

A Guide to Funerals at St. John the Evangelist

When Someone Dies

We are never prepared for the emotional shock and the many responsibilities that come when a loved one dies. The Church is here to help you through this time of grief by offering comfort through the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is, above all, a message of hope and resurrection. In addition, the community of St. John's is here to help with the decisions, obligations, and religious services so important to the healing process.

Practical Assistance

When someone dies, the first person to call is your doctor. Next comes the priest. You are encouraged to call the priest anytime of day or night. The priest will come to wherever you are to offer spiritual support and practical guidance. This will include prayer with the family, calling a mortician, and deciding on the time and place for the funeral, and determining the details for cremation or burial.

Planning the Funeral

Funerals for church members are customarily held in the church. "Calling hours," enabling friends to visit the family informally the night before the funeral, may be offered. While these gatherings may be held in a funeral home, they may also take place in the church itself. At St. John's we are pleased to offer this option as an alternative. The body of the deceased may or may not be present and a brief service of vigil is a fitting way to close the time together.

The funeral service is planned from the wealth of material in the *Book of Common Prayer* and *The Hymnal 1982*. The priest will work with the family to determine the nature of the service and to choose appropriate Scripture readings. The Episcopal liturgy emphasizes the resurrection of Christ and the universal hopefulness of Christian belief.

Music is often part of the funeral service. The priest or parish organist will work with you to select appropriate musical selections and hymns.

Normally the homily is based on a favorite passage from the New Testament and emphasizes the comforts of Christ rather than the attributes of the deceased person. Occasionally, a brief remembrance may be offered by someone close to the departed.

The Holy Eucharist is generally celebrated at funeral services but this is at the family's discretion in consultation with the priest. All baptized Christians in attendance, regardless of denomination or age, are welcome to receive Communion.

If the body is present, the coffin is closed and covered with a funeral pall (a white cloth signifying new life through the Resurrection). If ashes are present, the urn is covered with a white cloth.

Eulogies

Eulogies or remembrances by friends and family members are not encouraged. If one or two people would like to read prepared remarks, that may be worked out with the officiating priest. The remarks should be *no more than* three minutes in duration.

Flowers

If the family would like altar flowers, an outside florist is engaged by the family (speak with the administrative assistant for a list of local florists). Two arrangements, placed on the stands on either side of the altar, are normative. An arrangement may also be placed on the narthex table in the entryway. No other flowers will be placed in the worship space. If a reception is held in Upper Weld Hall, additional arrangements may be placed there. Generally, the flowers are left for the following Sunday with a note indicating the memorial in memory of the deceased.

Pictures of the Deceased

It's often very moving as well as healing to display pictures of a deceased loved one. While this is encouraged, no pictures will be displayed in the worship space during the liturgy. Pictures are most appropriate at a vigil the evening before or at the reception.

Bulletins

Bulletins will be printed by the parish office, in consultation with the priest, to reflect the liturgy and allow worshippers to participate. Pictures of the deceased will not appear on the front cover.

Police Detail

At large funerals (over 250) the family must provide for a police detail to assist with parking and traffic flow. This will be arranged through the parish office. The Hingham Police Department's current fee is \$205.

Reception

If available, Upper Weld Hall may be used for a reception following the funeral liturgy. Per the Fire Marshall, the maximum capacity is 250. If you need a recommendation for a caterer, speak with the parish office.

What about Cremation?

The Episcopal Church approves cremation as well as burial of the body. If cremation is chosen, interment in the St. John's Memorial Garden is offered to parishioners

St. John's Memorial Garden

Interment in the Memorial Garden is open to parishioners. It should be understood that there are no containers used and that the ashes are placed directly into the ground and covered with sod with no external marker. There is a plaque with names of those buried in the Memorial Garden outside the side entrance to the church. To have a name added, coordinate with the administrative assistant. To assist with maintenance fees, we request a minimum \$200 donation to the Memorial Garden fund. The cost of the plaque is \$110.

Fees

Members of the parish will be entitled to have a reception in Weld Hall for the gathering of family and friends. Use of the hall for this reception will be given by the parish as a service to the family of the deceased. There will be an additional fee for the Sexton when this service is used.

It is understood that the parish organist is to play for all services and that if a guest organist is requested, the parish organist is to be compensated for the full amount. If the services of a soloist or instrumentalist are desired, the request must be made to the parish organist. Please do not hire anyone independently.

The following fees are requested and are to be made out in **separate checks**:

For pledging members of the congregation:

Church: (to <i>Parish of St. John the Evangelist</i>)	\$200
Organist: (to <i>Elisabeth C. Gray</i>)	\$250
<i>(when soloists or instrumentalists are used an additional fee is assessed)</i>	
Sexton: (to <i>Dorothy Manley</i>)	\$100
<i>(should the wake be held at the church please add an additional \$100)</i>	
Police Detail (if necessary)	\$205
Clergy: Honorarium amount at the family's discretion.	

For non-members:

Church: (to <i>Parish of St. John the Evangelist</i>)	\$400
Organist: (to <i>Elisabeth C. Gray</i>)	\$250
<i>(when soloists or instrumentalists are used an additional fee is assessed)</i>	
Sexton: (to <i>Dorothy Manley</i>)	\$100
<i>(should the wake be held at the church please add an additional \$100)</i>	
Police Detail (if necessary)	\$205
Church Hall for Reception (if applicable)	\$150
Clergy: Honorarium amount at the family's discretion.	

Total cost for the Memorial Garden and Plaque is the same for both members and non-members: \$310 (to *Parish of St. John the Evangelist*).

Besides the fee for the organist and sexton, the rector may, at his discretion, waive the church's fee. It is our policy at St. John's never to refuse to do a funeral.

Funeral Hymns & Music

Music, like liturgy itself, helps us express our emotions in ways that transcend words. Hymns in particular are often a source of comfort and the Anglican tradition has many beautiful and appropriate hymns for funerals. Funeral music is always chosen in consultation with the clergy or parish organist. Choosing hymns is often a component of healing.

Some criteria to consider include: favorite hymns, texts that express the hope and joy of the resurrection, and whether or not it is known to the congregation. What follows is a list of suggested hymns but it is by no means complete. The standard resource is the *Hymnal 1982*.

The hymnal contains a section titled "Burial" that extends from hymn 354 to 358. Also, certain Easter hymns are particularly appropriate. The "Easter" section is found between hymns 174 and 213.

If an approved hymn is neither in our hymnal nor covered by our licensing agreement, the family will need to pay the reprint costs associated with the copyright permission.

A soloist – vocal or instrumental – may be engaged. In such cases, the parish organist is available to select a soloist and help choose the musical selection. The use of a soloist adds an additional fee to be arranged with the organist.

There will be no recorded music during the liturgy.

Suggested hymns from the *Hymnal 1982*

- 208 The strife is o'er
- 287 For all the saints
- 335 I am the bread of life
- 358 Christ the victorious
- 376 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee
- 379 God is love
- 390 Praise to the Lord, the almighty
- 397 Now thank we all our God
- 410 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven
- 416 For the beauty of the earth
- 460 Alleluia, sing to Jesus
- 470 There's a wideness in God's mercy
- 482 Lord of all hopefulness
- 487 Come, my way, my truth, my life
- 488 Be thou my vision
- 517 How lovely is thy dwelling place
- 618 Ye watchers and ye holy ones
- 620 Jerusalem, my happy home
- 625 Ye holy angels bright
- 637 How firm a foundation
- 645 The King of love my shepherd is
- 657 Love divine, all loves excelling
- 662 Abide with me
- 664 My shepherd will supply my need
- 671 Amazing grace
- 680 O God, our help in ages past
- 688 A mighty fortress is our God
- 690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

A final word about liturgical hymns: While pastoral sensitivity is paramount in planning a funeral, we do not have a policy of “anything goes” when it comes to music in the church. As the Prayer Book states regarding the use of hymns, they “are to be understood as those authorized by this Church. The words of anthems [and hymns] are to be from Holy Scripture, or from this Book, or from texts congruent with them.” In other words, if there is a favorite secular song, another venue, such as a reception, is more appropriate.