



# ∞ PLANNING YOUR FUNERAL SERVICE ∞

Christian burial—your burial—is marked by three characteristics.

- It is an act of **worship** wherein we glorify God for the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ.
- It is a liturgy of **celebration** whereby we give thanks for the gift of *your* life among us and commend you to the care of our loving God.
- It is a time when members of the Body of Christ **gather to comfort** one another and to offer mutual assurance of God’s abiding love.

The earliest records of Christian burial tell us that the following elements were included:

- Prayer in the home with family before the burial
- A gathering of the community for a burial service, consisting of thanksgivings, psalms, hymns, readings from Scripture, and prayers for the departed and those who mourn
- Celebration of the Holy Eucharist
- A procession of lights and torches to the place of burial
- The interment of the remains



When completing this packet, it is suggested that you take your time. Consult with your family and clergy. Planning your own Burial Service, is a profound, spiritual exercise for most people. You will need to read about the service in *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP, 468–507). The rubrics (fine italic print) on these pages are of particular interest. You will also need a *Hymnal, 1982*. And a *Bible*.

The information you will provide in the packet will give invaluable guidance to your family and clergy when they are planning the events around your death and burial service. **You do not have to make every decision or fill in every blank.** Many details will have to be decided at the time according to circumstances. Funerals, as the saying goes, may be for the living. But they should reflect *your* values and wishes. Any information will be helpful, and will be honored as best we can.

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*Full Name (please print)*

*Date*

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*Address, PO Box, and/or Apartment # Street Address, PO Box, and/or Apartment #*

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*City State Zip Code City State Zip Code*

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*Next of Kin Full Name*

*Date*

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*Address and phone number*

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*City State Zip Code City State Zip Code*

**File this information where it will be found easily upon your death.** By the time your family finds this in a safety deposit box or in a file folder at your attorney's office, it will be too late to be of any significance. **It is suggested that you file this with your local church** and tell your family that this form has been completed for their information.

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Your date and place of Birth

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Date and place of Baptism, if known.

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Father's Full Name  Living  Decreased

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Mother's Full Name  Living  Decreased

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Spouse or Life Partner Full Name  Living  Decreased

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Siblings  Living  Decreased

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Siblings  Living  Decreased

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Siblings  Living  Decreased

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Siblings  Living  Decreased

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Children  Living  Decreased

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Children  Living  Decreased

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Children  Living  Decreased

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Children  Living  Decreased

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Your Occupation

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Employer

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\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

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Date of last executed will

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Location of will

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Executor's name and address

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**Note**

*NJSA 3B:10-21.1 provides for the appointment of a Funeral & Disposition Representative. "Prior to probate, a decedent's appointment of a person in a will to control the funeral and disposition of human remains may be carried out in accordance with section 22 of P.L. 2003, c.261 (C.45:27-22). If known to them, a person named in a will shall notify such a person of their appointment and advise them of what financial means are available to carry out the funeral and disposition arrangements."*

**Sample language for your will may be as follows:** *"I hereby nominate, constitute and appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as my Funeral and Disposition Representative, pursuant to P.L. 2003, c. 261. My Representative shall have the authority and power to control the arrangements for my funeral and the disposition of my remains. My Executor shall notify my Representative of this appointment, and shall advise my Representative of the financial means available to carry out the Funeral and disposition arrangements. In the event \_\_\_\_\_ should predecease me or for some other reason not qualify to serve as my Funeral and disposition Representative, then I nominate, constitute and appoint \_\_\_\_\_ as my Alternative Funeral and Disposition Representative."*

**[This does not constitute legal advice and is provided only for your information.]**

## GENERAL BURIAL INSTRUCTIONS

First of all, know that cremation is a perfectly acceptable choice for members of the Episcopal Church. Creation can be done before or after the Burial (Funeral) Service. The church's process surrounding your death and burial will be largely the same whether you choose direct cremation, an expeditious service and direct burial, or a more traditional embalming and viewing.

The Episcopal tradition is that church members are buried from the church. Members of St. Thomas are also welcome use the church as the venue for a visitation, rather than renting a funeral home. Even with a body, careful use and planning can significantly reduce cost for our families. At this writing, members of St. Thomas may have ashes interred in the Memorial Garden, or in the historic churchyard.

The Prayer Book indicates the body is to be present, whether whole or cremains, for the Burial Service. At this service, the coffin or urn is closed and is always covered by a pall, which the church will provide. Under special circumstances, a memorial service without the body may be held.

## MY BURIAL INSTRUCTIONS

I request my remains to be

- Cremated       directly after death       after the funeral
- Not cremated, not embalmed, not prepared for viewing, but for direct burial following an expeditious funeral service.
- Not cremated, but embalmed and prepared for a viewing and funeral service.

Casket guidance:  Least expensive       Moderate       Elaborate

My preference for a funeral director is:

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I request that my service be conducted at

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Name, City and State of Church

Or at

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The rector or clergy of said congregation shall be in charge of the services.

The Burial of the Dead (the actual funeral service) is a series of psalms, lessons, and prayers. Those traditionally used are suggested in the *Book of Common Prayer*. They are not exclusive. A celebration of the Eucharist may be included.

I request (check one):

- The Burial of the Dead     Rite I     Rite II
- With     Without    Eucharist
- Graveside only

I have strong feelings about the following elements:

- Altar flowers:
  
- Special Musicians:
  
- Pall bearers:
  
- Eulogy and speakers:

Of the BCP suggestions for lessons, I am have some partiality for:

Hebrew Scripture (choose one)

- Isaiah 25:6–9 (He will swallow up death in victory)
- Isaiah 61:1–3 (To comfort all that mourn)
- Lamentations 3:22–26, 31–33 (The Lord is good unto them that wait for him)
- Wisdom 3:1–5, 9 (Souls of the righteous are in the hand of God)
- Job 19:21–27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)
- \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms (circle): 42 46 90 121 130 139 \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament (choose one)

- Romans 8:14–19, 34–35, 37–39 (The glory that shall be revealed)
- 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 35–38, 42–44, 53–58 (Raised in incorruption)
- 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:9 (Things which are not seen are eternal)
- 1 John 3:1–2 (We shall be like him)
- Revelation 7:9–17 (God shall wipe away all tears)
- Revelation 21:2–7 (Behold, I make all things new)
- \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms (circle): 23 27 106 116 \_\_\_\_\_

- Pascha nostrum* (Christ Our Passover) BCP 46, 83
- Nunc dimittis* (Song of Simeon) BCP 51, 93

Gospel (must be included if Eucharist is celebrated)

- John 5:24–27 (He that believeth hath everlasting life)
- John 6:37–40 (All that the Father giveth me shall 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 mansions)
- \_\_\_\_\_

- I request no music, just the spoken service.
- If possible, I would like the following hymns to be sung:

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Easter hymns are especially appropriate. The Easter hymns are (#174–213) in the 1982 Hymnal. Also suggested are the hymns for Holy Communion (#300–347), the Burial (#354–358), and #287, 376, 410, 556, 613-625, 637, 671, 680, and 688. These suggestions are not exclusive. However, music should be confident and strong, expressing the hope and faith that Christians affirm in our life, even if in the presence of death.

*“We all go down to the dust, though even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.” BCP 499.*

I prefer my body or cremains to be:

- Interred at:

- 
- Cremains Scattered at:

- 
- Other
-

I prefer the following funeral home:

\_\_\_\_\_ ; however, my family, proxy, or attorney may make this decision.

- I wish to have my coffin open at the funeral home.
- I do not wish to have my coffin open at the funeral home.
- I wish my visitation or reception to take place at the church.
- I do not wish to have a visitation or reception.
  
- In lieu of flowers, I request that donations be made in my name to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other information that would be helpful:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Christ, \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature and date