

Saint Luke's Episcopal Church

PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL

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

*You only are immortal, the creator and maker of humankind;
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.*

Commendation Anthem,
Book of Common Prayer page 499

INTRODUCTION

The body's physical death is a reality we all face as human creatures. Yet, it is one of the most emotionally difficult subjects for us to talk about or prepare for. At the time of death, families and loved ones experience some of the most stressful moments of their lives. It becomes difficult to make decisions and remember all the details that need to be attended to in a short time. Planning a funeral in advance is a loving thing to do and ensures that an individual's wishes can be known and honored.

This document is designed to help individuals think through decisions relating to their funeral and burial as well as provide a check-list of other key decisions and documents needed at the time of death. It is written primarily for Episcopalians at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, but others, Christians and non-Christians, may also find parts of it useful.

Once you have read through the document and completed the forms, we suggest making at least four copies: one for you, one for your church, one for your attorney, and one with your will. Like a will, it should be reviewed and updated every few years and each time there is a major life change. Parish clergy are always happy to discuss any part of the planning process with you.

A NOTE ON CHRISTIAN BURIAL

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, page 507

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

There are three sections: general policies and church teachings, a general planning data sheet (pages 5-6), and a funeral planning data sheet (pages 7-10).

We recommend you take some time to review the general information and data sheets, discuss the topics with important people in your life, and then complete the forms. It may be helpful to have a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* and a Bible handy for the actual planning.

Once you have completed the data sheets, make copies and store them where you store other important information as well as with a trusted family member or friend, attorney, and/or your church.

WHAT TO DO WHEN DEATH IS IMMANENT?

The *Book of Common Prayer* provides prayers and litanies for a vigil leading up to the time of death. When death is near, the parish should be notified so a priest can offer prayers and anointing as desired and provide pastoral support to family and friends.

If the clergy have not been notified earlier, a death should be reported to the parish as soon as possible so funeral planning can begin in consultation with the Rector.

THINKING AHEAD – HEALTH AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Do you have an Advanced Directive spelling out your wishes for end-of-life medical treatment? Do you have a Power of Attorney for Healthcare designating who makes medical decisions when you can't? Do you have a Power of Attorney for someone to handle your financial affairs when you can't?

What about organ donation?

The Episcopal Church honors the wisdom and the rights of individuals to decide what medical treatment is appropriate for their care, even to the point of refusing treatment (including nutrition) when physical death is inevitable and immanent as long as appropriate palliative care (pain relief) is provided.

The Episcopal Church encourages organ donation when medically appropriate.

Do you have a Will? No adult is ever too old, too young, too married, or too single to have a Will. A Will is the only way to ensure that your property is distributed according to your wishes after your death. A Will prevents the State from distributing your Estate according to their standards and can head off potential family conflicts.

A Will is also the only way to designate part of your Estate as a bequest for charitable causes that are important to you, including any potential gifts to your church.

An attorney specializing in family practice or estate law can help you with these documents for a reasonable fee. There are also do-it-yourself kits, but they may get confusing in the case of complex situations and it can be easy to overlook a matter of concern to you. Nothing beats having an expert with whom to consult.

THINKING AHEAD – FUNERAL MATTERS

The clergy in charge of a congregation have authority for the funeral service. However, there is much latitude in an Episcopal service for individual decisions that reflect the personality of the deceased. This section covers decisions to consider and discuss with others in advance.

Do you prefer cremation, burial, or donating your body to science? If cremation is your choice, do you want your body present at the funeral before cremation, or be cremated first? Do you wish for your body to be buried; or your ashes to be buried, scattered, or kept with a loved one for later disposition? Where is your body's final resting place?

The Episcopal Church encourages individuals to decide on cremation or burial in accordance with their family traditions and personal concerns, including financial. Some who chose cremation may prefer to have the body present at the funeral and then taken to the crematory. Others may prefer to have the body cremated first and have the ashes present at the funeral. Either is appropriate.

It is expected that whatever method is chosen, the mortal remains will be treated with dignity and respect that honors the individual as a person created in the image of God.

Where do you wish your funeral to be? At your current church? A former church where you still have friends or family? Should there be a funeral service in one place and a memorial service at another?

*A **funeral service** includes the presence of the body and prayers for the commendation of the soul to God and committal of the mortal remains to their resting place. The funeral and commendation are normally in a church and the committal is normally at the graveside and can be at a later time or different location than the funeral.*

*A **memorial service** is a worship service in memory of the deceased without the body present, often as an anniversary service or second service in another location when the deceased was well known to more than one community.*

Will there be a **viewing or wake**? This can be a time for family and friends to gather and pay respects in a more informal setting than a worship service. It can be in a funeral home, a family home, a parish hall, or – clergy permitting – in a chapel or church. At St. Luke's, a viewing may be done in the church but must end 15 minutes prior to the funeral.

It is an ancient custom for the body to be kept in Vigil before the Reserved Sacrament until the time of the funeral. Should the family wish this, arrangements can be made with the Rector. The body would be received the evening before the funeral and placed in the sanctuary. Vigil prayers may be offered and family and friends may keep vigil. The casket would be closed.

*A **note on viewings**: The Prayer Book requires that a coffin is closed prior to the start of the funeral service and is not opened again. At St. Luke's, it is covered with a pall, which is a reminder of our baptismal garment. If military honors are appropriate, a flag may be draped over the coffin at the conclusion of the funeral when the pall is removed. The flag is then removed at the conclusion of the military honors at graveside and before the committal prayers.*

Who do you want to participate in your funeral? Readers are needed to read lessons, ushers and pallbearers are welcomed. Friends or family members who are experienced may wish to serve as acolytes, communion ministers, soloists or as part of a choir in consultation with the clergy and musician as appropriate. You may wish for a family member or friend to provide a brief eulogy before the Sermon if the presiding clergy permit.

The parish clergy normally preside and preach at a funeral service, but the Rector may invite another clergy person to participate at the request of the family.

Will there be civic or society honors or acknowledgments? These are usually done prior to the service itself since a funeral is an act of worship, or prior to the committal rites at the graveside.

Will there be military honors? These also normally take place prior the funeral or prior the Committal service.

THE ROLE OF THE FUNERAL HOME

The funeral home provides an invaluable service in helping the family coordinate details and handle the logistics of a funeral. However, the funeral itself is the responsibility of the parish and a good funeral home recognizes they must work within parish guidelines. Saint Luke's has a very good relationship with many area funeral homes. The clergy can provide references as needed.

A NOTE ON EXPENSES

A funeral does not need to be expensive. An expensive casket is of no advantage to the departed and often is a hardship on the living. A dignified and reverently appropriate funeral does not need to involve great expense. Do not let anyone persuade you that moderate expense is in any way "disrespectful." Few people desire an ostentatious funeral for themselves, but some mistakenly believe it is necessary to show their regard for the departed by this means.

A very simple funeral can include direct cremation to avoid embalming and casket costs, having ashes present at the funeral, and then having them scattered in an appropriate and dignified place. When cremation is desired after the funeral, there are very simple, inexpensive coffins. Since the coffin is covered with a pall, its appearance is of no matter during a worship service. Any reputable funeral home will be able to guide you through the various options based on your desires.

In most churches there are expenses for musicians and space usage, usually based on the type of funeral and the person's status with the parish, and for clergy when the deceased is not a member of the parish. The church office would have a current list.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

For space reasons, a larger church may be desired. Saint Luke's can make arrangements with St. Matthew's, Pennington, or Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, to use their worship space as long as scheduling permits. In such cases, building fees may apply and their musicians will also be consulted regarding any music decisions. All of this is arranged through the Rector of St. Luke's.

There are times when the surviving family members are active church goers and the deceased expressed no faith preference. The Prayer Book provides for prayers and adaptations in such circumstances. Do not assume that a church funeral is not appropriate without consulting with the clergy.

When compelling reasons suggest a funeral home is a more appropriate setting, Episcopal clergy will still use the Episcopal liturgy appropriately adapted for the location and circumstances.

Funeral Planning – Advanced Considerations

This outline is an effort to help parishioners of Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church to understand the choices available to them. It has been designed in two parts – advanced considerations and the actual service - to guide you through a process. We recommend that you give the Church one copy to keep on file (omitting sensitive internet log-in information); another to your family; a third to your attorney; and keep a fourth with your will.

ADVANCED CONSIDERATIONS

Each of us will die. When we die, it falls to members of our family, friends, distant relatives, or total strangers to plan our services and burials.

Planning such things when you are grieving is both hard and time-consuming. Often members of the surviving family live far apart and have never discussed these matters.

When the time for planning comes they can have very different ideas about what the deceased person would have preferred or about what would be appropriate. The best way to avoid all this struggle, and even disagreement about what should be done, is to make your own plans. It is a very thoughtful gift both to your family and to yourself. You simply leave written instructions saying, "This is what I prefer."

Before planning the service, with its many options, it will be helpful to your family if you provide certain preliminary information:

1. Do you wish to be buried in a casket? _____
2. Do you prefer to be cremated? _____
Do you wish direct cremation? _____ *Direct cremation is cremation immediately after death.*
3. Do you wish to have a viewing? _____
(Once the casket is closed at the Funeral Home, it will not be reopened at the Church)
4. Who should be notified of your death?
(In addition to family and friends, list Social Security, pension funds, especially military pension funds, insurance companies, organizations, schools and colleges, professional and other associations known only to you.)
By Telephone: _____
By mail: _____
Use a separate sheet if necessary
5. Are you entitled to military honors? _____
If so, where are your discharge papers? _____
6. If you own a burial plot, where is the deed? _____
7. Who do wish to conduct your funeral? _____
8. Who should be invited to speak about you? _____
9. Is there anyone who should not be invited to participate or attend? _____
10. Have you made a Will or created a Revocable Trust? _____

11. Does your will make prudent provision for the well being of family, with clear directions about the guardianship of any minor children, and the arrangements for their nurture and education?

12. Does your will or trust leave bequests for charitable purposes, including Saint Luke's? _____
13. Where are your will and other important papers? _____
14. Where is your security box and where is the key? _____
15. Where is your passport? _____
16. Do you have valuable papers that need to be kept? _____
Where are they? _____
17. Where are bank books, stock certificates, titles and deeds of ownership? _____
18. Where online accounts will your executor need access to? Where is that information?

19. Have you compiled a list of valuable and/or treasured items and their proposed recipients apart
From your will?
Where is that list? _____
20. Whom have you designated as your executor? _____
21. Does anyone have any outstanding obligations to you about which your family or executor should
be aware? _____
22. Who has your Power of Attorney? _____
23. Have you made an "Advanced Directive/Living Will" and/or Healthcare Proxy? _____
Where is it? _____
Who has copies? _____
Who is your healthcare proxy? _____
What is that person's telephone number? _____
24. Do you own property of which others may not be aware? _____
Where is it? _____
25. Do you have partnerships in properties or businesses of which others may not be aware?

Where are the corporate offices? _____
26. Do you have death benefits of which others may not be aware? _____
Please list: _____
27. What online communities need to be notified of your death, what online memberships need to be
canceled, and where is the log-in information?

Use additional paper as necessary

Funeral Planning – The Service

PLANNING THE SERVICE

The Rector would be happy to meet with you to assist in the planning of this Service. Burial Services at Saint Luke’s are from the *Book of Common Prayer, 1979* utilizing Rite One found on page 469 or Rite Two beginning on page 491. The appropriate place for the Service is in the Church and in the context of the Holy Eucharist.

The parish will provide the service booklet with all information necessary for worship. The funeral home or family are welcome to design and produce their own memorial booklet with non-worship information.

Your full name (as it should appear publicly): _____

The date of your birth: _____

Name of Funeral Home: _____

RITE I (traditional English): _____ or RITE II (modern English): _____

Do you wish a Funeral Service with body or ashes present? (Recommended)

Where will burial be? _____

Music

Within the service there are opportunities for the singing of several hymns. Please list your preferences from the Episcopal Hymnal 1982; Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing II; Wonder, Love, & Praise; Voices Found; El Hinnario; or any other approved Episcopal hymnal. We normally use 2 – 4 hymns.

See page 10 for hymn suggestions.

Flowers

Saint Luke’s is a small church. Therefore, we recommend flowers be limited to the standard arrangements on the Altar for Sunday services. One additional arrangement can be used on a stand provided by the florist near the Statue of Saint Luke. The parish will recommend a florist who is familiar with our requirements and limitations.

Readings and Prayers

There are normally three readings from the Bible interspersed with Psalms. The suggested Psalms, listed below from the Book of Common Prayer, need not be used in the order that they appear. Psalms do not have to be used at all, but can be replaced by hymns.

Asking a friend, family member, or parishioner to read the lessons is a wonderful way to include other people in the liturgy.

Two people you would like asked to assist in the service as readers: _____

1. The first reading is from the Old Testament or from the Apocrypha. Choose one of the following:
 _____ Isaiah 25:6-9 (*He will swallow up death in victory*)
 _____ Isaiah 61:1-3 (*To comfort all who mourn*)
 _____ Lamentations 3:22-26; 31-33 (*The Lord is good unto them wait for him.*)
 _____ Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha) 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*)

2. Choose a Psalm:
 42:1-7 _____; or 46 _____; or 90:1-12 _____; or 121 _____; or 130 _____; or 139:1-11 _____.

3. The second reading is from the New Testament. Choose one.
 _____ Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 (*The glory that shall be revealed*)
 _____ I Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44 (*Raised in incorruption*)
 _____ II Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (*Things which are not seen are eternal*)
 _____ I 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*)

4. Choose a second Psalm:
 23 King James Version _____; or 23 Prayer Book Version _____; or 27 _____; or 106:1-5 _____;
 or 116 _____.

5. The Gospel. Choose one. (Read by a deacon or priest when there is communion)
 _____ John 5:24-27 (*He who believes has everlasting life*)
 _____ John 6:37-40 (*All that the Father gives me will 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 rooms*)

6. The Homily/Sermon. ***The priest will preach on the Resurrection of the Dead. A family member or friend may provide a eulogy at the discretion of the priest and with prior arrangement.***
 If desired, the Rector may invite another clergy person to preach the sermon on behalf of the family. Please consider inviting: _____.

7. The Apostle's Creed is said at the funeral of all baptized Christians. It may be omitted when the deceased is not baptized.

8. The Prayers of the People.
 BCP, pp. 480-481 _____ or BCP pp. 497. _____
 We recommend the first option, adapted to contemporary language for a Rite II funeral.

9. The Communion.

Rite 1, Prayer I (p. 333) _____ or Rite 1, Prayer II, (p. 340) _____ or Prayer A (p. 361) _____ or
Prayer B (p. 367) _____ or Prayer C (p. 369) _____ or Prayer D (p. 371) _____ or
Enriching Our Worship Prayer 1 _____ or Prayer 2 _____ or Prayer 3 _____ .

10. Additional requests:

13. It would be helpful if you would attach a finished obituary or the outline of an obituary.

Signature

Date

Copies of this form should be given to your family, your attorney, your designated Executor and the church office at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church, 1620 Prospect St, Ewing, NJ 08638-3031.

If you need any assistance in completing this form, please do not hesitate to contact the clergy.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

This is not a complete list of recommended hymns for funerals, but suggestions of the more popular or more widely known hymns. Any hymn from an approved Episcopal Hymnal can be used a funeral.

Any Easter hymn	636 How firm a foundation
194 Jesus live, thy terrors now	645 The King of love
208 The strife is o'er	662 Abide with me
287 For all the saints	664 My shepherd will supply my need
314 Humbly I adore thee (communion)	665 All my hope on God is founded
324 Let all flesh keep silence (communion)	671 Amazing Grace
335 I am the bread of life (communion)	680 O God, our help in ages past
357 Jesus, son of Mary	687 A mighty fortress is our God
383 Fairest Lord Jesus	690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
455 O love of God, how strong and true	691 My faith looks up to thee
473 Lift high the cross	694 God be in my head
474 When I survey the wondrous cross	707 Take my life and let it be
487 Come, my way, my truth, my life	708 Savior, like a shepherd lead us
488 Be thou my vision	LEVAS 72 Just a closer walk with thee
517 How lovely is thy dwelling place	LEVAS 91 Give me Jesus
562 Onward Christian soldiers	LEVAS 103 Steal away, steal away to Jesus
608 Eternal Father, strong to save	LEVAS 106 Precious Lord
620 Jerusalem, my happy home	LEVAS 184 Blessed Assurance
623 O what their joy and their glory must be	LEVAS 188 When peace like a river
635 If thou but trust in God to guide thee	LEVAS 191 His eye is on the sparrow