



# Funerals at Calvary Church



**CALVARY**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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*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.*

— *The Book of Common Prayer, page 507*

At the time of death, people turn to the Church for rituals which allow them to recognize their loss, express their grief, remember and give thanks for the life of the one who has died, mark the end of relationships which exist in this life, allow them to seek strength and comfort in their faith, and provide dignity and meaning to the end of life. The rites of the Church are appropriate at several junctures in the passage from life into death. Long before death is a reality, the church can help people plan for the funeral and address other issues and concerns. Near the point of death, the Church can be present in a ministry to the dying person and his or her family and friends. After death, there is the funeral service and committal of the body to a final resting place.



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### ***In Advance***

Decisions about care at the end of life and about funeral services can be considered and addressed at any time. The clergy are available to speak about these concerns. [Forms available from the church office provide a place to record information and express preferences about your funeral service.]

### ***Near the Time of Death***

The clergy should be called so that a priest may be present to minister both to the dying person and to the family. This ministry can include pastoral care, reflection, prayers, and sacraments as appropriate.

### ***The Funeral Service***

*The death of a member of the church should be reported as soon as possible to, and arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with, the minister of the congregation.*

***The Book of Common Prayer***, page 490

**Please notify the clergy immediately when death occurs.** The clergy can then offer pastoral care and guide the family in planning the details of the funeral service.

Please do not announce the date or time of the funeral service until arrangements have been made with the church and with the clergy.

*Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church.*

***The Book of Common Prayer***, page 490

We recommend that all funeral services be held in the church. The nave of the church or one of the chapels may be the appropriate location, depending on the size and form of the service.

The time of the service will be chosen in consultation with the clergy.

The service follows the Burial Office in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Both traditional language (Rite I, page 469) and contemporary language (Rite II, page 491) versions of the service are provided. The service may include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion).

A selection of Scripture readings and Psalms is provided within the Prayer Book services. A favorite psalm or Scripture passage of the deceased might be appropriate. Decisions about these or any other suitable readings will be made in consultation with the clergy. A member of the family or other lay person(s) may serve as a reader at the funeral service.

A homily or sermon is usually preached by one of the clergy. The homily fits with the purpose of the burial liturgy as a whole: to speak the Gospel of hope in the Resurrection, to remember the life of the person who has died, and to encourage those who are bereaved. A family member or friend may wish to offer a remembrance in addition to the sermon. This is an extremely difficult task to take on in the midst of grief, and such a decision should be considered carefully.

Music can be a deeply meaningful part of the funeral liturgy. Hymns sung by the congregation can allow those gathered to praise God, proclaim faith, and express emotions. Organ music can enhance the sense of comfort and strength, and expresses the depth and breadth of our confidence and hope.

Choices about music are always made in consultation with the clergy and the Director of Music.



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If flowers for the church are desired, the family is responsible for providing them. Consult the parish office **before** ordering flowers for specific guidance and direction about the choice of flowers for use in Calvary Church.

When the body is present in the church for the service, the casket is always covered simply with the church's funeral pall or with a national flag. No flowers are placed on the casket.

The parish office will provide a modest Order of Service bulletin for the funeral service. An order of service is helpful in allowing all those present to participate in the service. The clergy and Director of Music will work with the office staff in preparing the bulletin. An expression of thanks from the family or any special information for the congregation may be included in the bulletin. The clergy will consult with the family about the bulletin.

The committal of the body or ashes may take place immediately following the funeral service or at another time convenient for the family. Arrangements should be discussed with the clergy. Calvary Church has a columbarium for ashes, and information about the columbarium can be obtained from the church office.

### *Visitation*

Choices about viewing the body and visitation with friends are made by the family, in accordance with their customs and wishes and the wishes of the person who has died. Some families prefer to receive friends at the family home. The viewing may take place at the funeral home or in the church. The Parish Hall or other space at Calvary Church is also available for visitation, either prior to the funeral or following the service. If the family wishes to have a reception following the service, the parish will provide a place and coffee and tea for the reception. Arrangements can be made through the church office.

***Arrangements  
and Costs***

In general, funeral arrangements are made using the services of a funeral director. Times for services should always be determined in consultation with the church office and the clergy. The plans and wishes of the deceased and family should determine the decisions about funeral arrangements.

Specific costs for the funeral will be explained by the funeral director. There is no charge for the use of the church. Families may choose to make a donation to the church, to the discretionary fund of the officiating clergy, to the organist, and to the sexton.

***After the  
Funeral***

Grief is the normal human reaction to the loss of a significant person. Grieving is a process that takes time and is different for each individual. Following a death, the clergy and the community of Calvary Church want to support the bereaved throughout the time of mourning. Please do not hesitate to turn to us for help.



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