



ST. JAMES' CHURCH

BURIAL SERVICE  
AND  
INTERMENT



PERSONAL  
PLANNER

## INTRODUCTION

St. James' would like to encourage individuals to think about and plan their service in accordance with their own wishes. Death, whether it comes suddenly or after a long illness, is a major and often very difficult time of change for those who loved the deceased. As Christians we believe that those who die are gathered to God and ushered into new life through Christ. Yet that does not deny our questions in the face of suffering nor the very real experience of grief and loss. Through the ministry of the Church we hope to help your family and friends through this time so that in their grief they may know the love of God and the support of this community. And through the service you have prepared, the truth of this time in both its grief and hope will be proclaimed. The following pages provide practical information to help guide you through the planning as well as suggestions to help you prepare a service that will celebrate your life as it is entrusted to the care of God.

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

A call is made to St. James' Church to report a death to one of the clergy, who makes preliminary arrangements and contacts the Administrative Assistant to the Rector. After church hours, our telephone system refers such calls to the priest-on-call. The clergy are happy to come to the home or hospital to talk and pray with those who are bereaved. If death is not sudden and unexpected, we hope that the family will have been in touch with the clergy prior to death.

The Administrative Assistant to the Rector handles many of the immediate specific arrangements such as scheduling the time of the funeral and the officiating clergy. She will advise the Director of Music ushers, staff and others who assist in organizing the service and reception following, if desired.

## MUSIC

Music makes special contribution to the richness and meaning of the service. The Director of Music is available to make music arrangements and to play for funerals. If desired the Director of Music can also provide a soloist, a choir of four or eight voices, and/or instrumentalists. Hymns are strongly encouraged in the design of the service for the beauty and joy they bring. Listed in this document are some suitable hymns which may be sung at appropriate points in the service. Easter hymns and other bright and triumphant hymns are often appropriate for the Burial Office.

## SCRIPTURE

The Burial Office generally includes three lessons, one from the Old Testament, one from the Epistles, and one from the Gospels. Other non-scriptural readings may be used, after consultation with and permission from the officiating priest. One or two psalms may be used after one or more of the lessons. They may be said by the whole congregation in unison or read by the officiating clergy. Please ask your clergy for a copy of our Burial Service booklet(s) with the suggested scripture readings.

## HOMILY

Following the reading of the Gospel lesson, a homily (a brief sermon) is preached. The homily in Christian tradition grows both out of the lessons chosen for the service and the life of the deceased. In the service, we come together before God with our grief, our questions, our hopes and our faith. To bring together the life of the deceased with the promise of resurrection, it is especially important for family members and friends to share with the officiating priest those aspects of the life of the deceased for which we are giving thanks. This allows the officiating priest to weave into the service a strong sense of the person being remembered.

Brief reflections about the deceased may also be appropriate. Such reflections are offered at the very beginning of the service, providing a personal framework for the service that follows and allowing those family or friends offering reflections to join fully in the service. The clergy provide assistance regarding the length of such reflections. A written text or outline is submitted to the officiating clergy at least a day in advance of the service and authored in such a way as to blend with the message of hope that is at the heart of this service.

## ASSISTING CLERGY

Episcopal clergy and clergy from other denominations are welcome to assist in the conduct of the service. The Rector will extend the invitation and welcome them to take part. A member of St. James' clergy always officiates at burial services.

## ATTENDING THE FAMILY

Approximately one half hour prior to the service, family and close friends are asked to gather. After being greeted by the officiating clergy, they will be conducted to the front seats of the chapel or church by the Parish Verger. At the conclusion of the service, family and friends in the front of the church are escorted out by the officiant or Verger, in advance of the congregation's departure.

## Bells

It is our practice at the conclusion of the service to peal the bells in thanksgiving of the life of the deceased and in celebration of the everlasting life they have in Christ.

## RECEPTION

Arrangements may be made with Administrative Assistant to the Rector to provide a reception immediately following the service.

## FLOWERS

If flowers are desired, St. James' asks that they be limited to two bouquets on the altar. These are typically ordered by the Church and billed to the family.

## THE PALL

The Book of Common Prayer requires that the coffin be covered with a pall (a handsome embroidered cloth provided by the church) during the funeral service. It is also acceptable to have the coffin covered with the American flag. This use of the pall or flag symbolizes a great truth at the heart of the church's ministry: that we are equal in God's sight. Over the years, a pall or flag has covered the remains of the celebrated and the unknown, each of whom is loved by God. If an urn is to be used, with ashes, that urn is also covered with a silk or linen pall.

## COMMITTAL

The committal is that portion of the Burial Office when the coffin or ashes are interred. If interment takes place immediately after the service in the church, the officiating priest often accompanies the family to the cemetery to preside at this part of the liturgy.

St. James' Columbarium is available for the interment of ashes. Located in the bell tower of the church and connecting directly to the main sanctuary, it testifies to our belief that both the living and the dead are held together through the love of Christ.

Interment in the St. James' Columbarium can occur as the concluding section of the Burial Office. Or, if the family prefers, it may be held at another time with only immediate family present. In either case, a member of St. James' clergy officiates at the interment. If you would like more information about the columbarium and the availability of niches, please contact the Administrative Assistant to the Rector.

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

1. Assign someone at the time of death to call St. James' clergy. They will come immediately to your home or hospital to provide support and assist the family members through these first hours. They can also assist with scheduling and answer immediate questions.
2. Tell someone where to locate this document prepared by the deceased which indicates your wishes as to Christian burial (or you may want a copy on file in the Rector's office).

Give some thought to the following:

3. If necessary, would you like to have an autopsy?

\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

4. Do you want cremation? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

(The church has no prohibition against cremation.)

5. Do you want the body or parts of the body donated to medical science? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Details \_\_\_\_\_

6. Following a long-standing custom in New York City, parishes often recommend undertakers familiar with the specifics of burial in a given setting. If you do not have a funeral director, St. James' recommends:

Peter and Tom Montera, Funeral Directors

E. Willis Scott, Inc.

They may be reached at 718.824-3700.

## PREFERENCES

1. Ask the following questions:

Is there a cemetery plot? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Where is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Columbarium niche? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Who owns it? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the recording document? \_\_\_\_\_

If you need to buy a burial plot or columbarium niche, where will it be \_\_\_\_\_

and how many spaces will you need? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of casket or urn do you desire?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to have visiting hours at church, at the funeral home, or at another location?

\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Closed casket or open during visiting hours?

\_\_\_ closed \_\_\_ open

At the Service, the casket is always closed and covered with either \_\_\_ a pall or \_\_\_ an American flag.

2. Who should be notified?

3. Who is likely to come from a distance? Has the scheduling of the service taken travel time into consideration?

4. Decide on the designation of memorial gifts. It is often wise to choose two organizations, one church-related (e.g. St. James' Church, or Episcopal Relief and Development) and one secular (community, medical research, health or educational institutions). It is often helpful to state that such gifts are requested in lieu of flowers as the service does not accommodate multiple flower displays.

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

5. Memberships (Church, historical societies, service organizations, clubs, activities in church and community, etc.)

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6. Names of newspapers in which death notices and obituary items should appear (include local papers and also out-of-town papers, wherever there are friends to inform).

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NOTE: Classified death notices are paid by you, usually through the funeral director who places the notices with the newspapers. You will prepare and submit, if desired, longer obituary items to newspapers; they will be published at the editor's discretion. It may take up to three days to get a notice into *The New York Times*.

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

This information should be compiled by each individual and left with two family members and/or friends.

1. List of vital statistics needed for funeral home:

My full name \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name and birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name and birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Length of residence in the state \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_

Military serial or service number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of death certificates required \_\_\_\_\_

2. My survivors:

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Children by name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_

Sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Brothers \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name and telephone number of attorney to contact  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name and telephone number of funeral home to contact  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Contact for death benefits:  
Social Security \_\_\_\_\_  
Pensions \_\_\_\_\_  
Life Insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of health information:  
Physicians \_\_\_\_\_  
Requests for donation of body or parts thereof \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name, telephone number and relationship of my personal representative \_\_\_\_\_
7. Location of personal papers:  
Will \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Certificate \_\_\_\_\_  
School and College Diplomas \_\_\_\_\_  
Marriage Certificate \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (i.e., legal papers, safe deposit box and keys)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Bank Accounts:  
Savings \_\_\_\_\_  
Checking \_\_\_\_\_  
Bank books \_\_\_\_\_
8. Investment Information:  
Name and telephone number of broker(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Treasury Bonds/Notes/Bills \_\_\_\_\_  
Money Market Account(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Stock information \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Information about home:

Location of Deed/Lease/Mortgage \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance information \_\_\_\_\_

Warranty information \_\_\_\_\_

Information regarding other property(ies)  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Location of information about automobile(s) and other vehicles:

Registration \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

6

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

St. James' Church.....212.288-4100

212.774-4200

Administrative Assistant to the Rector.....212.774-4251

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Lawyer \_\_\_\_\_

6





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