



# Saint James Episcopal Church

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Greenfield, Massachusetts  
The Rev. Heather J. Blais, Rector

## Funeral Policy

### Introduction

The clergy, staff and people of Saint James Church are glad to be able to provide support to anyone in the greater community who has suffered a death among family or friends. Please contact the church office to let us know of your loss. You may also contact the office to request Last Rites (special prayers said at the time of death). We will do our best to assist you during this difficult time.

If you are interested in an Episcopal funeral or memorial service at Saint James, please read through this policy. If you are interested in using one of our spaces to host a funeral or memorial service, please read the section titled, *A Memorial Service Your Way*, on Page 3 of this policy.

### Advanced Arrangements

The clergy of Saint James Church strongly encourages members to outline their wishes for a funeral in advance. To help members plan and record their wishes for funeral and related matters, Saint James has created a planning guide, *Funeral Instructions and Other Final Matters*, that will aid members in expressing their wishes (i.e. burial, cremation, hymns, reflections, readings, participants, and whether or not to have communion as part of the service). Once you have completed the document, you are invited to schedule a time to meet with the Rector. The Rector will keep a copy of your wishes in a secure file. You can update it at any time.

### What is Christian Burial?

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all 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*" (Romans 8:38). 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.

### **Guidelines for planning the service**

Upon the death of your loved one, please notify the office as soon as possible, and schedule a time to meet with the Rector. The Rector will walk the family through a series of questions, using our *Service Planning Checklist*, a form found on our website.

In the Episcopal Church, a funeral may be held with the body present in a coffin or with the ashes present; or a memorial service may be held in the church without the remains. The Rector will be happy to support you as you make decisions, and discuss with you the theological and pastoral considerations for all of these approaches, as well as the timing of the service. The Rector will also be happy to provide or make referrals for grief counseling.

Following the guidelines of our Book of Common Prayer, baptized Christians are usually buried from the church and we encourage a service to be held at a time when the congregation has the opportunity to be present, though we can also hold graveside services if desired.

### **Celebrant**

At Saint James, the Rector is the chief celebrant at Episcopal funeral and memorial services, unless she or he is unavailable, or has given her or his blessing for another clergy to celebrate. 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. A \$200 donation is suggested, made payable to the Rector.

### **Music**

The regular organist(s), our Parish Musicians, will assist with music if available at the desired time. The service of other organists or other musicians may be used only with permission of our Parish Musicians. The Parish Musicians will consult with the Rector to select the music requested by the family during the funeral and offer a short program of music preceding the service and a postlude. A \$250 payment is required, made payable to the Parish Musicians. If the services of a soloist or other musicians are required, there will be additional fees.

### **Facility Fees**

Saint James Church and All Saints Chapel are available to active members of Saint James without charge, although a \$25 suggested donation is encouraged to cover the additional time required to clean and prepare the sanctuary before and after the funeral. Checks are made payable to Saint James, with "Building Use" written on the memo line.

### **Altar Flowers**

Saint James Flower Guild would be happy to prepare two simple flower bouquets in our brass vases, given to the Glory of God in honor of your loved one. A \$25 fee is required. Checks are made payable to Saint James, with "Flowers" written on the memo line. If the family would like to provide additional flowers, they may be displayed in front of the altar rail (i.e. not in the altar area). Floral arrangements for a funeral or memorial service are customarily left in the sanctuary for the Sunday service. If the service falls during Advent or Lent, when no flowers are used on Sundays, then the family removes floral arrangements after the service and is welcome to take the flowers home.

## **Reception**

The Parish Hall and Whiteman Room are available for a reception following the service, if not already booked for another event. If you are interested in one of these spaces for a reception, contact the Parish Administrator to check on availability and prices.

The Parish Administrator can recommend a variety of local caterers. It is expected that caterers will furnish all linens and serving pieces. Caterers are responsible for following the guidelines set forth in our rental agreement policy.

The Barnabas Guild, our hospitality ministry team, can arrange to set up, greet the caterer or family with the food, arrange the food on platters, prepare coffee and tea, serve, and clean up. A \$100 donation is suggested, made payable to Saint James with "Barnabas Guild" on the memo line. The services of the Barnabas Guild are based on availability. You may request this through the Parish Administrator who will have the head of the Barnabas Guild contact you directly.

## **A Memorial Service Your Way**

The clergy, staff, and people of Saint James Church understand that some members of the greater community are not interested in an Episcopal Burial Service led by the Rector, but instead, are simply in need of a space to host a funeral or memorial service, and/or reception for their loved one. We would be happy to share our spaces with you as a rental. We have a variety of spaces that may be used. Saint James Church and All Saints Chapel may be used for any type of Christian memorial services. Our Parish Musicians must be contacted in advance to inquire about the use of our organ and piano in the church (See "Music" above). Our Parish Hall, Whiteman Room, and Lawn may be used for other religious and non-religious memorial services. If you are interested in renting one of our spaces for a memorial service and/or reception, please contact our Parish Administrator.