

# Planning Your Own Resurrection Liturgy



**Saint Barnabas Church**

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*Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.*  
(The Book of Common Prayer p. 504)



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## Introduction

*If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:8)*

Dying is the culmination of a Christian life. It is important for us all to prepare for the journey well ahead of time. Death is with us daily, even as new life greets us in its wake. For each of us there will come a time to die "*once for all*" (Hebrews 9:27) and in that dying lies the possibility of new life.

The manner in which we journey from this life to the next is very important. This booklet is offered to help you make this journey whenever it may occur. The purpose of this pamphlet is to let you provide details for the manner in which you wish your funeral and burial to be celebrated. We are a people born of and by the resurrection of Christ, and it is entirely fitting that our death reflects this fact. The *Book of Common Prayer* makes this point as follows:

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.*" (Romans 8:38-39)

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 the one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we grieve in sympathy with those who mourn. (The Book of Common Prayer p. 507)

Our funeral can be a witness to the resurrection, or simply a ceremonial occurrence. *What will it be for you?*

*“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! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*  
(1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

Completing this booklet is a welcome gift for your family; a powerful witness. Anyone who has lost a loved one knows how agonizing it can be to plan an appropriate memorial service after the loved one has died and is not available to declare their personal preferences and wishes. And most people have attended funerals or memorial services that seem uniquely unsuited to the person who has died.

Letting your survivors know whether you’d like to be buried or cremated, what kind of ceremonies or gatherings you envision, and how to write memorial remembrances saves them the pain of making such decisions at a difficult time. Many family members and friends also find that an open discussion while you are still on this earth is a great relief—especially if death is likely to occur soon.

Saint Barnabas Anglican Church is committed to the ministry of pastoral care during serious illness and at the time of death. We believe it is very important that every member of our congregation is certain of the biblical promise that we will all be with Christ in the heavenly realms.

You are invited to complete this booklet with the thought in mind that we all need to be prepared to make the final journey when we die. It is not something to fear, but rather the fulfillment of the hope planted into our hearts by Jesus when he said, *“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.”* (John 14:2-3 NRSV)

The first question to ask yourself before completing this booklet is, *“Am I absolutely certain that I am ready to be with Christ in glory?”* If you have doubts about this statement, please make an appointment with me or one of the clergy and talk it through, because this is one of the basic promises Jesus has made to all who respond to his invitation to welcome him into our lives.

# Pre-Funeral Preferences

**The best time to plan is now.**

- The resurrection liturgy is a powerful expression of Christian hope. Having the casket present at the service helps people deal with the reality of death and the hope for the future with Jesus.
- It is the custom at the death of a person for a family member to contact the church and the funeral home of your choice. It is advisable that just as one plans their resurrection liturgy with the church, one would make similar advance arrangements with the funeral home.
- The body may lie in state at the funeral home for a specified period of time (a “viewing”). The casket will be closed at the church and it will be covered with a beautiful “pall”, a white decorative covering over the casket that matches the liturgical vestments.
- Casket taste and economic resources vary widely. The choice of a casket is a personal one, reflecting our values and priorities. Simplicity is a very agreeable benchmark of Christian values.
- If you wish to donate any organ (cornea, kidneys, etc.) you should fill out a “Uniform Donor Card” and designate its location.
- Cremation is a perfectly acceptable practice for a Christian burial. It is preferable to have a casket with the body present at the funeral service and then have the cremation and the interment of ashes as soon as possible afterwards. It is most appropriate to inter the ashes in the ground or to arrange to have them placed in a columbarium.
- If cremation precedes the funeral service and the ashes are available they should be covered with a small white pall and placed on a table in the sanctuary.

A Christian may expect to be surrounded by his/her brothers and sisters in Christ during times of death and grief. Christian funerals generally occur in a Church, that is, among the people of God, who are the Church. Therefore, you are encouraged to plan for your own resurrection liturgy in our beloved Saint Barnabas Church.

- The Eucharist is the most appropriate form of worship for the gathered people of God at a funeral. We always baptize people in the context of the Eucharist, for Baptism is the time when we begin the process of dying to self and being raised to a new life in Christ. It is appropriate, therefore, to include the Eucharist when planning your resurrection liturgy.
- The funeral service should resemble as closely as possible the Sunday morning worship experience. It is appropriate for the congregation to sing hymns, make responses, etc. Church tradition encourages the use of Easter hymns or hymns of praise during a funeral, expressing our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise we have for eternal life in the resurrection. Music can be arranged through the Minister of Music. (See attached Funeral Music Guidelines.)

## **Suggested Procedures to Follow at the Time of Death in the Family**

- If possible, call one of the clergy on the church staff when death is imminent. It is important that a member of the clergy administer the Sacrament of Holy Communion to the dying person if this has not already been done, and offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) if desired. Also, the anointing with holy oil is appropriate. If it is not possible to call before death has occurred, call one of the clergy as soon as possible after your loved one has died.
- Find out from the clergy if the deceased person made arrangements for his/her funeral service. A member of the clergy would be willing to be with you as you work with the funeral director in making arrangements.
- Consult with the clergy to choose a time and date for the service. One of the clergy will be the officiant (leader of worship) for the service and will assist you in its planning. The funeral director will help to coordinate all the details connected with other arrangements.
- In the church a pall (a beautiful linen cloth) will cover the casket. A flag or floral arrangement can be used to cover the casket at the gravesite. Altar flowers similar to Sunday arrangements may be placed in the sanctuary. Other flowers that are sent will be taken to the reception or to the graveside. There is a flower memorial chart available for choosing memorial Holy Table flowers for special remembrances in the future.
- It is good to tell people who ask about ways to express gratitude for the deceased that memorial gifts can be made to Saint Barnabas Church and that each gift will be acknowledged. If you would like to have a member of the parish who is knowledgeable about planned giving, we can make arrangements for you to talk to someone.

# Funeral Pre-Planning Checklist

*To be used as a guide and aid for my family upon my death.*

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Disposition of the body:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Whole Body Burial
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cremation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Donation of body to medical research. Forms have been filled out with \_\_\_\_\_  
(Medical facility or hospital)

## 2. Pre-Funeral Planning:

### A. My funeral wishes are on file with:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Saint Barnabas Church
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family member
- \_\_\_\_\_ Funeral home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Home: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ prepaid \_\_\_\_\_ not prepaid

Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Mortician:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Body lie in state at the funeral home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Casket open
- \_\_\_\_\_ Casket closed

### C. Casket:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Wood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cloth-covered wood
- \_\_\_\_\_ Metal

### D. Participation in Organ Donor Program

\_\_\_\_\_ My signed "Uniform Donor Card" can be found at:

\_\_\_\_\_

E. Autopsy

- If it is helpful for research or needs of my survivors
- Decision to be made by: \_\_\_\_\_
- None, unless vital to medical research or required by law

**3. Funeral Preferences:**

A. Location of service

- Saint Barnabas Church
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Ministers leading the service

- Saint Barnabas Clergy \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Type of Resurrection Liturgy

- Burial Service with Eucharist (See attached document, "Concerning Christian Death and Burial")
- Burial Service without Eucharist

D. Music (See Suggested Hymns & Music list)

- (use separate pages for listing song choices)
- Other instruments, soloists, duet
- Piano only
- Hymns to be sung
- Musicians and/or singers requested (list separately)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Scripture Readings (See attached document "Concerning Christian Death and Burial")

- Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm Reading: \_\_\_\_\_
- Epistle: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Additional Ceremonies

- Incense
- Holy Water

G. Desired Pallbearers (*Minimum of 6, you may have 8-10 and may have honorary pallbearers also*).

My family will arrange for pallbearers. Include:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

H. Ushers:

_____	_____
_____	_____

I. Our church Fellowship Hall and several larger area Fellowship Halls are available for fellowship and/or a reception following the service. Please see the church office for a list.

**4. Interment:**

A. Burial location

Cemetery \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name of cemetery)*

Cremation

Columbarium

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Committal Liturgy (at cemetery or gravesite)

1. For whole body burial:

\_\_\_\_\_ At graveside, with family and friends present

\_\_\_\_\_ Lowering casket into ground with committal words

2. For interment after cremation:

Another place (arranged between family and priest)

**5. Additional Requests:**

A. If there is a choice and depending on circumstances, I would prefer to die:

\_\_\_\_\_ At home or at present residence

\_\_\_\_\_ In a hospital or nursing home

B. I request that no extraordinary means be used to keep me alive

\_\_\_\_\_ If family, priest and doctor agree, please remove life support equipment.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am looking forward to being with the Lord.

C. I understand that I may change these requests at any time, by notifying those who are holding copies.

D. I authorize the person(s) named here to make any necessary changes in the above requests, in accordance with their best judgment and the circumstances which exist at the time of my death:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Other requests or instructions:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Information for My Survivors

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Residence \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Medical history, if applicable:

I.D. Number \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of military service \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Names and addresses of children or next of kin:

Names of parents

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

Birthplace of parents

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's maiden name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Will: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Accountant \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Executor(trix) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Safe Deposit Box(es) *(Give name, address, box number, and where key(s) can be found.)*

Insurance Policies: *(Give name, address, policy number, and where policy(s) can be found.)*

Other Financial Data *(Savings accounts, stocks, bonds, credit union accounts, titles to real and personal property, pension systems, etc.)*

Electronic Passcodes (Give web address and password)

Please give specifics about the nature of your gift to the Church in your Will:

Have you talked to a planned giving expert to find out ways to maximize your gifts to the church? Please specify:

You may want to include a letter to your loved ones to be read after you die. It will be a treasure to them.

Have you written an obituary draft? Please include it with these documents. It will be updated before publication.

**Give Notification of my death to:** *(Priest, relatives, friends, business associates, lodges, schools, unions, other organizations and individuals who should be notified of my death. Those marked with an \* should be listed in my obituary.)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer memorial gifts be made in my name to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Saint Barnabas Church

\_\_\_\_\_ In consultation with the Rector and Vestry specific gifts may be decided upon

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

*(If additional space is needed for any of the above information, attach a separate sheet of paper.)*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world”. (John 11:21-27)*

