

Funeral Customary for St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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."

~Book of Common Prayer, page 507

The death of a loved one, no matter the circumstances, is a difficult time in the lives of those left behind. At a time of grieving, families and loved ones must make emotional and practical decisions, sometimes with little time to prepare.

This customary will aid you in planning a funeral or memorial service at St. Mark's and establish guidelines and policies that make it easier to prepare.

The clergy and staff at St. Mark's are ready to help you in making decisions and planning a beautiful and meaningful service. This customary is a resource to help you with that process. It includes information from the Book of Common Prayer, as well as about aspects of the service specific to St. Mark's. If you would like to inquire about a funeral or memorial to be hosted at St. Mark's, please be in touch with the church office to arrange an appointment with one of our clergy.

Where to Start

Surviving family members and/or those responsible for making the funeral arrangement should contact the church and consult one of our clergy members. If you have a preference for one of the St. Mark's clergy in particular, you can make that known at this time. We are happy to accommodate your request when possible. In consultation with the presiding priest, who will coordinate with our facilities manager, those planning the service should select a time for the service based on the needs of the family, out-of-town mourners, and the availability of the church.

Liturgy:

At St. Mark's, funerals and memorials conform to the liturgy of The Burial of the Dead on page 461 (Rite I) or 491 (Rite II) of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. You may choose to include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The church will prepare a bulletin for you. Our Director of Operations will work with you to include a cover design (that may include a photo), readings, and other personalized information, such as a short obituary.

The body may be present (funeral) or not present (memorial service). Coffins are delivered to the church by the funeral home the day of the funeral and are typically part of the opening procession of the service. Coffins are always closed in the church and covered with a pall, a hanging placed over the casket instead of flowers or a flag. Cremated remains are typically delivered to the family before the service and you may then deliver them in a suitable container to the church. Ashes in their containers are typically placed in the church prior to the beginning of the burial rite.

We will reserve pews at the front of the church for the family and any who are participating in the liturgy, e.g. pallbearers, readers, etc. Please let the priest know ahead of time how many reserved rows you will need.

Eulogies

Eulogies are permitted by friends or family prior to the priest's homily, but must be planned in advance with the presiding clergy. We highly recommend that eulogies be less than five minutes and written down ahead of time.

Participating clergy:

The priest who has helped the family members prepare for the funeral is the appropriate priest to preside at the burial rite. If you desire an Episcopal priest other than the one from St. Mark's, you must receive the permission and invitation of the St. Mark's Rector. Guest clergy (other than Episcopal priests and deacons) may be invited to read lessons and lead prayers.

Flowers and fixtures

The church will be vested in white. You may provide one arrangement of flowers on the altar. For altar flowers, we require Ben White Florist, our preferred florist; they know the specifics of our space and are familiar with what will work best on the altar. If you would like altar flowers, you may contact Ben White Florist directly. You may choose to leave the altar flowers in place rather than take them with you after the service, in which case they will remain on display for the coming Sunday liturgy.

Floral sprays and decorations sent by family and friends may be displayed in the narthex (foyer) or the parish hall.

Interment

Please plan the time and place of interment with your presiding priest. The remains of the deceased are typically interred after the church service with a short committal service. Family and friends may choose for this to be private or open to all.

St. Mark's has a columbarium available for the interment of ashes for members of the parish and their immediate family. It is located in an outdoor garden adjacent to Grace Chapel. If you are interested in reserving a niche in the columbarium please contact the church office for details about availability and cost.

Facilities:

The clergy of St. Mark's will officiate at funerals or memorial services in the church, in our chapel, at funeral homes, or at the graveside. Services in the church are preferred and recommended.

You may arrange a reception following the service in our Parish Hall.

Readings

You may choose up to four scripture readings; if there is a service of Holy Eucharist one of them must be a Gospel reading. Reading suggestions for Burial from *The Book of Common Prayer*:

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](#) (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 following *Psalms* are appropriate: [42:1-7](#), [46](#), [90:1-12](#), [121](#), [130](#), [139:1-11](#).

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](#) (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)

A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow. The following *Psalms* are appropriate: [23](#), [27](#), [106:1-5](#), [116](#). *

From The Gospel:

- [John 5:24-27](#) (He who believes has everlasting life)
- [John 6:37-40](#) (All that the Father gives me will come to you)
- [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)

Music

Hymns may be appropriate for a variety of reasons: they might be favorites of the family, the words might be especially meaningful, the music might fit the mood of the service. Hymns are typically included at the opening procession, before the Gospel reading, at the offertory, and at the end of the service. In general, it is helpful to choose hymns that are broadly familiar across denominational lines so that the congregation will be able to sing with confidence. There are many possible options, this list includes some that work especially well.

Suggested hymns:

7	Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies	493	O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
8	Morning Has Broken	522	Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
208	The Strife Is O'er	525	The Church's One Foundation
287	For All the Saints	556	Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!
304	I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord	608	Eternal Father, Strong to Save
314	Humbly I Adore Thee, Verity Unseen	618	Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones
321	My God, Thy Table Now Is Spread	620	Jerusalem, My Happy Home
335	I Am the Bread of Life	623	O What Their Joy and Their Glory
358	Christ, the Victorious	625	Ye Holy Angels Bright
362	Holy, Holy, Holy	636	How Firm a Foundation
376	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	646	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
383	Fairest Lord Jesus	657	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
388	O Worship the King	662	Abide with Me
390	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	664	My Shepherd Will Supply My Need
423	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	671	Amazing Grace
439	What Wondrous Love Is This	680	O God Our Help in Ages Past
447	The Christ Who Died but Rose Again	685	Rock of Ages
455	O Love of God, How Strong and True	686	Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
460	Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!	688	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
470	There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	690	Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
473	Lift High the Cross	691	My Faith Looks Up to Thee
482	Lord of All Hopefulness	699	Jesus, Lover of My Soul
488	Be Thou My Vision	708	Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
490	I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light		

Memorial Gifts

Family and friends may make gifts to St. Mark's in tribute to the deceased.

Fees

The clergy do not charge a fee for funerals or memorials. Honoraria are at your discretion. If you request music, the organist's fee is \$250, the fee for soloists \$100-150. There is a \$100 building-use fee for the sexton. There is a \$100 fee to have the service live-streamed.