



EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF THE
ASCENSION

FUNERAL GUIDELINES

A Christian funeral is a bittersweet mix of grief at the loss of a loved one, and joy in our hope of the Resurrection as given to us by Jesus Christ. At the time of death, people turn to the church, as they have done for centuries, for rituals that will strengthen and comfort them, and will honor the deceased. Christian burial is an act of worship where we recall our baptism into Christ's death, where we mourn with others, and take comfort in the gift of eternal life. Celebrating the Holy Eucharist within the Burial Office is appropriate, because in communion we proclaim that "Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again."

In preparation for Christian burial, we encourage you to counsel with family members and your clergy well ahead of time about your wishes, concerns and other issues. Pre-arrangements allow you to have control over your final wishes. They can be a great comfort to grieving family members, who are relieved from having to make difficult decisions in a time of distress.

We encourage you to do the following:

***Create a Will and/or an Estate Plan** for the disposition of your property and your finances

***Designate a Power of Attorney**, someone you trust to handle your affairs (other than medical or health related) if you become unable to do so

***Complete a Directive to Physicians**, designating your end of life care wishes (also known as a DNR order) -- available at most hospitals and online

***Complete a Medical Power of Attorney**, naming someone you trust to handle your medical decisions should you become incapacitated (available at most hospitals)

***Complete a Pre-Arranged Funeral Plan** through the funeral home or crematory of your choice. Please make clergy aware of any pre-arranged plans with funeral homes, as we will need to work with them regarding the reception of the body into the Church and the committal afterwards

AND Complete this Funeral Guidelines document

*** An attorney can assist you in completing a Will and your Advance Directives. There are resources online as well at www.mydirectives.com or Texas.gov (<https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/forms/advance-directives>)

Keep copies of all of the above documents. Give a copy to your attorney, trusted family members, your physicians and all Powers of Attorney. Give a copy of your funeral plans to your clergy so that we may have your wishes on file.

***NOTE:** Emergency Medical Technicians tell us that it is very helpful for you to have a copy of these documents, placed in a manila envelope, taped to your refrigerator, with the words, "END OF LIFE CARE PLANS" written clearly on the front. This can save precious time and avoids confusion in times of sudden medical crises.*

When Death is Near

Please contact your clergy through the church office (214-340-4196) when a death is near or is imminent. Your Ascension clergy and staff will do everything we can to be present to you and your loved ones with Scripture, prayers, anointing and other ministrations of the Church. Understanding the personal distress that comes with loss, we can be of great support to family members struggling with "what happens next."

At the Time of Death

Please notify your clergy at Ascension of the death as soon as possible. This is the quickest way to ensure that you receive timely pastoral presence and care. Your priests will then will contact staff and begin to make preliminary arrangements.

Funeral Scheduling

Funerals and memorial services cannot be scheduled on Sundays because of the other services and programs of the church. This is true of many holy days as well, including, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday or Easter Day. Services are most often scheduled mid morning or early afternoon. We make every attempt to honor a grieving family's wishes; however, the Church calendar includes previously scheduled worship services, special events and classes throughout the year that must be considered when planning for a funeral.

The Book of Common Prayer states that the body (casket or cremains) will be present at the funeral. Grief experts agree that this provides the means to begin the acceptance of the reality of the death, and as such, the movement forward towards healing. However, please know that a Memorial Service or Burial Office also may be held at Ascension without the presence of the deceased's earthly remains. We know that the soul is already with God.

The Pall

The Book of Common Prayer states that the coffin or urn be covered with a pall (an embroidered cloth provided by the parish) during the service. The pall symbolizes that we are all equal in God's sight. If the casket is covered by flowers or a flag when it arrives in the Narthex, the altar guild or funeral home attendants will remove the covering for the service and replace it upon exit from the sanctuary. An open casket is never part of the worship service, if desired, this would be offered in a different part of the building, such as the Parish Hall or Narthex.

The Program

Ascension provides a printed order of service. Any photographs or other printed text MUST be approved by the clergy.

The Homily and Personal Reflections

During the Burial Office, a brief homily is preached by the clergy or authorized lay preacher. Additional personal reflections or testimonies can be offered as a part of a reception. Noting this as we plan the reception is helpful so we can plan accordingly.

Photography

Ascension requests that there be no photography or videos during the Burial Office.

Flowers

After the date and time of the funeral has been determined, clergy will contact the Flower Guild with the family's requests. Altar flowers will remain at the altar. If flowers are delivered to the church from family and friends, they will be placed appropriately in the Narthex or arranged in the reception area. Family may choose to take these arrangements home with them. If a family wishes no flowers at all, this is also acceptable.

Music

Music is an important aspect of our worship. Our parish organist works closely with the clergy and other staff and is available to play for funerals (see fee schedule attached). A soloist, choir or instrumentalists may be provided for an additional fee. All music must be approved by the organist/choirmaster, and clergy, including any independent musicians or vocalists engaged privately by the family.

Because the Burial Office is a sacred worship service, only sacred music is permitted. We strongly suggest hymns from *The Hymnal 1982* be included in the service. Two or three hymns are usually sung at a service without Holy Eucharist, while three or four hymns may be sung at a service with Holy Eucharist. Suggested hymns are included on page six of this document.

Scripture Readings

The Episcopal Burial Office includes four Scriptural lessons. One lesson is from the Old Testament, one is from the Psalms, one is from the Epistles, and one is from the Gospels. Non-scriptural readings are discouraged within the service. Suggested readings are included on page six of this document.

Attending the Family

Family members and any persons involved in reading or speaking roles are encouraged to arrive at the church an hour prior to the service. Family and close friends will gather in our Parlor for pastoral care, final instructions about the service and prayer. Family will be seated prior to the service by our ushers and will be escorted out in advance of the congregation's departure.

Reception After the Funeral

If you wish to host a reception for family and friends after the funeral, Ascension's Hospitality Committee may assist you. Please inform clergy should you desire a reception at the church.

Ascension Memorial Garden

Ascension's Memorial Garden is a lovely sacred space for the interment of cremains. Shaded by trees, with tables and benches for quiet reflection, it is a place of respect and prayer. There are no individual ground markers; a bronze plaque with your loved one's name is placed on the memorial wall by the garden. Please notify your priest if you desire more information about this interment option.

Funeral Fees

There are costs associated with having a funeral, families typically help to cover these costs. Ascension suggests a \$1,200 fee, to cover internal costs of space (Nave and Parish Hall), clergy, organist, a printed order of service with picture and biography as provided by the family, and flowers in the Nave.

Ascension Memorial Garden (Includes interment and bronze wall plaque)	\$500
Additional Altar Flowers or flowers for the Parish Hall	per request
Reception costs vary on what is requested	
Sound or multimedia for the reception	
Choir (by special request)	\$500
Outside Professional Musicians/Soloists (Must be approved by organist/choirmaster)	\$200+/- per person

Liturgies:

Rite I (traditional language)
 Rite II (contemporary language)
 With Holy Eucharist
 Without Holy Eucharist

Burial service (with body/cremains)
 Memorial service (no body/cremains)
 Graveside service only
 Interment

Hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*

180	He is risen	473	Lift high the cross
182	Christ is alive	482	Lord of all hopefulness
208	The strife is o'er, the battle done	516	Come down, O love divine
293	I sing a song of the saints of God	541	Come, labor on
304	I come with joy	618	Ye watchers and ye holy ones
335	I am the bread of life	620	Jerusalem, my happy home
362	Holy, holy, holy	645	The King of love
376	Joyful, joyful, we adore thee	657	Love divine, all love excelling
383	Fairest Lord Jesus	671	Amazing grace
390	Praise to the Lord	680	Oh God, our help in ages past
410	Praise my soul, the King of heaven	688	A mighty fortress is our God
439	What wondrous love	690	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

Please select from the following Scriptures**Old Testament:**

Job 19:21-27a	I know that my redeemer lives
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
Ecclesiastes 3:1-9	For everything there is a season

Psalms:

23, 27, 42:1-7, 46, 90:1-12, 106:1-5, 116, 121, 130, 139:1-11

Epistles:

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39	The glory that shall be revealed
I Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58	The imperishable body
II Corinthians 4:16, 5:9	Things that are unseen are eternal
I John 3:1-2	We shall be like him
Revelation 7:9-17	God will wipe away every tear
Revelation 21:2-7	Behold, I make all things new

Gospel Readings: (The Gospel is always included when there is Holy Eucharist)

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 14:1-6	In my Father's house are many rooms

PERSONAL FUNERAL PLAN

Date: _____

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Legal Next of Kin: _____

Address: _____

Contact Info: _____

Designated Powers of Attorney (if different from above): _____

Address: _____

Contact Info: _____

People I would like notified of my death:

Contact Info: _____

Date of Last Executed Will: _____

Location of Will and other Legal Documents: _____

Pre-Arranged Funeral Plan: ___Y ___ N

If yes, name of Funeral Home: _____

Address and Phone: _____

If no pre-arrangements, I would like my arrangements to be handled by:

Address and Phone: _____

I desire that my funeral to take place at (location): _____

I desire that my burial/interment take place at (location): _____

Organ Donor: ____Y ____ N

I prefer to be _____ buried in a coffin OR _____ cremated

Preferred Liturgy: (circle one)

Rite I (traditional language)

Rite II (contemporary language)

With Holy Eucharist

Without Holy Eucharist

Burial service (with body/cremains)

Memorial service (no body/cremains)

Graveside service only

Interment

Preferred Celebrant or Officiant: _____

Preferred Readers:

Preferred Acolytes:

Preferred Pallbearers:

Scripture Readings: Old Testament _____

Psalm _____

Epistle _____

Gospel _____

Service Music:

Music desired: Y N

Organist: Y N

Choir: Y N

Soloist: Y N

Name(s): _____

Additional Musicians: Y N

Names: _____

Preferred Hymns:

Opening Hymn _____

Hymn Before Gospel _____

Communion Hymn _____

Final Hymn _____

Altar Flowers: Y N

Flowers Desired: _____

Colors: _____

In lieu of flowers, I request that a charitable donation be made to the following organization(s):

Please consider including a bequest to the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in your Will or Estate Plan. Contact the church office at 214-340-4196 for more information.

Other Information for my survivors: _____
