

FUNERALS

at St. John's Episcopal Church



A Guide to Custom & Practice

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Introduction

Our 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.

Funerals in the Episcopal Church, therefore, are 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 human grief unchristian. The 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 Lazarus. 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.

How to Use This Book

This Funeral Customary is designed to assist individuals and families with decisions related either to their own funerals or the funeral of a loved one. It also includes a Planning Form for key decisions related to the funeral liturgy.

Once you have read through the document and completed the Planning Form, we suggest making at least four copies: one for you, one for the church office, one for your preferred funeral home, and one for your family. It should be reviewed and updated every few years or each time there is a major life change. Parish clergy are happy to discuss any part of the planning process with you.

Who May Have Their Funeral at St. John’s?

While our funeral liturgy is offered primarily for members of St. John’s, one need not be a member of our church to receive the benefits of Christian burial as we understand and offer them. We are not a funeral chapel, *per se*, but anyone in search of dignified Christian burial for a loved one is welcome to call upon our clergy and inquire about the possibilities. All funerals at St. John’s are conducted by our own clergy in accordance with the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*.

Advance Planning

Acknowledging our mortality and planning for the inevitability of death can be one of the most daunting tasks we face as human beings. Advance planning, however, is a gift not only for ourselves but also for our loved ones. Planning ahead ensures that our wishes will be known and relieves much potential stress for loved ones who must otherwise attend to multiple details and decisions on their own, all while coping with the pain of loss. Advance planning should include arrangements for your funeral and religious needs, as well as your legal and estate needs.

Planning with the Church

It is the role of the Church to offer funeral services that express the best of our beliefs and traditions as Christian people and to provide for your loved ones' pastoral needs. The majority of this Funeral Customary is designed to help you make decisions regarding your funeral liturgy, or the funeral of a loved one.

Planning with a Funeral Home

The funeral home provides an invaluable service in helping the family handle the logistics of a funeral. However, the funeral itself is the responsibility of the parish clergy. St. John's has excellent relationships with the funeral homes in Tallahassee and can assist you in choosing one if needed.

Decisions About the Body

Cremation v. Embalment

You may choose to have your body embalmed for burial, cremated, or donated to scientific research per required pre-arrangements. All three options are in keeping with our religious traditions. The Episcopal Church encourages individuals to make this decision in accordance with their family traditions and personal concerns, including financial.

In all cases, it is expected that the mortal remains will be treated with dignity and respect, honoring the individual as a person created in the image of God.

Final Resting Place

Most people specify where they wish their remains to be interred. If embalmed, you may wish to choose a cemetery in your current locale or where other loved ones have been buried. The funeral home can assist you in learning how to purchase a cemetery plot. If cremated, you may wish to have your ashes interred in St. John's Memorial Garden, a cemetery, or some other location significant to you and your loved ones.

Preparing Important Documents

Last Will & Testament

A last will and testament, commonly called a will, is a legal document disclosing one's instructions for the prudent care of one's family and the disposal of one's temporal goods. Wills need not be complicated and can be drawn up with the assistance of a lawyer at little expense.

St. John's encourages you to remember the Church in your planned giving. While schools, universities, etc. receive funding from multiple sources, St. John's relies solely on the generosity of her members. Remembering St. John's Foundation in your will creates a lasting legacy and helps to ensure the security of our parish for generations to come.

Advance Directive & Living Will

An advance directive is a set of written instructions regarding the types of medical care you wish to receive should you become incapable of speaking for yourself. Living wills are a type of advance directive, usually focused specifically on what life-sustaining measures you do or do not wish to receive should death become imminent. These decisions should be made in close consultation with your doctor and loved ones.

Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare

The durable power of attorney for healthcare is given to the person you want to make medical decisions for you in an emergency. Even though you set out your wishes in your living will, such documents can never cover every circumstance, and the person who has a durable power of attorney for healthcare can make decisions not covered by your living will.

Memorial Gifts

Many individuals and families instruct their friends and loved ones to offer memorial gifts to religious or charitable organizations in lieu of flowers. St. John's encourages you to remember the church in your decision making.

When Death Is Imminent

Notifying the Priest

If death is imminent, a priest of the church should be notified, regardless of the hour, to visit the home, hospital, or nursing facility if within reasonable proximity to the church. Please notify the priest by telephone, not email, text, or social media.

Withdrawal of Life-Sustaining Treatment

Families and loved ones are encouraged to call the priest when, in the setting of terminal illness, life-sustaining treatment is to be withheld or withdrawn. Our clergy are available for counsel at the time of the decision if desired, and during the event of withdrawal of life-sustaining measures. The priest may lead those gathered in a litany of prayers written specifically for the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

At the Time of Death

If present at the time of death, the priest may anoint the body and offer the Ministration at the Time of Death (*BCP 462*), a series of prayers formerly known as "Last Rites."

Notifying the Parish of a Death

The church office customarily sends an email notice to the whole parish informing them when the death of a St. John's parishioner has occurred. To ensure the family has adequate time to notify their loved ones directly, the church office will not send the parish wide notice until the family informs the office that it is safe to do so.

If funeral plans are imminent, the office will send one notice to the parish, including funeral details. If plans will require several days to be finalized, the office will send a notice of the death, followed later by a separate notice with funeral details.

The Visitation, Wake or Vigil

Many cultures practice ancient customs such as the visitation or “wake,” in which friends of the deceased call on those closest to her or him, praying and offering consolation or reminiscences.

Visitation or Wake

Visitations most often take place at a funeral home the day before the funeral. The body may be present or absent. Some families choose to celebrate this ritual at home. The visitation may be an appropriate context for eulogies, as the homily given on the day of the funeral should be a proclamation of the Resurrection, not a celebration of life’s accomplishments.

Vigil

A vigil is a ritual of prayers offered for the deceased at a time prior to the funeral. It can take place in the sanctuary, home, or chapel of a funeral home. The body or ashes of the deceased are typically present. Prayers for vigil may be found on pages 465-466 of the *Book of Common Prayer* or pages 13-17 of the supplemental resource *Enriching Our Worship*.

If the body of a departed member is brought into the church the night before the funeral, church members may choose to keep watch in turns with the body through the night until the time of the funeral.

The Funeral

Role of the Funeral Home

Please see page 2.

Location & Time

Location

Baptized Christians are most appropriately buried from the sanctuary. The sanctuary is where we are baptized, confirmed, instructed in the faith, meet and enjoy our friends, exchange wedding vows, and take our joys and sorrows before the Lord week by week. What more fitting place to bid our loved ones farewell and commend them to God’s eternal care?

Occasionally a funeral home chapel or the simple graveside is an appropriate setting, but these options require careful planning between the clergy and funeral home directors. Please make these decisions in consultation with the priest.

Time

Scheduling should be done in consultation with the priest. Considerations may include the availability of the family, clergy, funeral home directors, musicians, and lay ministers.

Officiant(s)

St. John's Clergy

The Rector is normatively the officiant for funerals in connection with St. John's, but other priests employed by the parish may officiate at the request of the Rector and the family.

Guest Clergy

While it may be possible, on occasion, for clergy from outside St. John's to assist in a funeral liturgy, this requires close communication and planning with the officiating priest from St. John's. Please consult the officiating priest prior to making plans or invitations for guest clergy.

The Body or Ashes

Presence of the Body or Ashes

The clear teaching of the New Testament and the Creeds is that our bodies are important to God and that, in fact, we will be raised *in our bodies* on the Last Great Day just as Jesus was raised in his. (*Job 19:25-27, Romans 8:22-24, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, Apostles' Creed*)

The funeral rite therefore assumes the presence of the body or ashes during the service, typically placed in the sanctuary before the chancel steps prior to the start of the service.

While it is possible for various pastoral reasons to hold a service without the presence of a body or ashes, it is not normative. Except in the rarest of circumstance, burial/interment should never precede the funeral.

Closed Casket

Because the focus of the Episcopal funeral liturgy is on the Resurrection, the *Book of Common Prayer* directs that the casket is to be closed before the service, and it remains closed thereafter.

Funeral Pall or Flag

The *Book of Common Prayer* also requires that the casket or urn be covered with a pall, thus reducing distinctions and equalizing all who are buried from the church. St. John's provides the pall. In the case of a veteran, the American flag may be used as the pall.

Flowers

Flowers in the sanctuary should be in keeping with the norms for worship at St. John's. Specifically, two large arrangements may be placed on either side of the cross behind the altar. White flowers are encouraged, as white is the liturgical color of Resurrection, but other colors may be used. Artificial flowers are not permitted.

While an outside florist may be used, St. John's encourages the use of its regular Floral Guild, as they are familiar with our space and customs and can provide beautiful arrangements at a fraction of the cost. The family is responsible for ordering and paying for flowers for the sanctuary.

Additional Tributes

Episcopal custom seeks to offer the same treatment to all who are buried from our church, regardless of their wealth, rank, friends, or status. All are equal in the eyes of the Lord.

For that reason, additional tributes such as photos, paintings, flags (other than one used as the pall), floral sprays, wreaths, houseplants, and baskets—although culturally customary—are *not* to be placed in the sanctuary. If necessary, such tributes may be placed in Graham Lounge or Alfriend Hall.

In lieu of flowers, many people opt to ask for donations to St. John's Foundation or St. John's Episcopal Church.

Ceremonial

Rite I or Rite II

The *Book of Common Prayer* provides the funeral service in both Rite I and Rite II. Rite I contains traditional language (thee, thou, thy, Holy Ghost). Rite II contains modern language (you, your, Holy Spirit).

High or Low

Depending upon the availability of required clergy and acolytes, the liturgy may be “high” which includes the use of incense and chanting of the Opening Anthem and Eucharistic Prayer by the priest, or “low” with simple, spoken ceremonial.

Participants

Family Members & Friends

Typically, the family of the deceased gather 30-60 minutes prior to the service in Grahame Lounge. At the appropriate time, the priest meets and escorts them in procession to the sanctuary, where they are seated as a group in the front pews.

In consultation with the priest, the family may select one or two people to read the scripture readings chosen for the day.

The Congregation

Members of the congregation should make reasonable effort to attend the funeral for a member of the congregation, whether personally well known or not. The congregation’s response offers the central message of Christian faith: that God continues to bring new life out of the loss of death through the recall of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Attending a funeral is part of a wider ministry of compassion to grieving family members and friends. In most cases, reasonable effort should be made in planning to ensure the congregation is able to attend.

Military Honors

Military honors may be observed at the grave *before* the Committal begins.

Civic & Fraternal Organizations

Members of civic or fraternal organizations may serve as honorary pallbearers and be seated as a group in the sanctuary.

Ministrations particular to their order are not to be performed in connection with the funeral or burial liturgies. These are more appropriately offered at the visitation.

Music

A listing of suggested hymns is available on page 28 of this Funeral Customary. Hymns requested by the deceased during advance planning or by the family may be included at appropriate times in the service at the discretion of the priest and Director Music. Care should be taken to choose hymns and songs familiar to those who are likely to be in attendance.

The Organist, Director of Music, Staff Singers, and/or Choir, pending availability, may be engaged to provide music as appropriate for the service. An invitation to guest musicians or vocalists should be made only with the prior permission of the officiating priest and the Director of Music. Payment of any fees or honoraria to any musicians or vocalists are the responsibility of the family.

Popular, Contemporary & Pre-Recorded Music

Music must be in keeping with the norms for worship at St. John's. Selections from movies, Broadway shows, or popular culture are not appropriate for the funeral and may be better utilized at the reception or visitation. Pre-recorded music of any kind, including sacred and Christian music, is not used in the sanctuary.

Service Outline

Funerals officiated in connection with St. John's generally follow the order below, based on the Burial of the Dead, Rite II, in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Materials from Rite I or the supplemental resource *Enriching Our Worship* may be used at the discretion of the officiating priest. Musical selections are placed appropriately throughout.

- The Opening Anthem
- The Collect
- Readings
- The Homily

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Prayers
- Holy Eucharist (*if observed*)
- The Commendation
- The Committal (*if burial follows immediately*)

Several of these components are explained in detail below.

Readings

The *Book of Common Prayer* provides several options for appropriate Scripture readings, listed on page 14 of this Funeral Customary. Other scriptures from the Bible may also be used. Readings from sources other than the Bible are not permitted. St. John's utilizes the NRSV translation.

Lessons from the Old Testament and Epistle should be read by lay persons. If it is desired that readers be members of the family or friends of the deceased, the priest should be informed of their names as soon as possible. Readers unfamiliar with the church should present themselves at least an hour before the service to familiarize themselves with the readings and where and when they will be required to read.

Homily / Eulogies

At St. John's, the preaching/speaking role at funerals is reserved to the clergy. Not only does this alleviate the bereaved of the burden of delivering a speech in the midst of grief; it also ensures the memory of the deceased is set appropriately within a message of Christian hope, the love of God, the triumph of Christ, and the promise of the Resurrection. Eulogies by friends and family members are not offered during the liturgy but may be shared in other settings such as a visitation or reception.

Our clergy are highly skilled at crafting homilies that faithfully capture the essence of the deceased while also proclaiming the promise of the Resurrection. Please trust them with this role.

Creed

The Apostle's Creed on page 496 of the *Book of Common Prayer* is the ancient statement of our Christian faith. It is normatively included at all funerals of baptized members but may, under some circumstances, be omitted.

Prayers

A series of prayers is read, either by the priest or by a reader pre-designated by the family. The form most commonly used at St. John's is on page 465 of the *Book of Common Prayer*, but others may be used, including those on pages 480 or 497 or on pages 79-83 of the supplemental resource *Enriching Our Worship*.

Eucharist

It is customary that Holy Eucharist (i.e. Communion, the Lord's Supper) be included in the funeral. The offerings of bread and wine may be brought to the altar by family members or friends of the deceased. Any of the authorized Eucharistic Prayers may be used; Prayer A and Prayer D are the forms most commonly used for funerals at St. John's. All baptized Christians are invited to come forward to receive Communion.

Commendation

The officiant and other ministers take their places at the body for the prayers of Commendation (*BCP 499*), then bless and dismiss the people and process with the body out of the sanctuary.

Livestream

Please indicate when planning if you would like the service to be livestreamed. St. John's is equipped to livestream the service to St. John's Youtube page at no charge. We are not able to stream to other platforms or personal accounts.

Special Circumstances

Occasionally there are special circumstances involved in a funeral, such as the death of a child, death by suicide, or death of one who does not profess the Christian faith. Rest assured that St. John's clergy have experience and resources for addressing such concerns with grace and care.

The Bulletin

Funeral bulletins printed at St. John's follow a standard format and are designed with care to facilitate the congregation in their worship. Photos, obituaries, poems, and tributes are not included in bulletins printed at St. John's but may be included in supplemental materials printed and distributed by the funeral home or family.

Committal / Interment

Committal

The committal is the final portion of the service, which takes place at the grave or final resting place and typically includes a brief spoken anthem, prayers, a blessing, and a dismissal. If possible, it is best if the casket is lowered into the ground, or ashes interred, *before* the committal service begins. Regarding military honors and civic or fraternal organizations, see page 8.

The committal does not have to take place immediately after the service. It may be scheduled at another day or time to meet the family's needs. Only in the rarest of circumstances would the committal take place *prior* to the service.

Cemetery & Funeral Procession

If the committal is to take place at a cemetery immediately following the funeral, the funeral home will coordinate with law enforcement to provide escort for the funeral procession.

St. John's Memorial Garden

Contact St. John's Parish Administrator for details about burial in the St. John's Memorial Garden.

After the Service

Reception

A reception on the premises *may* be possible, depending upon availability of the required facilities. Contact the Parish Administrator for details.

If the facilities are available, the family may contract with St. John's Culinary Director to cater a reception at their expense, or they may choose to hire an outside caterer.

Expenses

Neither St. John's nor its clergy charge for funeral services. Any gift or honorarium you may offer is greatly appreciated but wholly unnecessary.

The following costs are not covered by St. John's:

- Altar flowers
- Staff singers
- Instrumentalists (other than the organist)
- Catering
- Memorial Garden niches

Suggested Readings

Choosing the Readings

The following readings are suggested by the *Book of Common Prayer*. At the discretion of the priest, other scriptures from the Bible may be used. Readings from sources other than the Bible are not permitted. St. John's utilizes the NRSV translation.

If the funeral does *not* include Holy Eucharist, choose two readings. For funerals *with* Holy Eucharist, choose three readings and a psalm. One reading must be from the Gospel. For more information about the readings, see page 10.

For the First Reading

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured 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 for ever. 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

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 brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, 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

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 forever. 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 3:1-5,9

But 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. 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 19:21-27a

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 forever! 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.

For the Psalm

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, *

I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;
He revives my soul *
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
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.
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.
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

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?
When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, *
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who
stumbled and fell.
Though an army should encamp against me, *
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.
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;
To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.
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.
Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.
Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.
You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, LORD, will I seek.
Hide not your face from me, *
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
You have been my helper;
cast me not away; *
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
Though my father and my mother forsake me, *
the LORD will sustain me.
Show me your way, O LORD; *
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries, *
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
and also those who speak malice.
What if I had not believed
that I should see the goodness of the LORD *
in the land of the living!
O tarry and await the LORD's pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart; *
wait patiently for the LORD.

Psalm 42:1-7

As the deer longs for the water-brooks, *
so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, athirst for the living God; *
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
My tears have been my food day and night, *
while all day long they say to me,
"Where now is your God?"
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,
With the voice of praise and thanksgiving, *
among those who keep holy-day.
Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul? *
and why are you so disquieted within me?
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

God is our refuge and strength, *
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, *
and though the mountains be toppled into the
depths of the sea;
Though its waters rage and foam, *
and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.
The LORD of hosts is with us; *
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, *
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her;
she shall not be overthrown; *
God shall help her at the break of day.
The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken; *
God has spoken, and the earth shall melt away.
The LORD of hosts is with us; *
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Come now and look upon the works of the LORD, *
what awesome things he has done on earth.
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.
“Be still, then, and know that I am God; *
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.”
The LORD of hosts is with us; *
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Psalm 90:1-12

Lord, you have been our refuge *
from one generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born, *
from age to age you are God.
You turn us back to the dust and say, *
“Go back, O child of earth.”
For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday
when it is past *
and like a watch in the night.

You sweep us away like a dream; *
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green and flourishes; *
in the evening it is dried up and withered.
For we consume away in your displeasure; *
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.
Our iniquities you have set before you, *
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
When you are angry, all our days are gone; *
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
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.
Who regards the power of your wrath? *
who rightly fears your indignation?
So teach us to number our days *
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Psalm 106:1-5

Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
for his mercy endures for ever.
Who can declare the mighty acts of the LORD *
or show forth all his praise?
Happy are those who act with justice *
and always do what is right!
Remember me, O LORD, with the favor you have
for your people, *
and visit me with your saving help;
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

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.
The cords of death entangled me;
the grip of the grave took hold of me; *

I came to grief and sorrow.
 Then I called upon the Name of the LORD: *
 "O LORD, I pray you, save my life."
 Gracious is the LORD and righteous; *
 our God is full of compassion.
 The LORD watches over the innocent; *
 I was brought very low, and he helped me.
 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, *
 for the LORD has treated you well.
 For you have rescued my life from death, *
 my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.
 I will walk in the presence of the LORD *
 in the land of the living.
 I believed, even when I said,
 "I have been brought very low." *
 In my distress I said, "No one can be trusted."
 How shall I repay the LORD *
 for all the good things he has done for me?
 I will lift up the cup of salvation *
 and call upon the Name of the LORD.
 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
 in the presence of all his people.
 Precious in the sight of the LORD *
 is the death of his servants.
 O LORD, I am your servant; *
 I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
 you have freed me from my bonds.
 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving *
 and call upon the Name of the LORD.
 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD *
 in the presence of all his people,
 In the courts of the LORD'S house, *
 in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
 Hallelujah!

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
 from where is my help to come?
 My help comes from the LORD, *
 the maker of heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot be moved *

and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;
The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,
So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.
The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.
The LORD shall watch over your going out and
your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 130

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.
If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, *
O Lord, who could stand?
For there is forgiveness with you; *
therefore you shall be feared.
I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; *
in his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the LORD,
more than watchmen for the morning, *
more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, wait for the LORD, *
for with the LORD there is mercy;
With him there is plenteous redemption, *
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Psalm 139:1-11

LORD, you have searched me out and known me; *
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You trace my journeys and my resting-places *
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, *
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.
You press upon me behind and before *
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
Where can I go then from your Spirit? *
where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb up to heaven, you are there; *
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
If I take the wings of the morning *
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there your hand will lead me *
and your right hand hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, *
and the light around me turn to night,"
Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day; *
darkness and light to you are both alike.

For the Second Reading

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

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 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

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.

2 Corinthians 4:16—5:9

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.

1 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

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

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.”

For the Gospel Reading

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 to the people, “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 10:11-16

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother, Lazarus, 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, “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.”

Suggested Hymns

Choosing the Music

The following hymns from the *Hymnal 1982* are especially appropriate for funerals at St. John's. Selections from other sources are discouraged.

- 178: Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord
- 208: Alleluia! The strife is o'er
- 287: For all the saints, who from their labors rest
- 303: I come with joy to meet my Lord
- 324: Let all mortal flesh keep silence
- 325: Let us break bread together
- 335: I am the bread of life
- 390: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
- 397: Now thank we all our God
- 400: All creatures of our God and King
- 473: Lift high the cross
- 482: Lord of all hopefulness
- 488: Be thou my vision
- 490: I want to walk as a child of the light
- 517: How lovely is thy dwelling place
- 522: Glorious things of thee are spoken
- 526: Let saints on earth in concert sing
- 618: Ye watchers and ye holy ones
- 620: Jerusalem, my happy home
- 625: Ye holy angels bright
- 636: How firm a foundation
- 645: The King of love my shepherd is
- 662: Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
- 664: My Shepherd will supply my need
- 671: Amazing grace
- 680: O God our help in ages past
- 686: Come, thou fount of every blessing
- 688: A mighty fortress is our God
- 690: Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
- 718: God of our fathers

Planning Form

Submit this form to the church office. If planning in advance, you may wish to make a copy for yourself, your family, and your preferred funeral home.

Full Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ **Death Date:** _____

Times & Locations

Name of Funeral Home: _____

Preferred Funeral Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Preferred Funeral Location: St. John's Other _____

Primary Contact Name: _____

Primary Contact Number: _____

Primary Contact Email: _____

Funeral

Holy Eucharist: Do you wish to include Holy Eucharist? Yes No

Rite I or II: Do you prefer Rite I or Rite II? Rite I Rite II

Ceremonial: Do you prefer a “high” liturgy with incense and chanted prayers, or a “low” liturgy with simple ceremonial? High Low

Livestream: Do you wish for the service to be livestreamed? Yes No

Readings: For a funeral *without* Holy Eucharist, choose two readings. For a funeral *with* Holy Eucharist, choose three readings plus a psalm. One reading must be from a Gospel.

Old Testament: Isa. 25:6-9 Isa. 61:1-3 Lam. 3:22-26,31-33
 Wisdom 3:1-5,9 Job 19:21-27a

Psalm: 23 27 42:1-7 46 90:1-12 116 121
 130 139:1-11

New Testament: Rom. 8:14-19,34-35,37-39 2Cor. 4:16-5:9
 1Cor. 15:20-26,35-38, 42-44,53-58 1John 3:1-2 Rev. 7:9-17
 Rev. 21:2-7

Gospel: John 5:24-27 John 6:37-40 John 10:11-16
 John 11:21-27 John 14:1-6

Readers' Names: _____

Preferred Greeters, Acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers or Vergers:

Preferred Hymns: _____

Flowers: Have altar flowers been ordered? Yes No

Committal & Interment

Cremation or Burial:

Cremation Burial Body donation to: _____

Preferred Committal Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Place of Committal:

St. John's Memorial Garden Other: _____

Military Honors: Are military honors expected? Yes No

Civic/Fraternal Organizations: List any organizations you wish to serve as honorary pallbearers.

Memorials

In lieu of flowers, would you like to request memorial gifts be made in your name to one of the following?

St. John's Episcopal Church St. John's Foundation

Other _____

Reception

Do you wish to have a reception on the premises? Yes No

If so, have you contacted the Parish Administrator and Culinary Director?
 Yes No

Additional Requests

Are there other requests or details you would like to share with us?

