

St Edmund's Anglican Church **Notes on Funerals and Memorial Services**

It is an important task to lay to rest the mortal body of one who has died. For those who have faith in Jesus Christ, it is a particular comfort to hear the Bible's message of hope, grounded upon the resurrection of Jesus, at that time. Funeral and memorial services at St Edmund's are built around this gospel message and are full of prayer to God. To ask St Edmund's clergy conduct a funeral for your loved one is to seek Christian ministry at a time of sorrow. St Edmund's is glad to offer this ministry to those who open themselves to it. It is not a service we provide, but a gift we offer. It is not an event to be designed, but a rite to participate in.

Before you meet with the minister to talk about the funeral arrangements, do please read over these notes. This will help you know what to expect and will help you prepare for the service. When you meet with the minister, you can expect:

1. To get to know one another and to talk about the nature of a Christian funeral service.
2. To confirm personal details about the deceased, and the date, time and place of the funeral or memorial service. Funerals will not be conducted on the weekend, a date during the week must be agreed together.
3. To share something of the life, interests and character of the person who has died with the minister, especially if they do not know the person who has died. The minister will not be giving a eulogy, but will be helped in preparing prayers of thanksgiving for the service through this discussion.
4. To make decisions about the details of the service. The funeral or memorial service must use the Anglican forms with the bounds permitted by the Prayer Book. The service is in essence a service of hearing Scripture, Christian proclamation and prayer. Anything in the service, including any music played and anything printed in the order of service, or distributed at the service must be consistent with the understanding of life and death set forth in these Anglican forms, and is subject to the approval of the minister taking the service.

The outline of the service will be as follows (black elements are essential, grey elements are optional, but often included):

ORDER OF SERVICE

Music played before the service

(As noted above all music used must be appropriate for an Anglican service. This does not rule out all secular music, but any lyrics should be thoughtfully chosen. The minister can guide you.)

Opening Hymn

(One or more hymns may be sung by the congregation during the service. Other suitable places for hymns are indicated below)

Welcome, Scripture Sentences and Opening Prayer

(led by the minister)

Eulogies

(A eulogy or set of eulogies from family and friends may be given. In many cases it is good to budget around 15-20 minutes in total for eulogies. Circumstances will be taken into account.)

Bible Reading(s)

(There must be at least one Bible reading, and customarily there are two, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. No readings or poems that are not from the Bible can be included in the service.

Suitable choices include: From the Old Testament: Psalm 23, Psalm 121

From the New Testament: John 11:20-27, John 14:1-6, 1 Corinthians 15:19-23 or 50-57)

Sermon

(Given by the minister)

Hymn

Prayers

(Thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, prayers for those who mourn, prayers that we may know Christ's salvation. The minister may lead these, or Christian relatives or friends may do so, as coordinated with the minister. Prayers conclude with:)

The Lord's Prayer

(This may be said in the contemporary or the older wording)

The Placing of Rosemary (or similar)

(Often funeral directors will offer this manner of people paying their last respects and farewelling the person who has died. Some appropriate music may be chosen for this time in the service.)

Committal

(This is the moment to lay to rest the body of the person who has died either in burial or cremation, and these prayers will be led by the minister. This prayer may be deferred until the graveside or crematorium, and a suitable closing prayer used at the church instead.)

Hymn

Benediction

Given by the minister

Music for the departure of the congregation

Other matters to consider

Once the various choices have been made, the family may wish to arrange the printing of an order of service. The final draft should be passed to the minister for approval before it is sent to the printer. Anything printed in the order of service, or distributed at the service must be consistent with the understanding of life and death set forth in Anglican forms, and is subject to the approval of the minister.

Funeral services held in other places will sometimes include photo tributes. St Edmund's does not have facilities for the projection of such tributes, and they are not normally included in the services at St Edmund's. If you wish to livestream the service do please ask the minister about this.

The St Edmund's Hall next to the church is available to be hired if you wished to have a reception after the service. Speak to the minister if you are interested in this.

The capacity of the church is 165. The capacity of the hall is 100.

There are no fees for a funeral service at St Edmund's. No-one is hiring the church or the minister. Rather St Edmund's is offering a Christian rite of burial to those who are seeking that ministry. Families who do not customarily give to St Edmund's are welcome to consider making a donation, but there is no expectation of any such donation.

Do please raise any questions you wish to ask or things you may wish to talk about when you meet, or anytime afterwards.

The funeral service and the journey of grief

Funeral are hard moments, but the Christian funeral service encourages us both to grieve and to hope. We grieve because we are bound to the one who has died by bonds of history, kinship and love, and death has robbed us of the one we love. In our grief we may also hope because in the resurrection of Jesus we see God's power to give new life to those who sleep in death, and because of the promise Christ makes that those who believe in him will live, even though they die.

In the weeks or months after the service, if you wish to have any further conversation with the minister about your journey of grief, by all means be in touch.