

Funerals at St James Episcopal Church

St James Episcopal Church

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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.*

Concerning Burial Services

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.

Funeral plans may be decided before a death. This may reduce stress on your family in the event of your death as plans will be in place. **Such plans must occur in conversation with a priest of the parish and kept on file at the parish so that your wishes may be carried out at the time of your death.**

Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church. The service should be held at a time when the congregation can be present.

A 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. An urn of ashes will also be covered by a small pall.

The Committal is the part of the service when the remains are interred in the ground. If necessary, or if desired, all or part of the service of Committal may be said in the church.

A priest normally presides at the service. It is appropriate that the bishop, when present, preside at the Eucharist and pronounce the Commendation. When the services of a priest cannot be obtained, a deacon or licensed lay reader may officiate at a service without communion.

It is desirable that the Lesson from the Old Testament, and the Epistle, be read by lay persons. The Gospel is read by a deacon or priest. 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 Presider 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 presider standing in the accustomed place.

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

At death, we give our lives back to God. For many persons of faith, death is a coming home, the culmination of a journey from home to home. 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. 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.

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

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT DEATH

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:** ask your physician for arrangements for donation of the body to science or donation of organs for transplant. This must be arranged prior to death.
2. **Burial:** The body may be buried in a cemetery or entombed in a mausoleum. Funeral homes can provide the information needed, as well as costs.
3. **Cremation:** Cremation reduces the body to ashes. Ashes may be disposed of in several ways, including burial, placement in a columbarium, or scattering.

St James Episcopal Church has a **Memorial Garden** for the placement of ashes of members or those close to them. As of 2024, there is one option, to be placed in the walled comingled garden. Previous commitments to those promised a place in the yard will be honored.

1. Ashes are placed within the walled comingled garden. The name of the deceased is engraved on one of the large stones. A spouse or loved one of a person interred in this area who plans to have their own ashes similarly interred, may have their name inscribed on the stone at the same time the deceased's name is inscribed. The cost, which covers upkeep of the garden and an engraving fee, is \$650.00.
2. Discontinued option as of 2024: Ashes placed within individual plots outside the walled comingled garden. Prior reservations will be honored.

An urn for ashes at the funeral may be used but is not required. However, St James does not allow urns to be interred along with ashes in the Memorial Garden. Only the ashes themselves are placed into the ground.

Flowers (artificial, planted or otherwise), flags and other items are not permitted to be placed anywhere within the Memorial Garden.

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

WILLS AND DIRECTIVES

Will: a written document directing what will happen to one's estate. With a will, an individual has a clear say about who receives the estate, rather than the state making the determination. When making out a will, please remember St James Episcopal Church.

Treatment Directive (or Living Will): a written document stating how you wish to be treated if you become incapacitated by illness, injury, or old age. It is extremely important that your health care providers and family members know of your living will and have copies available in the event of sudden illness.

Proxy Directive: a written instrument by which a person appoints someone as an agent giving that person the authority to act in the person's place for matters related to health care.

Visitation: Family members and friends may desire an opportunity to visit the immediate family after a death. This can be done at a **formal visitation time** in either a funeral home or church before **the funeral** when family members are present. This is a time when extended family members, parishioners, and friends can express sympathy personally. A time to connect with the family may also be had during a reception following the funeral service. A funeral service is held in one of the worship spaces at the church (*sanctuary or parish hall when set up for worship*).

At St James, the sanctuary can be used as a respectful place for visitation prior to the funeral. Either the body or container of ashes may be placed before the altar, and people can visit the immediate family. If a casket is present, the casket is **closed**. If family members wish to have a viewing of the body, a funeral home is a more appropriate place to do this. The Paschal Candle is lit as a sign of Resurrection during a visitation in the sanctuary.

FUNERAL SERVICE AND PLANNING: A burial service from the sanctuary is the preferred option for Church members and strongly recommended. Another option is a simple burial service said at the graveside or in the Memorial Garden.

The **Burial of the Dead** service comes from the Book of Common Prayer. Scripture Lessons are read, a brief sermon given, and prayers are said for the deceased and their family. **Eucharist** (Communion) is strongly encouraged for members of the parish, with participation open to all. **Hymns** may be sung, and **music** played. A casket or urn of ashes is usually present.

Appendix A is a form to help with funeral liturgy planning.

It is important that the family meet with the Rector (or a priest s/he appoints) 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. **To accomplish all that goes into a funeral, at least 5 days (or more) are necessary to plan and prepare.**

The Rector normally presides and preaches at a service of burial. S/he may appoint another priest to preside. St. James has a tradition that if family members or close friends wish to speak briefly about the deceased, they do so before the sermon. Please let the Rector or priest you are working with know if this is desired when you meet to plan the service.

Funerals are public services of the Church, to which all are welcome.

TIMES OF SERVICE

It is best to schedule a service when the greatest number of people can attend, and when it works best in the parish calendar and for the clergy. Weekday services may start at 11:00 a.m. at the earliest. Funerals are not usually held on Sundays. The interment of a body (with casket) can happen later. Interment of ashes may happen separately from the funeral service, for example if winter weather and ground conditions do not permit interment. **In the latter case, the family or loved ones are responsible for keeping the ashes until the time of interment.**

MUSIC

Music appropriate for a funeral focuses on God. A guideline is music appropriate for a Sunday morning Church service – hymns, songs of praise, etc. The Rector and Minister of Music have final authority in the selection of music for a funeral. *Appendix B* contains several hymn suggestions.

FLOWERS

Flowers may be placed on the retable (shelf) behind the altar and should fit on it. Other flowers that do not fit there may be placed elsewhere at the discretion of the Rector and Altar Guild. It is not appropriate to have flowers or other decorations placed on a casket, as it is covered with a pall for the service. Pictures of the deceased may be displayed if desired, either in the entryway of the church or parish hall if there is to be a reception.

PALL

A pall covers a casket or container of ashes. This is provided by St James. A flag or flowers may be placed on the casket once the casket leaves the church.

MILITARY or OTHER HONORS

Military or other honor services may be held after the funeral service. In the event of military honors, the casket or ashes are taken outside of the Church, the pall removed, the American or other national flag placed on the casket, and then appropriate honors offered. This can happen at the place of interment as well but in either case, would be led by a member of the military.

PALL BEARERS

It is appropriate when a casket is present to have six to eight persons escort the casket from the funeral hearse to its resting place in the sanctuary, and then from the hearse to the place of interment. There may also be honorary pallbearers for cremated remains (ashes). Pallbearers may be women or men.

RECEPTION

A reception for the family may be held in the Parish Hall, depending upon availability. There may be a charge for custodial care for the reception. Food and beverages are provided by family and friends or a caterer. **No alcohol** may be served.

WHO IS A PARISHIONER?

Persons who are considered active parishioners are those who attend church regularly unless prevented from doing so by illness and contribute financially to the church. With permission of the Rector, others are invited to have funerals at St James, with the understanding that there are expected costs beyond those asked of active parishioners.

FEES

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 or before. Checks should be made to St James Episcopal Church. Please complete *Appendix C* and attach it to your check. The Parish Office will disburse the funds.

For parishioners, there is no fee for use of the sanctuary, or services of the clergy. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and or a gift to the Rector's Discretionary Fund or directly as an honorarium are always appreciated.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Rector or Parish Administrator if you have questions.

FUNERALS AT ST JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FORM TO ACCOMPANY PAYMENT

Please complete this form and attach it to your check.

Name: _____

Last Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

	Parishioners	Non-Parishioners
Use of Church	Contribution	\$450.00
Use of Parish Hall	Contribution	\$200.00
Clergy	Contribution	\$250.00
Altar Guild <i>(cost of flowers not included)</i>	\$25.00	\$25.00
Organist / Keyboardist	\$200.00	\$200.00
<i>Or if working with a soloist</i>	\$275.00	\$275.00
Soloist	\$75.00	\$75.00
Printed Service Leaflet	\$50.00	\$50.00
Interment in Comingled Memorial Garden <i>(stone engraving included)</i>	\$650.00	*

* As a rule, the Memorial Garden is a repository for the cremains of individuals who have had a significant personal relationship (for example, a parishioner) with St. James' or a significant family relationship with an active member of St. James'.

Please return completed form along with payment to the Parish Office, or mail to: St. James Episcopal Church Attn:

*Parish Administrator
4 St. James Place
Essex Jct., VT 05452*

APPENDIX A

FUNERAL LITURGY PLANNING FORM

Today's Date _____

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Current or Last Known Address

Phone _____ Email _____

Name of Funeral Director if desired _____

Do you desire Calling Hours in a Funeral Home? Yes No

Name, phone number, email of family member(s) to contact _____

Is a bulletin desired? Yes No If "Yes" approx. how many do you expect will attend? _____

If "Yes" would you like to attach an example? Yes No

Would you like to attach a photo or send a digital photo to the office? Yes No

Who will give final approval after the bulletin is made?

Is a reception desired? Yes No

If "Yes" at St. James or elsewhere? St. James _____ Somewhere else _____

(St. James is often able to provide a modest reception with set up, coffee and cookies, and serving hospitality. On occasion some finger sandwiches can be made, but if a larger event is desired, the family will be responsible for hiring a caterer. Alcohol is not allowed.)

At times, long-distance access for loved ones and friends who cannot travel to Vermont might be available with the online program Zoom. If available at the time of the funeral, would you like to have Zoom capability with a Minister of Technology to facilitate? Yes No

If a Member of St. James, would you (or the family) like to remember St. James in your estate planning or such plans been made? Yes No

If "Yes" would you contact from the Senior Warden or member of the Finance Team to discuss details of your wishes? Yes No

What type of burial (full casket; cremation)? _____

Will remains be present at the funeral service? Yes No
(If ashes please bring in advance including crematorium tag)

The priest gives a short homily on the meaning of death in the Christian faith. Please provide some information about you or your loved one that you might like included. (life activities, activities with the church, significant relationships within the family or with friends – whatever seems appropriate)

If already deceased:

Date of Death _____ Age at Death _____

Cause of Death _____

Place of interment _____

Burial directly following service Yes No

If so where? _____

If locally, would you like the clergy to accompany you to the burial place? Yes No

Burial in St James Memorial Garden Yes No

(Available for Members of St. James or family members)

If "Yes" please provide **exact name and dates** (birth & death years only) to be engraved on the stone

Would you like family members, friends, or members of St. James to participate in any of the following roles? If so please include **full names** to be printed in the bulletin:

Lectors (2) – these persons may read the lessons chosen

1. _____

2. _____

Intercessor – this person may lead a set of prayers on behalf of the deceased and the bereaved

Music – in-person musician soloists in your circle of family or friends may work with our Minister of Music offering appropriate and approved vocal or instrumental music. Please add details if this is your wish. If you would like a paid soloist (*see fee attachment*) we will try to find one (*names of musicians, piece of music you would like to be considered*)

The Burial Liturgy

The Liturgy begins on page 491 of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). For members of the household of Christ, it normally consists of 4 main parts: The Liturgy of the Word (Scriptures and reflections), Liturgy of the Table (Holy Eucharist or Communion), the Commendation, the Committal.

Opening Anthem (choose one) BCP 491 or BCP 492

OR an Opening Hymn _____

Collect (choose one – BCP pg. 493) First Second Third

Lessons (choose one of each – BCP pgs. 494-495) Other appropriate scripture lessons may be chosen in conversation with the priest

First Reading _____

Second Reading _____

Psalm, Hymn or Canticle _____

Gospel _____

Will someone give a Eulogy (remembrances) before the Homily? Yes No

If “Yes” who? *(full name(s) for bulletin)*

Include the Apostles’ Creed? Yes No

Prayers (BCP p497)

Include Prayer re: Baptism Yes No

Include Prayer re: Communion Yes No

Concluding Prayer (choose one – BCP p498) First Second

Offertory Hymn or Music if Communion is to follow _____

Holy Communion (BCP p361-375) Yes No

If Yes: Eucharistic Prayer (choose one) A B C D

OR Enriching Our Worship 1 2 3

Lord’s Prayer (BCP p502) Traditional Contemporary

Communion Hymn or Music _____

Recessional Hymn _____

Burial directly following service Yes No

If “Yes” where? _____

APPENDIX B

HYMN SUGGESTIONS (OTHERS MAY BE CHOSEN)

Opening Hymn:

For all the saints Hymnal #287 (verses 1-4)
The strife is o'er Hymnal #208
Praise my soul the king of heaven Hymnal #410
O God our help in ages past Hymnal #680

Hymn Before the Gospel:

Amazing grace Hymnal #671
I come with joy to meet my Lord Hymnal #304
I sing a song of the saints of God Hymnal #293
All things bright and beautiful Hymnal #405

Offertory Hymn:

The King of love, my shepherd is Hymnal #645, 646
Alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord Hymnal #178
I am the bread of life Hymnal #335
Give thanks for life Wonder, Love, and Praise #775

Communion Hymn:

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord Wonder, Love, and Praise #810
In remembrance of me Lift Every Voice and Sing #149
Let us break bread together Hymnal #325
Take my life and let it be Hymnal #707

Recessional Hymn:

Lift high the cross Hymnal #473
Now thank we all our God Hymnal #396,397
Jerusalem, my happy home Hymnal #620
For all the saints Hymnal #287 (verses 5-8)
Lord of all hopefulness Hymnal #482
Joyful, joyful we adore thee Hymnal #376