit as a sign of Resurrection in a visitation in the Chapel.

FUNERAL SERVICE

There are several options for burial. **One** is a burial service from the funeral home, which is strongly discouraged for members of the parish. **Two** is a burial service from either the Chapel or Church, the preferred option for Church members. **Three** is a simple burial service said at the graveside or at the columbarium.

The **Burial of the Dead** is the service from the Book of Common Prayer. It is said in either contemporary or traditional language. Lessons from Scripture are read, there is a homily, and prayers are said for the person who died and their family. **Eucharist** is strongly encouraged for members of the parish, with participation by all who come to the funeral. **Hymns** may be sung and **music** played at the funeral service. The casket or container/urn of ashes may be present for this service.

It is **important** that the family meet with the Rector or priest prior to the funeral so that the service can be planned, musicians contacted, bulletins printed (if desired) and persons who are part of the service invited to participate.

At Good Shepherd, we have the tradition that if family members or friends wish to speak briefly about the person, then they do so after the Gospel reading or the second reading and before the homily. Guest clergy may be invited by the Rector to help with the service. Please let the Rector know what the desires are when you meet to plan the service.

TIME OF SERVICE

It is best to schedule the funeral service when the greatest number of people can attend, and when it works best in the parish calendar and the clergy. Often funerals are held at night or on Saturdays, which is the best time for working people. The burial of the body (if a casket) can then happen later. Funerals are public services of the Church, to which everyone is invited.

MUSIC

Music that is appropriate for a funeral focuses on God.

A guideline would be music appropriate for a Sunday morning Church service – hymns, songs of praise, etc. The Rector and Director of Music will have final authority in the selection of music for the funeral.

FLOWERS

The parish uses vases that sit at either side of the Altar for flowers. Flowers for a funeral would be ones that fit these vases, or on the platforms on which the vases sit. It is not appropriate to have flowers or other decorations placed on the casket, as it is covered with a pall for the funeral service.

PALL

A pall covers the casket or the container of ashes. This is provided by the Church of the Good Shepherd. A flag or flowers may be placed on the casket when the casket leaves the church.

MILITARY or OTHER HONORS

Military or other honor services may be done at the end of the funeral service. In the event of military honors, the casket will be taken to the rear or outside of the Church, the pall removed, the American or other national flag placed on the casket, and then appropriate honors done.

PALL BEARERS

It is appropriate when a casket is present to have six to eight persons escort the casket from the funeral hearse or Chapel to its resting place in the Church, and then from the hearse to the place of burial. There may also be honorary pallbearers for ashes.

Pallbearers may be women or men.

RECEPTION

A reception for the family may be held in a parish hall of the Church, depending upon availability. There is an extra charge for custodial care for the reception. Food and beverage can be provided through a caterer.

The Church of the Good Shepherd does not provide food or beverage service. The parish has a list of caterers. **No alcohol** may be served unless the Rector has specifically approved its use.

PARISHIONERS

Persons who are considered active parishioners are those who attend regularly (unless prevented from doing so by being homebound) and contribute financially to the congregation. This also includes their immediate family. Others are invited to have their funerals at the Church of the Good Shepherd, with the understanding that there are expected expenses beyond those asked of active parishioners.

MONEY

No one will be excluded from the ministry of the church for financial reasons. The financial charges serve as guidelines. All fees should be paid at the time of the funeral. Checks should be made out to the Church of the Good Shepherd. The Parish Administrator will disburse the funds.

For parishioners, there is no fee for the use of the Church or Chapel, or for clergy. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and the Rector's Discretionary Fund (for Outreach use) would be appreciated.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Rector or Parish Administrator if there are questions.

FEES FOR 2007

	Parishioners	Others
Use of Church	Contribution	\$200.00
Use of Chapel	Contribution	\$100.00
Clergy	Contribution	\$150.00
Altar Guild	\$25.00	\$25.00
Organist	\$100.00	\$125.00
Sexton	\$75.00	\$75.00
Plus Reception	\$50.00	\$75.00
Bulletins*	\$35.00	\$35.00

**This is a minimum charge. Actual cost may be higher, depending on the bulletin design and printing.*

Columbarium**	\$350.00	\$350.00
(plus the cost of the brass nameplate)		

**This includes interment and a deed to the space.

RESOURCES

Chrysalis by Val Hillsdon-Hutton, a Forward Movement Publication, Cincinnati, OH, 800-573-1813. This booklet looks at the issues of death and has a place for noting records.

Final Acts by Nan Cobbey, a Forward Movement Publication, Cincinnati, OH, 800-573-1813. This booklet looks at the issues of death and burial, and offers resources.

Funeral and Memorial Societies of America offers a plastic, see-through, string-tied “freezer pouch” of planning materials to be filled out and kept in the freezer at home. The pouch is \$5 plus \$2 shipping, and is obtained from FAMSA at 800-765-0107.

Planning a Funeral Service: A Guide to Planning a Funeral in the Episcopal Church by Jedediah Holdorph, from Morehouse Publishing at \$5.95, 717-671-4500.

Faithful Living, Faithful Dying: Anglican Reflections on End of Life Care by the End of Life Taskforce of the Standing Commission on National Concerns, from Morehouse Publishing at \$14.95, 717-671-4500.

“The Burial of the Dead: A Commentary” by Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, a booklet about death and preparation for death, the paschal mystery, the theology and practice of the Episcopal Church. From Associated Parishes at \$3, Box 27141, Baltimore, MD 21230. 410-752-0877.

The Church of the Good Shepherd

Staff

The Rev. David Selzer
Rector

The Rev. Edith Patterson
Deacon

Michael Salmon
Director of Music

Janice Beam
Parish Administrator

Sextons

December 2006