**Funerals at St. James, Louisa**

Guidelines 2022

We welcome your inquiry concerning funeral services at St. James Episcopal Church. The information below presents our policies and procedures for a funeral in The Episcopal Church tradition. You are encouraged to read it carefully, and if you have questions or are interested in arranging a funeral at St. Thomas, please call the parish office at 540-967-1665.

**When Death Occurs**

If at all possible, the priest should be notified when a person is near death in order that the ministrations of the Church may be provided. When death occurs, the parish office should be called at once. All arrangements for the funeral must be made only in consultation with the Rector.

**Funeral Service**

The funeral service 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” (Romans 8:38-39). This joy, however, does not make diminish human grief. So, while we rejoice that the one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we join in sorrow and sympathy with those who mourn (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 507).

Since the Episcopal funeral service is a service of worship, it is properly held in a church, unless considerations of space prohibit. It is virtually impossible to carry out the worship of the Church in a funeral home, because our services assume the presence of an altar with its sacred vessels, linens, vestments, Prayer Books, and other appurtenances of worship, which are not available in a funeral chapel, or are transported there only with great inconvenience.

It does not matter whether the deceased was a member of the Church or not, or whether the survivors are members. The Church and its services are available to all. St. James Episcopal Church uses the Book of Common Prayer for its funeral services. The Holy Eucharist is customarily celebrated at funerals. All baptized Christians are invited to receive Holy Communion.  
Though eulogies, or remembrances, are not a part of our funeral liturgy, we understand that they can play an important role in comforting those who are grieving. Therefore we do allow up to 2 people to deliver brief remembrances of the deceased. Each should be no more than 3-5 minutes, and not be a detailed litany of life achievements. Rather they should tell a story, or paint in broad strokes a picture of the joy of life and the Christian hope in death. This will be followed by a brief homily delivered by the officiating priest.  
 **Funeral Policies**

Only the Rector is authorized to make funeral plans with the family and perform the funeral service. The Rector has complete authority over the contents and conduct of the service, authorizes the date and time of service, and which church property space may be used. No funeral services will be conducted at the church when the Rector is unavailable or out of town, or if it conflicts with other previously scheduled church events. Permission to use another Episcopal priest to conduct the service in the absence of the Rector is granted solely by the Rector.

The church will provide printed programs to aid the congregants in following the service. The seating capacity in the church is around 100 with overflow in the Parish hall.

**Pall for the Coffin**

The coffin is to be closed before the service and it remains closed thereafter. A white pall to cover the coffin during the service in the church is provided by the church. This reminds us of the equality of all people before God. In the case of a veteran of the United States military, the coffin may be covered at the burial site or upon leaving the church, by an American flag, if desired. Military funeral ceremonies are appropriately conducted outside the church or at the burial site.

**Cremation**

The Episcopal Church has no objection to cremation. The cremation may take place after the service or beforehand. The ashes may be present at the service, and blessed during the Commendation, if desired.

**Music**

The music for the funeral or memorial service should be taken from hymnals and other sources approved by The Episcopal Church for use in worship services. More importantly, music selections should be appropriate for a funeral or memorial service. Recorded music is not permitted.

The selection of all music for the service is done in consultation with the clergy. St. James Organist/ Music Director will play at all funerals or memorials with music as she is available.  **An honorarium is appropriate for her services,** as she is donating her time to provide this ministry. Musicians requested by the family, in addition to the Organist, are welcome to participate in the service. However, they and their music selections must be approved by the Rector.

**Flowers and Memorial Table**  
Inside the church, flowers at a church funeral are usually displayed as on Sundays, above the Altar in front of the stained glass windows. Flowers are not to be placed on the coffin. A memorial table may be set up in the parish hall and the church allows a small memorial table in the front on the church, when there is no coffin or cremated remains present. The items in the church are limited to pictures and appropriate items of remembrance.

We often use Colonial Florist in Gordonsville, (540) 832-3611 but please make arrangements with church Administrative assistant.

**Wills**  
“The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses” (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 445) Please don’t forget St. James in your will! Our Rector is willing to talk to you about the different options available for you to leave a legacy at St. James Episcopal Church. A “Living Will” (Advanced Care Directives) would be helpful to the doctor and to family members should one become unable to make decisions for oneself.  
Information regarding end-of-life issues can be obtained from the clergy. Also, it is highly encouraged for you to come meet with the priest at some point and plan your funeral. Discuss what is important to you and arrangements.

**Lessons for Burial of the Dead**  
Appropriate lessons are suggested as follows (from the BCP, pp 494-495).

At the burial of a child, the passages from Lamentations, 1 John, and John 6, together with Psalm 23, are recommended.  
From the Old Testament  
Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever)  
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 are in the hands of God)  
Job 19:21-27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)

A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow. The following Psalms are appropriate: 42:1-7, 46, 90:1-12, 121, 130, 139:1-11.

From the New Testament  
Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)  
Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)  
A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow. The following Psalms are appropriate: 23, 27, 106:1-5, 116.

The Gospel  
John 5:24-27 (He who believes has everlasting life)  
John 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will come to you) 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 rooms)

**Suggested Hymns for the Burial of the Dead (from the Hymnal 1982)**

357 Jesus, Son of Mary (Communion)  
671 Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
688 A mighty fortress is our God  
665 All my hope on God is founded  
208 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! The strife is o’er  
287 For all the saints, who from their labors rest  
379 God is Love, let heaven adore him  
690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah  
637 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord – also 636  
517 How lovely is thy dwelling place  
620 Jerusalem, my happy home  
680 O God, our help in ages past  
448 O love, how deep, how broad, how high  
455 O Love of God, how strong and true  
388 O worship the King, all glorious above!  
373 Praise the Lord! Ye heavens adore him  
685 Rock of ages, cleft for me  
492 Sing, ye faithful, sing with gladness  
645 The King of love my shepherd is  
618 Ye watchers and ye holy ones