

Calvary - Burial and End of Life Preferences

Revised Summer 2018 by Reverend Maureen O'Connor

As the Book of Common Prayer States -

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." 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.

Even with this truthful and pastoral introduction, planning a funeral is rarely a joyful task. You can help make the process easier for your family and loved ones if you make a few of your wishes known beforehand. The following will be considered a guide to those left behind to arrange a pleasing service, though it may not be followed to the letter. If you so desire, the parish office will keep a copy of this form on files.

General information about your burial preferences:

Where would you like to be buried?

Would you like to be cremated or interred?

Do you wish a viewing/wake/visitation?

Will you be an organ donor? Have body donated to science?

Do you have a funeral home or cremation society in mind?

Have you informed your family about these preferences?

Now some questions about the church service:

Hymns and Songs I particularly like:

Not all services contain music, but many do. An organist is often able to incorporate "unchurched" music into a service. It is appropriate to list out your favorite hymns here, as well as a few other secular or classical artists you particularly enjoy and think would be appropriate.

(Scripture) Readings I have always enjoyed:

An Episcopal funeral contains at least one reading from the Holy Scriptures. If there is to be communion, one of the readings must be from the Gospel. Appropriate passages are suggested in the BCP, pages 494-495 – but for our purposes today, it might be more instructive to list some of your favorite passages – whether they're from the Gospels, Psalms or even apocrypha. You may also point the priest towards favorite poems and other non-scriptural readings.

A few people I would really like to be involved in my service:

Funerals have many opportunities for lay participation – whether it's readings, prayers, or remembrances. Some may ask not to have a speaking role, while others may serve as ushers or as pall bearers. The priest will work with your family and those you name to include as many of them as possible in the service.

Would you like someone other than the priest to offer remembrances? If so, who?

Those who offer remembrances will be asked to abide by the guidelines provided by the priest, and will be limited to three at the most. With rare exceptions, it is expected that the priest will preach and will be the final speaker.

Is it important to have communion at your service? Any other general notes?

This is the place to specify if you'd like to use Rite I, or want specific flowers, or really hate "Amazing Grace." Attach an additional sheet if necessary.

General Planning/Thoughts:

Three words about what I like about the church/my church:

Three words about what I *don't* like about the church/my church:

Three words I'd like to be remembered for/as:

And finally ...

Have you remembered All Saints in your will?

Have you made sure to speak with your family about your final plans wishes¹?

¹ Did you notice that I asked this twice? That's because it's by far the most important question!