

# Funeral Customary

## *Guidelines for Burial Rites*



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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, p. 507)*

## Introduction

The death of a loved one, regardless of the circumstances, can be a traumatic time in the lives of those left behind. While still grieving, families and loved ones are called on to make numerous decisions in a short period of time. This customary is designed to assist those who wish to have their loved ones buried out of St. Matthew's Church. The Rector will work closely with the family in all the planning and preparation.

## General Information

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 Rector.

As clearly stated in the *Book of Common Prayer*, baptized Christians are properly buried from the church. It is, therefore, the general policy at St. Matthew's that funerals take place at the church, rather than at a funeral home or other location.

The committal, whether at a cemetery or in the St. Matthew's memorial garden, may occur before or after the church service, and it may be private (just family) or open to all who attend the funeral.

St. Matthew's parish hall is available, if desired, to be used for a reception following the service.

## Fees

There is a set fee of **\$500.00** to cover all funeral expenses (clergy honorarium, altar flowers, organist's fee, sexton's fee). Checks should be made payable to Saint Matthew's Church with "funeral" in the memo line. *We ask that you please pay this fee prior to the service, if at all possible.* If there are financial difficulties, please consult with the rector (fees may be waived for good cause).

## At the Service

- Families may choose Rite I (traditional language) or Rite II (contemporary language) from the *Book of Common Prayer*.
- St. Matthew's will produce the service bulletin in consultation with the family.
- The coffin or urn may be already in place in the church or may be part of the opening procession. A coffin is always closed in the church and is covered with a pall (symbolizing that we are all equal in the eyes of God), or in the case of a veteran of the Armed Forces, the American Flag.
- With few exceptions, altar flowers are the only flowers to be used during the service and will be arranged by the St. Matthew's altar guild in consultation with the family. Floral displays on the coffin are removed as the coffin enters the church and replaced after the service. All other floral displays should be taken directly to the cemetery by the funeral home staff.
- Displays of pictures of the deceased and other memorabilia are most suited to the visitation at the funeral home prior to the funeral, or at a reception following the funeral. An appropriate photograph of the deceased may be placed on a table at the entrance of the church if desired.
- Family members and friends may participate in the service in the following ways:
  - 1-2 people may offer brief (3-5 min.) remarks of remembrance
  - Select and read the lessons for the service

- Select 1-3 hymns from the Hymnal to be sung during the service
- Serve as pall bearers, if necessary
- It is most appropriate, though not mandatory, to include Holy Communion as part of the burial liturgy. All baptized Christians, regardless of denomination, are invited to receive communion if it is included in the service.

## **Music**

- Our Director of Music, if available, provides for the music at all funerals at Saint Matthew's. Other musicians may participate in consultation with the Rector and the Director of Music.
- All music during the service *will be sacred in nature* (non-sacred music is best reserved for a reception afterwards).

## **Memorial Donations**

It is customary to invite relatives and friends of the deceased to make memorial donations to his/her church community. This invitation may be offered in the obituary and/or the funeral service bulletin. If you would like to do this or have questions about it, please speak with the rector.

## Scripture Choices for the Funeral

*You may choose one or more Scripture passages (a maximum of four). If there is to be Holy Communion at the service, a passage from a Gospel always concludes the readings. You may also choose readings not listed here in consultation with the rector.*

### From the Old Testament

#### **Isaiah 25:6-9 (NRSV)**

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

#### **Isaiah 61:1-3 (NRSV)**

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

#### **Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 (NRSV)**

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not reject for ever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone

#### **Wisdom 3:1-9 (NRSV)**

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of

others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

### **Job 19:21-27 (NRSV)**

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! Why do you, like God, pursue me, never satisfied with my flesh? 'O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

## **From the Psalms**

### **Psalm 23**

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; \*  
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul \*  
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; \*  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; \*  
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, \*  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

### **Psalm 27**

- 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? \*  
the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?

- 2 When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, \*  
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though an army should encamp against me, \*  
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
- 4 And though war should rise up against me, \*  
yet will I put my trust in him.
- 5 One thing have I asked of the LORD; one thing I seek; \*  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;
- 6 To behold the fair beauty of the LORD \*  
and to seek him in his temple.
- 7 For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; \*  
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling and set me high upon a rock.
- 8 Even now he lifts up my head \*  
above my enemies round about me.
- 9 Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation with sounds of great gladness; \*  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.
- 10 Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; \*  
have mercy on me and answer me.
- 11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." \*  
Your face, LORD, will I seek.
- 12 Hide not your face from me, \*  
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
- 13 You have been my helper; cast me not away; \*  
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
- 14 Though my father and my mother forsake me, \*  
the LORD will sustain me.
- 15 Show me your way, O LORD; \*  
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
- 16 Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, \*  
for false witnesses have risen up against me, and also those who speak malice.
- 17 What if I had not believed that I should see the goodness of the LORD \*  
in the land of the living!

### **Psalm 42:1-7**

- 1 As the deer longs for the water-brooks, \*  
so longs my soul for you, O God.
- 2 My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; \*  
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
- 3 My tears have been my food day and night, \*  
while all day long they say to me, "Where now is your God?"
- 4 I pour out my soul when I think on these things; \*  
how I went with the multitude and led them into the house of God,
- 5 With the voice of praise and thanksgiving, \*  
among those who keep holy-day.
- 6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? \*  
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 7 Put your trust in God; \*  
for I will yet give thanks to him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

### **Psalm 46**

- 1 God is our refuge and strength, \*  
a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, \*  
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea;
- 3 Though its waters rage and foam, \*  
and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.
- 4 The LORD of hosts is with us; \*  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
- 5 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, \*  
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 6 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown; \*  
God shall help her at the break of day.
- 7 The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken; \*  
God has spoken, and the earth shall melt away.
- 8 The LORD of hosts is with us; \*  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.



- 9 Come now and look upon the works of the LORD, \*  
what awesome things he has done on earth.
- 10 It is he who makes war to cease in all the world; \*  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.
- 11 “Be still, then, and know that I am God; \*  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”
- 12 The LORD of hosts is with us; \*  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

### **Psalm 90:1-12**

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge \*  
from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, \*  
from age to age you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to the dust and say, \*  
“Go back, O child of earth.”
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past \*  
and like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep us away like a dream; \*  
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; \*  
in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- 7 For we consume away in your displeasure; \*  
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.
- 8 Our iniquities you have set before you, \*  
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
- 9 When you are angry, all our days are gone; \*  
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
- 10 The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; \*  
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
- 11 Who regards the power of your wrath? \*  
who rightly fears your indignation?
- 12 So teach us to number our days \*

that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

### **Psalm 106:1-5**

- 1 Hallelujah! Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, \*  
for his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Who can declare the mighty acts of the LORD \*  
or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Happy are those who act with justice \*  
and always do what is right!
- 4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have for your people, \*  
and visit me with your saving help;
- 5 That I may see the prosperity of your elect and be glad with the gladness of your people, \*  
that I may glory with your inheritance.

### **Psalm 116**

- 1 I love the LORD, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, \*  
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.
- 2 The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; \*  
I came to grief and sorrow.
- 3 Then I called upon the Name of the LORD: \*  
“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”
- 4 Gracious is the LORD and righteous; \*  
our God is full of compassion.
- 5 The LORD watches over the innocent; \*  
I was brought very low, and he helped me.
- 6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, \*  
for the LORD has treated you well.
- 7 For you have rescued my life from death, \*  
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
- 8 I will walk in the presence of the LORD \*  
in the land of the living.
- 9 I believed, even when I said, “I have been brought very low.” \*

In my distress I said, "No one can be trusted."

- 10 How shall I repay the LORD \*  
for all the good things he has done for me?
- 11 I will lift up the cup of salvation \*  
and call upon the Name of the LORD.
- 12 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD \*  
in the presence of all his people.
- 13 Precious in the sight of the LORD \*  
is the death of his servants.
- 14 O LORD, I am your servant; \*  
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.
- 15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving \*  
and call upon the Name of the LORD.
- 16 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD \*  
in the presence of all his people,
- 17 In the courts of the LORD's house, \*  
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

### **Psalm 121**

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; \*  
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the LORD, \*  
the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let your foot be moved \*  
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel \*  
shall neither slumber nor sleep;
- 5 The LORD himself watches over you; \*  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, \*  
nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; \*  
it is he who shall keep you safe.

- 8 The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, \*  
from this time forth for evermore.

### **Psalm 130**

- 1 Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice; \*  
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, \*  
O LORD, who could stand?
- 3 For there is forgiveness with you; \*  
therefore you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; \*  
in his word is my hope.
- 5 My soul waits for the LORD, more than watchmen for the morning, \*  
more than watchmen for the morning.
- 6 O Israel, wait for the LORD, \*  
for with the LORD there is mercy;
- 7 With him there is plenteous redemption, \*  
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

### **Psalm 139:1-11**

- 1 LORD, you have searched me out and known me; \*  
you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places \*  
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, \*  
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.
- 4 You press upon me behind and before \*  
and lay your hand upon me.
- 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; \*  
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
- 6 Where can I go then from your Spirit? \*  
where can I flee from your presence?

- 7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there; \*  
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
- 8 If I take the wings of the morning \*  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 9 Even there your hand will lead me \*  
and your right hand hold me fast.
- 10 If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, \*  
and the light around me turn to night,"
- 11 Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day; \*  
darkness and light to you are both alike.

### **From the New Testament**

#### **Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39**

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, 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.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:50-58**

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through

our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

## **II Corinthians 4:16 - 5:9**

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling— if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

## **I John 3:1-2**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

## **Revelation 7:9-17**

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will

shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

### **Revelation 21:2-7**

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

## **From the Gospels**

### **John 5:24-27**

Jesus said: “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.”

### **John 6:37-40**

Jesus said, “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

### **John 11:21-27**

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even

though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

**John 14:1-6**

Jesus said to his disciples, " Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, " Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, " I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."