

# *Preparing for a Funeral at Christ Church*

*Parish Office (Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4.00pm)*

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## **Preparing for a Funeral at Christ Church**

*In response to the mystery of living and dying, human beings in every culture have developed and observed rites of passage to mark life's journey since time immemorial. With respect to the death of someone we love this is especially important, both to honour and commemorate the dead, and to give collective expression to grief and loss.*

*In the Church catholic, or universal – including the Anglican Church – the funeral service, in which we lay a person's body to rest, is our rite of passage from life to death. The wounds of grief need time and care to heal. The funeral may help this process, by enabling us to acknowledge our loss, give thanks for the life of the person who has died, make our last farewell, and begin to take up life once more.*

*Christians believe in God, the source and giver of life. God's good news proclaims Jesus Christ to be our living Lord, who knew death, yet triumphed over it, drawing its sting, and being raised by the One he called 'Father' to new life. Christians affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit, the divine Comforter, who does not remove suffering or sorrow, but helps us to bear it with grace and integrity, as we confront the reality of our mortality.*

*Christian funeral rites therefore proclaim the Church's hope in the face of death.*

Sections of these pages have been adapted from *A Prayer Book for Australia*, copyright 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation, published under the imprint of Broughton Books, and *A Pastoral Handbook for Anglicans*, edited by Charles Sherlock, copyright 2001, The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, published by Acorn Press.

### **Grief and Commemoration**

Although everyone has a different experience of grief, soon after the death of a relative or friend, some people may feel overwhelmed by the many important decisions that have to be made in a short space of time. We hope that these pages will help you to find your way, or at least point you in the right direction, during this very difficult time. Do not hesitate to ring Christ Church at any time – a member of the Ministry Team can provide counsel and/or pastoral care, according to your need.

### **Funeral Director / Undertaker**

When someone dies, one of the first things the next of kin is asked to do is to contact a funeral director. This can be a confronting experience, but the choice is an important one. Although you may change funeral directors at any time, it is usual that the same firm will be engaged to provide the following services:

- remove the physical remains of the person who has died to another place, and tend to the body in preparation for the funeral rites to be held;
- seek a death certificate from the relevant authorities;
- place a death and/or funeral notice in the newspaper;
- help the family of the person who has died in planning a funeral rites (e.g. finding, recommending and/or booking a church or chapel; organising flowers; providing cars and drivers; providing a coffin or casket; finding a venue to provide post-funeral hospitality; booking caterers etc.);
- help the chief mourners in thinking about burial or cremation, and organising for their wishes to be carried out, including (where applicable) returning cremated remains to the family for interment, or laying them to rest in some other way;
- arranging for a viewing of the body, where appropriate, as per the family's wishes.

Please contact us if you would like any assistance with choosing and/or contacting a funeral director.

### **Establishing a Day/Date and Time**

Once in touch with a funeral director, they will make a time to meet with the next of kin to discuss the funeral arrangements. There is no set number of days which should elapse between someone's death and their funeral, and no set day of the week or time that a funeral should be held. At Christ Church, we are unable to hold funerals on any Sunday or public holiday; during Holy Week (the week immediately prior to Easter); or on Christmas Eve (24 December). Availability at other times is subject to existing services, bookings, and other commitments, but we will endeavour to accommodate the family's requests wherever possible.

There is no need to rush to select a date – indeed funerals can be delayed to allow for family members to fly in from overseas, or to assist in the grieving process. The funeral director and the clergy of the Parish will help you make such decisions.

If you plan to have a funeral at Christ Church (and this ministry is open to all, whether regular churchgoers or not), the funeral director will contact us initially to check for available times and dates, organise a time for the family of the person who has died to meet with us, and then will then usually hand arrangements for the service itself over to the officiating clergy and other members of the Ministry Team.

We will arrange for one of the Parish clergy to be the Officiant at the funeral. Clergy of other denominations are not normally able to officiate at funerals at Christ Church; however, where appropriate, they may assist in the service. The service will be conducted according to the funerary rites as stipulated by the Anglican Church of Australia's *A Prayer Book For Australia* (1995), details of which will be discussed at your interview with the Officiant.

### **Verger**

The Parish verger assists the funeral directors with seating those attending the funeral, and assists the Officiant with preparing the church and resetting the space afterwards.

### **Music**

Unless you wish to have no music at the funeral (in which case the organist's fee is waived), an organist appointed by the Parish will play. If alternate musicians are used, the organist's fee is still payable.

Recorded music (including CDs) is not normally permitted, and all music to be performed at the funeral, and those performing it, must be approved by the [Director of Music](#). Please note that there is to be no amplification of musical instruments or of singers.

The Director of Music, Michael Fulcher, can provide professional soloists, choirs and other ensembles as required. Additional musicians will be an extra expense in addition to the standard funeral fees, and will be invoiced separately. After your initial meeting with the Officiant, he or she will contact Michael to discuss your wishes. Unfortunately, due to the short period of time usually available to prepare for the funeral, it may not always be possible to fulfil all of your musical wishes.

Please understand that non-sacred music is more suited to a non-liturgical funeral rite (such as a wake) than at the service itself. It is not necessary to have hymns, but if you believe one or more would be appropriate (and that the congregation will sing it), please discuss this with the Officiant. A list of suitable hymns is provided at the end of this booklet, and the Officiant will be happy to suggest alternatives beyond those listed.

You will find online recordings of some hymns and organ pieces on YouTube. Words of hymns may be found at a website such as CyberHymnal.

### **Requiem Eucharist**

If you wish to have Holy Communion at the funeral, this can be arranged with the Officiant.

### **Printing Orders of Service**

Copies of a special Order of Service will be printed for you by the Parish or its preferred printing firm. This will be discussed with the Officiant at your meeting.

### **Eulogies or Tributes**

A Christian funeral service seeks to honour the dead within the context of a corporate act of worship, the focus of which is upon God. Whilst it is important to remember the achievements and character of the person who has died, this represents only one part of the service. *A Prayer Book for Australia* states that, close to the beginning of a service, 'A member of the family or a friend may speak about the person who has died.' We recommend that the family appoints someone who is used to public speaking, to prepare a brief summary of the life and qualities of the person who has died. This may be formal or informal in style, but should reflect the nature of the person who has died as well as the dignity of the occasion. We also recommend that the eulogy is written out in full, so that if the person appointed to deliver it becomes overly upset and unable to continue, someone else may read it.

Whilst it is possible to have more than one eulogy, a multiplicity of speakers is best avoided, as unduly long services can be physically and emotionally taxing for those in grief. We would recommend that the eulogy/-ies run for no more than 15 minutes in total, which – in our experience, amounts to around 1500 words (another advantage of having the text(s) typed out in advance. Other tributes are often best left to a less formal, non-liturgical gathering, such as the post-funeral hospitality, or a quiet family gathering. It is customary for the Officiant to deliver a short sermon or homily at the appointed time in the service.

### **Readings**

A list of suitable Bible readings for funerals is provided on this site. You will need to select one or more most appropriate for your service. Again, this will be discussed at your interview. Appropriate readings from other sources may also be included, in consultation with the Officiant.

### **Flowers**

As a matter of course, flowers are placed in Christ Church for funeral services, and these tend to be predominantly white in colour. If you have special requirements, you should discuss this with the funeral director and with the Officiant. The parish has an arrangement with local florist Victoria Whitelaw, who can organise a wide variety of floral tributes. (Such arrangements are an extra cost, payable direct to the florist. Ph 9821 4613) Floral tributes sent to the church by others will be placed on garden areas near the main entrance. The funeral director will ask you what you would like done with them following the service.

### **Old Vicarage Parish Centre**

This gracious and convivial 'home' (only the upper floor is now used as a dwelling) contains two large public rooms, which are available as a venue for hospitality after the funeral, for up to 100 people (or more if the weather is fine and the outdoor courtyard can be used). We can help by putting you in touch with professional caterers who are used to working in this space and our kitchen, and who can provide anything from a cup of tea and a sandwich to wine and extensive finger food, depending on your wishes. Please discuss this with the Officiant at your interview.

### **Car Parking**

As Christ Church Grammar School shares our site, on weekdays during school term we are unable to provide on-site parking other than for official funerary vehicles. Limited parking is available for chief mourners and the disabled. South Yarra train station is a short walk along Toorak Rd to the east of the church, and the number 58 tram stops directly across the road coming from either direction.

### **Funeral Costs**

The fee for funerals at Christ Church is currently approximately \$1,725. This varies at the discretion of the Vicar according to requirements and pastoral circumstances, but always includes the services of the office secretary, clergy, verger, bell ringer, organist, provision of flowers, compilation and (onsite) printing of Orders of Service. No charge is made for the use of the church as such, but additional costs may be incurred for the use of the Old Vicarage Parish Centre. The choir and/or other musicians are available at an additional fee (which is negotiated with the Director of Music) which will be invoiced separately.

### **After the Funeral**

A member of our Ministry Team, often the Officiant at the funeral, is available to continue the funeral ministry at the graveside or crematorium if requested; a further fee may apply. Cremated remains may be interred at a later date, as part of a regular service, in the beautiful Garden of Remembrance at Christ Church. Whilst individual plots are not reserved or available, the ashes are interred into the earth, the name of the person who has died and been interred is recorded in the Memorial Book, and they are remembered annually by name in the prayers on the Sunday before the anniversary of their death. There is normally a fee levied for interment into the Memorial Garden, which is significantly less than that charged by a cemetery or public memorial garden. Please discuss your wishes with the Officiant.

### **CONTACT**

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## **Selected Bible Readings for Funerals**

If you do not own a Bible, various online sites allow you to search and display bible texts. The translation of the Bible normally read at Christ Church is the New Revised Standard Version. Here is provided the most recognisable sections of the readings:

Psalm 23

'The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.' ... (either read or sung)

Psalm 46

'God is our refuge and strength: a very present help in trouble.' ...

Sections of Psalm 90

'Lord, you have been our refuge: from one generation to another.' ...

Psalm 121

'I lift up my eyes to the hills: but where shall I find help?' ...

Psalm 139:1-11

'O Lord, you have searched me out and known me:' ...

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die;' ...

Isaiah 65:17-25

'For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.' ...

Matthew 5:1-12a

'When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' ...

Mark 10:13-16

'People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them;' ...

John 6:35-40

'Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' ...

John 11:17-27

'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.' ...

John 14:1-6

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places.' ...

John 20:11-18

'Mary Magdalene said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.' ...

Romans 6:3-9

'Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.' ...

Romans 8:31-39

'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 13

'Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.' ...

Philippians 4:4-9

'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' ...

Revelation 21:1-7

'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.' ...

## Selected Hymns for Funerals

If you do not own a hymn book, various online sites allow you to search and display hymn texts, and hear their tunes.

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide  
All things bright and beautiful  
Alleluia, sing to Jesus  
All creatures of our God and king  
All my hope on God is founded  
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side  
Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
Blest are the pure in heart  
Christ be my leader by night as by day  
Comfort, comfort all my people  
Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Do not be afraid, I am with you  
Eternal Father, strong to save  
Farewell. We come to send you on the way  
For all the saints who from their labours rest  
God is love, let heav'n adore him  
Goodness is stronger than evil  
Guide me, O thou great redeemer  
How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
I heard the voice of Jesus say  
I to the hills will lift my eyes  
Immortal, invisible, God only wise  
In faith and hope and love  
In the bulb there is a flower  
Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey  
blest  
Jesus lives! thy terrors now can no more, O  
death appal us  
Jesus, my Redeemer, lives  
Just as I am, without one plea

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
Let saints on earth in concert sing  
Love divine, all loves excelling  
Love's redeeming work is done  
Lord, keep us steadfast in your word  
Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy  
Lord of creation, to you be all praise  
Lord of the living, in your name assembled  
May flights of angels lead you on your way  
Nearer my God to thee  
Now thank we all our God  
O God, our help in ages past  
O God, you search me and you know me  
O Jesus, I have promised  
O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
(How great thou art)  
Praise, my soul, the King of heaven  
Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days  
Rock of ages, cleft for me  
The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended  
The king of love my shepherd is  
The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want  
The strife is o'er, the battle done  
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son  
What a friend we have in Jesus  
When human voices cannot sing and human  
hearts are breaking  
When I survey the wondrous cross  
Ye holy angels bright  
Ye watchers and ye holy ones