



Funeral Practices and Guidelines

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Reno, Nevada

Concerning Grief and the Episcopal Liturgy for Burial (The Book of Common Prayer)

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all 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, not 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.

Concerning the Service

Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church, but for pastoral reasons, the funeral service may be held at the funeral home or at graveside. It should be held at a time when the congregation has opportunity to be present.

There are three types of services for the departed:

1) A *Funeral* is the liturgy for the Burial of the Dead with the body present, either in a coffin or as ashes in an urn. It is usually held within a few days of the person’s death. It can be held in the church, graveside, or the funeral home. A funeral liturgy can also be in the absence of a body or ashes, such as when the body is willed to science or there are no remains. This is to be distinguished from a memorial service (see #3). A Funeral is also often referred to as a “Celebration of Life” as the loved one is honored.

2) A *Committal* is a brief liturgy that usually follows the funeral directly at the place where the body or ashes are to be interred. It can also be a stand-alone event.

3) A *Memorial Service* is a liturgy without either the body or ashes. It can be held at a stated time from a few days up to a year after death such as an anniversary, or in a place other than where the funeral is being held.

About the Funeral Liturgy:

There are two liturgies for funerals: Burial I and Burial II. As in Rite I and Rite II Holy Eucharist Liturgies, the difference is primarily the language – Burial II being the contemporary, and Burial I being the “traditional,” marked by King James English (Old English). Both liturgies begin joyfully: “I am the resurrection and the life.” The collect states “grant him/her an entrance into the land of light and joy.” (In II, there are more to choose from.) The Old Testament lessons

speak of victory, comfort, righteousness. There are psalms from which to choose dealing with praise, trust, strength, refuge, help, redemption, mercy, light; the New Testament selections are about revelation of glory, eternity, wiping away all tears, and making all things new. After the readings, hymns may be sung. Psalm 23 is often done as a musical setting (at that point or elsewhere). The Gospel choices are about everlasting life, good shepherd, resurrection and life, and dwelling places. The prayers are somewhat different in I and II. In either rite, a provision for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is made, although not mandatory. For active Church members here at Trinity, we recommend the celebration of the Eucharist with the parish community attending.

Suggested Scripture Readings and Choices:

(The Revised Standard Version of Scripture is used in the liturgy with the exception of Psalms like Psalm 23 which may use the traditional King James Version.

Family or friends of the family may be chosen to present the Old Testament and the New Testament Readings and the Psalms. The Gospel is always read by the Clergy.)

From the 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 lives)*

After the Old Testament Lesson, a suitable canticle or Hymn, or one of the following Psalms may be sung or said.

Psalm Choices

Psalm 42; Psalm 46; Psalm 90; Psalm 121; Psalm 130; Psalm 139

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 *(Raised in incorruption)*

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

1 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)*

After the New Testament Lesson, a suitable canticle or hymn, or one of the following Psalms may be sung or said.

Psalm Choices

Psalm 23; Psalm 27; Psalm 106; Psalm 116

From the Gospels

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)*

Details about the Service

- Upon the passing of a loved one, it is important to be in touch with the Church and clergy as soon as possible to set a date, time, and to arrange an appointment for planning the Service.
- The rector is the chief cleric and if Dr. Stomski is unable to conduct the funeral, it is given to the associate, Rev. Rick Millsap. Canon law requires if any other clergy are to be involved, they must have the permission and direct invitation to do so from the rector.
- A meeting with the clergyperson will review all details pertinent to the service including rituals, best practices, church etiquette and customs, and necessary personnel.
- In the Episcopal Church, eulogies are discouraged because of how we understand the purpose of the funeral. The funeral is the place to lift the deceased up to God and to cast our cares at God's feet. In short, the funeral is all about where God is in the midst of death and mourning. Exceptions can be made for pastoral reasons, so this is not a hard and fast rule, but multiple speakers are discouraged. It *is* appropriate to make time and space available for friends to share their experiences of the deceased, since this is a healthy and healing activity. A luncheon or reception following the funeral is well suited for this. Though not customary, a Eulogy from one family member or friend may take place. (If there is a *pastoral need* for a eulogy as a part of the Service, it is to be less than five minutes in length and must be written and presented to the presiding cleric for approval of content no later than the day prior to the funeral service.)
- Well before the beginning of the funeral liturgy or at the time the body enters the church, the coffin is closed. The coffin remains closed thereafter. The closing of the coffin permits the mourners to acknowledge the parting caused by death and to commend the deceased to God.
- In the event of military honors, an American flag may be substituted for the funeral pall over the coffin. Military honors, service Fraternal or other organizational rites are not added to, or mingled with the services of the church. If such a service is desired, it should precede the church service. The vigil would be a good time for these rites if it is held at the funeral home or in a private home. The fraternal meeting place is another appropriate place. If such honors or rites are also to take place at the graveside or mausoleum, again, they are to precede the Committal Service.
- Trinity Episcopal Cathedral does have a columbarium chapel (All Soul's Chapel) for those who wish to inter cremains here on sacred ground. Please make arrangements with the Parish Administrator (cost is \$500-\$1000).
- When the services of a priest cannot be obtained, a deacon or lay reader may preside at the service. The Eucharist requires the presence of a priest to preside.
- If cremation is to take place, burial services may be held prior to this, or if held afterwards, the ashes should be present at the service.
- **FLOWERS:** It is suggested that no flowers be brought into the body of the church except those designated for the altar that the family may host and request special and

appropriate flowers. (*Two arrangements on the reredos liturgical east-wall may be utilized or a large arrangement in front of the altar table, or the combination of both.*) Rather than incur the waste of huge bouquets of flowers, friends and family of the deceased should be encouraged to contribute to a charity or some fund of the parish. A funeral floral spray is not used in the church since a funeral pall, a symbol of our Baptismal Covenant, covers the casket or urn.

Some Things to Consider

The Vigil: Church, Funeral Home, or Home? (*also called a Wake, Visitation, Calling Hours, or Viewing*)

It is common practice to have the body in a convenient place for friends and family to gather and sit vigil, usually on the night before the funeral. In our tradition (though not in popular culture), sitting vigil is most properly done in the church rather than the funeral home. It can also be done in someone's home.

The church's practice is that the vigil is not a time of socializing but a time to lift the deceased up in prayer. Therefore, it is usually a good idea to have a room set aside for socializing and visiting with the family. We see these as two parts of the same function.

It is appropriate to have some form of brief liturgy during the vigil. The "Litany at the Time of Death" (BCP p.462) and the "Prayers for a Vigil" (BCP p.465) are especially good. Or people can simply sit with the body.

If the vigil is to take place at the church, the coffin is closed before entering the church and it remains closed thereafter. If family members wish to have a viewing of the body, a funeral home would be a more appropriate place to do this.

The Burial Service: Church, Graveside, or Funeral Home?

The Church strongly encourages church funerals – it is our spiritual home, not a strange place. It is where we most properly acknowledge our life with Christ. If the cleric determines that it is inappropriate to conduct the service in the church, then a graveside service is usually the preferred alternative over the funeral home.

Memorial Gifts or Flowers?

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Trinity's Endowment Fund, a hospital, organization, or charity such as the American Cancer Society, etc.

Will there be music? Will there be singers or additional instruments?

The organist's fee is \$250. Trinity's organist has first refusal, which means if a different organist is chosen our organist still needs to be paid this amount in full. This is standard protocol. Furthermore, a guest organist must have the permission of Trinity's organist to use our organ. Instrumentalists and vocalists may be utilized. They are to be planned through the Parish Musician/Organist. (Additional fees will be negotiated for these musicians.)

Suggested Hymns for the Burial of the Dead (from the Hymnal 1982)

358 Christ the Victorious, give to your servants (1 Cor. 15) (Cantakion) (Commendation)

355 Give rest, O Christ (1 Cor. 15)

354 Into paradise may the angels lead you (Rev. 7 & Rev. 21) (In Paradisum)

357 Jesus, Son of Mary (Communion)

356 May choirs of angels lead you (Rev. 7 & Rev. 21) (In Paradisum)

671 Amazing grace! How sweet the sound

688 A mighty fortress is our God (Psalm 46) - also 687
 665 All my hope on God is founded
 208 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! The strife is o'er (1 Cor. 15)
 658 As longs the deer for cooling streams (Psalm 42)
 695 By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered – also 696
 487 Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life
 669 Commit thou all that grieves thee (Psalm 37)
 287 For all the saints, who from their labors rest
 151 From deepest woe I cry to thee
 326 From glory to glory advancing, we praise thee, O Lord
 677 God moves in a mysterious way
 379 God is Love, let heaven adore him
 690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
 637 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord – also 636
 517 How lovely is thy dwelling place (Psalm 84)
 335 I am the bread of life (Jn. 6 and Jn. 11)
 692 I heard the voice of Jesus say
 668 I to the hills will lift mine eyes (Psalm 121)
 635 If thou but trust in God to guide thee
 429 I'll praise my Maker while I've breath (Psalm 146)
 620 Jerusalem, my happy home (2 Cor. 4-5)
 624 Jerusalem the golden (Rev. 7 & Rev. 21)
 194 Jesus lives! thy terrors now (Rom. 8 & Jn. 14) – also 195
 526 Let saints on earth in concert sing
 621 Light's abode, celestial Salem (Rom. 8, 1 Cor. 15, 2 Cor. 4-5, Rev. 21) – also 622
 702 Lord, thou hast searched me and dost know (Psalm 139)
 691 My faith looks up to thee
 664 My Shepherd will supply my need (Psalm 23)
 14 O God, creation's secret force – also 15
 680 O God, our help in ages past (Psalm 90)
 448 O love, how deep, how broad, how high – also 449
 455 O Love of God, how strong and true – also 456
 623 O what their joy and their glory must be (Rom. 8, 2 Cor. 4-5, Rev. 21)
 388 O worship the King, all glorious above! (Psalm 104)
 666 Out of the depths I call (Psalm 130)
 373 Praise the Lord! Ye heavens adore him (Psalm 148)
 560 Remember your servants, Lord (Mt. 5:3-12)
 685 Rock of ages, cleft for me
 492 Sing, ye faithful, sing with gladness (1 Cor. 15)
 679 Surely it is God who saves me (First Song of Isaiah) – also 678
 447 The Christ who died but rose again (Rom. 8)
 645 The King of love my shepherd is (Psalm 23, Jn. 10) – also 646
 663 The Lord my God my shepherd is (Psalm 23)
 457 Thou art the Way, to the alone (Jn. 14)
 338 Wherefore, O Father, we thy humble servants
 625 Ye holy angels bright (Rev. 7)
 618 Ye watchers and ye holy ones (Rev. 7)

Easter Themed Hymns:

178 Alleluia, alleluia! Gave thanks to the risen Lord
 191 Alleluia, alleluia! Hearts and voices heavenward raise (1 Cor. 15)
 174 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
 181 Awake and sing the song
 212 Awake, arise, lift up your voice
 182 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing
 185 Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands --- also 186
 184 Christ the Lord is risen again!

183 Christians, to the Paschal victim
199 Come, ye faithful, raise the strain – also 200
205 Good Christians all, rejoice and sing!
180 He is risen, he is risen!
207 Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
188 Love’s redeeming work is done (1 Cor. 15) – also 189
204 Now the green blade riseth from the burial grain
176 Over the chaos of the empty waters – also 177
210 The day of resurrection!
202 The Lamb’s high banquet called to share
211 The whole bright world rejoices now
192 This joyful Eastertide
187 Through the Red Sea brought at last, Alleluia!
209 We walk by faith, and not by sight

Reception

The Parish Hall is available to parishioners for the family’s use after a funeral *at no charge*, although a fee of **\$150** for the sexton is required (for set-up/take-down and clean-up). The family is responsible for making the arrangements for food, beverage, delivery and cleanup. At the reception photo displays and memorabilia may be displayed.

For *non-members*, a fee of **\$450** to use the parish hall or other facility is required. The family is responsible for making the arrangements for food, beverage, delivery and cleanup.

Service Bulletin

The church office will provide the worship bulletins. If the family wishes to have a folder that honors the deceased, with photos, poetry, prayers, etc., that may be done and provided through an outside printer.

Burial Fees

It being understood that the church and columbarium are primarily for the use of the members of Trinity Church. A member is defined by Diocesan Canon as a baptized person who contributes to and participates in the worship and communal life of the congregation.

Member Church Fee: \$250 (*facility use and services of the sexton*)

Non-Member Church Fee: \$650 (*facility use and services of the sexton*)

Clergy Fee (*made to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund of Trinity Church*): \$250

Organist/Parish Musician: \$250 (*payment made directly to the organist*)

Parish Hall usage (*includes set up and take-down fees and cleaning*):

Member: \$150; Non-Member \$450.