

The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew

Burial Planning Form

All of us go down to the dust, yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Full Name:

Introduction

As we are reminded every Ash Wednesday, we are but dust—and to dust we shall return. Death is a reality that we all will one day experience. But while each of us dies in the sure and certain hope of Resurrection, those we leave behind are faced with urgent and difficult decisions. It can make their burden lighter if the one who has died has recorded his or her wishes about funeral and related matters. That is the reason for this packet.

The Prayer Book offers some guidance about the nature of a funeral service:

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 the 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 would you want your life and your resurrection to be celebrated? Think, pray, reflect; if you can, discuss it with your family or those closest to you. Our clergy are always available to help with this consideration and with any of the personal or theological complexities it may bring up. Finally, return this form to the Church office, where it will be kept in a confidential file until the day it is needed. (Of course, you may also amend it at any time—and it’s not a bad idea to review it every few years to make sure it continues to say what you want it to.)

The Funeral Service

1. Do you have a preference about which funeral home is used? If so, please provide a contact person, their address, and phone number.

2.) Do you want to be cremated?

3.) Do you want to have a funeral service in the church (which the Church encourages), at the funeral home, or elsewhere?

4.) Would you like for there to be communion at your funeral? (Many faithful people choose to have communion; many more choose not to have it, especially if it might leave out some of the people likely to be at the service.)

5.) The Rector or Associate Rector is the chief celebrant at funerals, unless she or he is unavailable. However, other clergy are welcome to participate, to preach, or even (in the case of Episcopal clergy) to lead the service in its entirety, if there is a particular reason for that to happen. Are there any particular clergy whom you would like to participate in the service? If so, is there anything in particular you would like them to do? Please provide names and contact information (phone numbers, addresses):

6.) Would you like your body, or your ashes to be present at the service? Where would you like to be buried or have your ashes scattered (cemetery, garden, other)?

The funeral service in Episcopal Churches is almost always based on the Burial Office as found in the Book of Common Prayer. In order to think about the questions that follow, it would be helpful for you to have a prayer book handy. If you need to borrow one, feel free to take one home from church, and bring it back the following week. You will also want a Bible handy if you would like to choose the readings for your service, and a hymnal if you want to choose hymns. Both can likewise be borrowed from the Church. If you do not want your funeral service to follow the Prayer Book, then the questions below may not be much help; yet planning ahead is especially important in such cases. Please speak to our clergy about how to make such plans.

7.) There are two funeral rites offered in the Prayer Book. Burial I is the traditional language service (similar to Rite I of the Eucharist, which we use at eight o'clock on Sundays). Burial II is the contemporary language version (similar to Rite II, our ten o'clock liturgy). Burial I begins on page 469 of the Prayer Book; Burial II on page 491. Keeping in mind your own preferences and what will best speak to those likely to gather at your funeral, do you have a preference for which rite we use?

8.) There are a number of readings that are typically used at funerals, though other readings can be substituted. The following are the ones most often chosen.

From the Old Testament:

Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death forever)

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)

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, 42-45, 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)

Revelations 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)

Revelations 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

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 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)

With the help of your Bible, read through these passages. If you would like, choose one passage from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and one from the Gospel (it's fine just to check them off on the list above). If there is another passage of scripture that is important to you that you would like to use instead, note it here:

9.) Usually we say at least one Psalm, and sometimes more. Psalms especially appropriate for funerals include:

Psalm 23 (The Lord is my shepherd)

**This can be used in either the modern or the traditional version on page 476 in Prayer Book. Please indicate if you have a preference.*

Psalm 121 (I will lift up my eyes to the hills)

Psalm 46 (God is our hope and our strength)

Psalm 42 (As the deer longs for the water-brooks)

Psalm 139:1-11 (Lord, you have searched me out and know me)

Psalm 106:1-5 (Hallelujah! Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good)

If you would like, choose one or two of the Psalms above (you will find the full versions in your Prayer Book or Bible). If there is another Psalm you would like to use instead, note it here:

10.) Would you like music at your funeral? If so, are there any particular hymns that are important to you that you would like to have used? Any hymns from *Hymnal 1982* (blue book), *Wonder, Love, and Praise* (green book), or *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (black book) are acceptable; hymns from other sources are generally fine as well, but may be a challenge to get access to on short notice. In *Hymnal 1982* hymn numbers 174-213, 287, 354-358, 376, 390, 410, 429, 482, 487, 517, 522, 526, 556, 557, 593, 613-625, 636-637, 645-646, 658, 664, 680, 686-688, 690, 692 are especially appropriate for burials, and 300-347 are appropriate for communion. If you would like, choose up to three hymns. Please provide the name of the hymnal, title or first line, and the hymn number.

Hymnal	Title or first line	Hymn #
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11.) Are there particular people you would like to ask to participate in your service? If there are, please indicate who, and the role you would like each to take:

Pall Bearers or Person to carry ashes:

Ushers (usually two):

Reader(s) (one or two, depending on how many lessons you chose; a clergy person always reads the Gospel):

Musical Soloists:

12.) The celebrant will sometimes offer a short homily. Sometimes others, such as members of the family, ask to share reflections about the life being celebrated. Would you want a homily or reflections offered at your service?

13.) Are there other things you would want for your funeral that have not been covered here? Particular prayers or readings, poems, songs, anything that you feel would help your family and friends to better hold you in their love and prayers?

Other Matters (Optional)

The days after death are confusing and difficult. There are an enormous number of decisions to be made, and often a shortage of information upon which to base them. Sometimes it can be helpful to your survivors to have a list of important people such as lawyers and accountants, information about the location of your important papers, and so forth. You may want to keep such a list in your home, for easy updating while you are alive, and easy retrieval after your death. Alternatively, you may want to keep such a list someplace where it will not be seen by others until it is needed. If you like, you can provide such information here, where it is likely to be found in the course of planning for your funeral service. You might want to leave copies of this information with trusted friends or relatives as well.

Lawyer name, phone number and address:

Accountant name, phone number and address:

Location of your will:

Life insurance policies (identify by company, policy number, agent, or otherwise)

Bank or other accounts (identify by institution and account number)

Do you have prepaid funeral arrangements? Where?

Are there people you want notified of your death? Who, and how can they best be reached?

Name	Address	Phone Number
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And finally, while you are healthy and strong...

Do you have a living will, and/or a healthcare power of attorney? These documents can make all the difference between getting the sort of medical care you want, and getting the sort of medical care you do not want, if you are unable to speak for yourself.

It is important to have these documents signed, witnessed, and current; it is also important that your family or friends know that they exist, what they say, and where they are!

Does your will say what you want it to? Many people fail to make wills, and their property goes to their descendants by operation of law. Many more people do make wills, and then forget all about them. Years pass, situations change—if you have not looked at your will recently, do so now; if it needs updating, take care of it.

If the Church is important to you, consider making it a beneficiary under your will. Such bequests help the Church to thrive and flourish, and are a gift to those who faithfully follow where you have led the way. A bequest to The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew, Greenfield, Massachusetts will reach the intended recipient. If you would like further information, sample bequests, or information on types of planned gifts, please speak to the Clergy or to a member of The Third Century Society of Saints James and Andrew.

Are there any broken relationships, bad feelings, grudges, or hurts that could be healed while there is still plenty of time? There is no better time than now to bury old hatchets, to reconcile with those you are estranged from, to ask forgiveness of those you have harmed, and to reconnect with those you have drifted away from.

This is hard spiritual work, but it leads to joy. Our clergy would love nothing more than to help you begin such healing.

Signature

The requests and comments I have written above are meant to guide those who are planning my funeral and attending to other matters arising from my death. Nothing contained here is intended to create, amend, or constitute a Will, or to have any other legal effect.

Signed:

Date:

****We recommend you keep one copy in your personal records, and another copy to our clergy, which will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Clergy's Office.***