



St. Benedict's
ANGLICAN CHURCH

Final Arrangements

“Memento mori” reminds us that we are all on a pilgrimage which brings us through the grave—to travel through “the land of the shadow of death.” All Saints’ Day, and its octave, brings an annual reminder to the faithful, not only of those who have gone before, but also of our own mortality. The Church calendar invites us to prepare our souls daily, weekly—and annually. Being aware of our condition and of the customaries of the Church as we age, become ill, and pass, is also part of our preparation. God is Lord of time and orders our days for His glory. Like the calendar He gave Israel for tabernacle life, the Book of Common Prayer provides the calendar for daily, weekly, annual, and lifetime worship. The Church’s sacramental “Life Calendar” begins on the “numberless page” (271), and its last three services are the topic of this reminder to you, during the octave of All Saints.

Being faithful to “our life’s end” in a local parish means that the faithful will be cared for by the Church all the way from the baptismal font to a sanctified grave, awaiting the resurrection. Parishioners do not simply fade away; they are loved, cared for, prayed over, and buried by their church.

This form is to acquaint all parishioners and their loved ones with the ordinary process before God’s appointed time comes to them. Below are the typical steps or stages which the parish will follow and encourage while caring for you.

**I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord:: he
that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall
he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me,
shall never die.“**

1. **Stay in contact with the Church** as you age and become less mobile. Church membership is not only for the healthy, but for all. As you become less able, the parish will place you on a list of members who are “shut-in” or less able to come to services. Such persons receive regular pastoral care in their homes. You belong to Christ your whole life; avoid the danger of slipping away from His Church in your old age, 1) by remaining faithful, and 2) by notifying the Church. You continue to be a valuable member of Christ’s flock at home, where you are eminently useful in the Kingdom as a prayer warrior and “wise one” for the rest of the parish. You will receive weekly pastoral care and support from the parish. When lonely, do not be shy to ask for the clergy, or others, to come and visit you.
2. **Visitation of the Sick.** When you are ill or in hospital, call for the clergy to come and visit, pray, and anoint you (James 5:14). This office begins on page 308 of the BCP, and is used by the visitation minister. Holy Unction is administered (BCP, page 320) and Holy Communion is given to the ill and home-bound regularly by the parish clergy. During this service, the ill are further instructed on the spiritual use of illness, making confession, and becoming right with God and their fellow man (BCP, page 313).
3. **The Litany for the Dying, and Facing Death.** As it becomes likely that our time of departure is drawing near, it is appropriate to pray the “Litany for the Dying.” Its language is taken from the “Offices of Instruction” learned during youth, and the litanies prayed throughout our lifetimes. With it we place ourselves in God’s hands, and our loved ones release us to pass on peacefully. This should be done near the end, but should be done early enough that you yourself can be an active participant in the service. (*Your intentions for extreme treatment, resuscitation, being at home when you pass, etc., should be known to your family and friends, and also on file at the church. Christians are not to bring themselves to an earlier end than God provides, nor are we required to use all the means medicine can provide. Food, water, and natural sustenance are never to be deprived; talk to your priest about this, and to your family, in advance.*)
4. **Passing into God’s presence** is something we pray and sing about our whole lives long in our hymns, in Morning and Evening Prayer, and Compline, and for which we prepare spiritually and practically. Before passing, a person is often in both worlds, and should receive comfort and reassurance from those around them that they are free to go on. After the passing those around the departed should 1) complete the Litany with the “Commendatory Prayer” (BCP, page 319), and 2) notify a parish clergyman, who will give a final anointing to the body to prepare it for burial. The parish will then initiate preparations in to plan the funeral and complete the burial, while serving the family.

5. **Planning.** Planning the funeral is a difficult process for the mourners. The more that is done in advance, and the greater your trust in the preparedness and knowledge of the parish clergy and Altar Guild, the easier it is for all. Extreme stress and emotion do not provide the optimum context for making such important decisions, which we encourage you to make now, and in advance. Your clergy and Altar Guild will help you, and you may trust the Church to provide direction and to carry out the liturgies she has faithfully done for centuries. The things to plan are 1) the wake, or visitation, 2) the funeral, and 3) the burial.
6. **The Wake, or Visitation** is an opportunity for others to say goodbye and to express their love for you, and condolences to those you have left behind. Resist the urge to think this is unnecessary, or a bother. With preparation, this can be done in your home, before your body is taken away, or in a funeral home, or at the church. The spirit is departed; the baptized body remains, and we pray in solidarity. A Visitation may also be had without the body present. Since the funeral service is a worship service and does not include eulogies, a visitation provides a possible time for people to visit and exchange stories. People often say, "I don't want a big fuss." You will not simply have vanished, so please keep in mind the needs of others before discouraging this.
7. **The Funeral office** begins (BCP, page 324) with the body coming into the Church or on its way to the grave, and is greeted with the solemn and dignified proclamations of the Gospel, in Jesus' resurrection, and in God's sovereignty even over the last enemy—death.
 - a. Though the spirit is departed, the funeral is the final worship where all worship together in the flesh, before the body is planted like a seed for the resurrection, and therefore a service of Holy Communion (requiem mass) is always appropriate. The body is sanctified in baptism and will be raised up at the last day, when Jesus returns, and is not unimportant!
 - b. The priest-in-charge of the parish is the officiant and celebrant at all funerals and public services. Other arrangements or requests should be made in advance, or requested of the priest-in-charge.
 - c. Your "Final Arrangements Form" (enclosed) should be completed and in your file. Your family and friends should be free to grieve, and not have to fret about which psalm or hymn you wanted, or whether you would want music at all. It is a fallacy that the Funeral service is unimportant, or only for those you leave behind; you are there, in the flesh, and the service is for you especially. You should be laid to rest in the care of the Church, and with the love of those you have left behind.

- d. The Funeral or Memorial is a worship service. Eulogies and receptions are necessary, and will come later. The Service allows the worshiper to grieve loss, to mourn the dead, and to hope in Christ—all under the sound of the Holy Scriptures and in Christian Hope. The service will therefore not be simply a “celebration of life.”
 - e. Traditionally, the liturgical color for funeral services was black or violet, with white reserved for children. Newer liturgies introduced white for all funerals, which may be allowed, but with a reminder that holy sorrow is entirely appropriate at the funeral. We gather to grieve in hope. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus.
 - f. Some parts of the service can be chosen or shaped by the family; others cannot. The clergy and Altar Guild will guide you.
 - g. Gifts for building expenses, music, and as ministry offerings are according the ability of the family, and are arranged through the Parish Office (see suggested schedule).
 - h. Wills and Bequests are responsible for much of the good that the Church has done throughout her history. Plan in advance to advance the Kingdom of God by furthering parish, school, diocesan, or other worthy Christian ministries with the gifts God has given you. Our Prayer Book states: “The Minister is ordered, from time to time, to advise the people, that whilst they are in health, to make Wills arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, and, when of ability, to leave Bequests for religious and charitable uses” (BCP, page 320). Please make your Will and desires known in your parishioner file, and to your appointed loved ones. The parish’s “Gifts and Memorials Fund” disburses to ministries requested by you, or for special ministry needs known to be important to you. Where possible, memorial plaques are placed. This is not vanity, but remembering that you live in heaven, await the resurrection, and are departed, but not dead. All prior parishioners who have passed on are remembered each year on All Saints Sunday in the necrology.
 - i. When the body is not present (in casket, or as cremains), the service is a Memorial Service, and not a Funeral. The Memorial Service is nearly identical to the Funeral, but the body is not present, or addressed, or blessed. The Memorial Service is to remember our loved one in the context of the Scripture and Church; the Funeral is to complete their earthly pilgrimage on the way to burial as a last service in the flesh with the Church on earth.
8. The **Burial of the Dead** is completed at the **Grave** (BCP, page 332). All baptized Christians should be buried (even if cremated), and is assumed by the Book of Common Prayer. The service is brief, dignified, biblical, and confident.
- a. The service will follow the rubrics, including casting earth on a descended casket. As elsewhere, this pain is the beginning of a healthy grief, and should not be avoided.

- b. Christians should be buried. Cremation (for burial) is allowable, for financial or other necessary reasons, but has never been the Christian norm. We are planted as seeds for the resurrection. Ashes should therefore not be kept in homes, nor should they be scattered abroad.
 - c. Chapel clergy will travel anywhere necessary, or make arrangements with sister parishes in other locations, to ensure that you receive Christian Burial.
 - d. Following the Funeral and/or Burial the family may host a reception; this is another helpful and appropriate place for eulogies, stories, laughter, and weeping together. The parish Altar Guild Funeral Coordinator is prepared to coordinate this for you, and does so gladly.
9. The first year of grief will be unusually difficult for your loved ones. Live well, and like Jesus, leave them not comfortless; make peace with all before you pass on.

10. Some other Questions to help you prepare:

- a. *Do you anticipate being alone and in need of eldercare in future years? Please pass this concern on to our clergy, and to your parishioner file.*
- b. *Do you have a Living Will, or Final Directives?*
- c. *Have you made out and filed your Will? Does it include the Parish, School, or Diocese? Other ministries? Your family?*
- d. *When the time comes, is your Will sufficiently clear to those you leave behind? Can it give cause for ill will or arguments amongst family members? Will some be hurt or confused, and in need of explanation from you?*
- e. *Have you mended all your relationships which ought to be repaired, and righted any wrongs committed?*
- f. *Have you met with your priest and completed your Final Arrangements Form? Is it in your parishioner file?*

In Christ's peace,

Your Clergy and Altar Guild

Final Arrangements

(A Form for Funeral and Burial, or Memorial Services)

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:27-28). Death is not the end, as Jesus reminds Mary and Martha, in their sorrow, when he comes to raise their brother Lazarus from the dead: *“Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world”* (St. John 11:20-27).

We are wise then to prepare not only for our death, but for our resurrection from the dead. This Final Arrangements Form will help you make several practical, yet highly important, decisions, but in no way diminishes the even more important spiritual preparation of your soul!

Families are often required to make difficult decisions at a time when they are the least qualified and least prepared to do so. Your time and care to complete this form will relieve them immensely. Moreover, because you are a baptized child of God, your funeral is important, and deserves your preparation. The surrounding culture has developed a number of practices and services—some of them helpful, some of them pagan, and others indifferent. The Church has a magnificent heritage, and knows how to bury the departed in the fear of God, and to the comfort of those bereaved. If your loved ones are unaware of the Church’s rites and rituals, it is especially important that you complete this form personally.

While the Officiant has the final say in all matters liturgical, the pages that follow attempt to give our parishioners an opportunity to contribute to their own final arrangements, beforehand, to the relief of their families and friends, and to their own peace of mind. In order to allow us to assist you in deciding how your Service and Burial is conducted, please read this package thoroughly, discuss the matter with your family, and complete it. Then return it to me and we will schedule a confidential meeting to review your plans, and answer any questions. “Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints;” the ordinary rites of the Church should not be minimized or neglected, but rather embraced and loved.

Thank you.

The Rev. Michael D. Vinson, Vicar
St. Benedict’s Anglican Church

Final Arrangements - Contacts

The parish Altar Guild Funeral Directress will be in contact with your family very quickly after she hears from the clergy that a death has occurred in the parish who will be able to assist them every step of the way, and provide for their needs. While much work must be done, in short order, mourners need time and space to grieve. Your thorough information below allows the Altar Guild Funeral Directress to be a great relief and help to all involved. She will also liaise directly with the Vicar and Parish Office.

Your Name _____ Today's Date _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone - Home _____ Cell _____ Work _____

Email _____

Date of Birth _____

Immediate Next of Kin _____

Children, or other Kin _____

Person(s) authorized to make decisions regarding my service are _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone - Home _____ Cell _____ Work _____

Email _____

(Bear in mind that while the church retains final discretion, it will attempt to honor requests made by such persons authorized by you to make decisions. In matters highly important to YOU, please be clear, yourself, on this Form.)

Person(s) NOT authorized to make decisions regarding my service are _____

Final Arrangements - Preparation and Will

Preferred Funeral Home _____

Director _____

Contact Information _____

The Church encourages a Wake or Visitation; it is helpful to those you have left behind, allowing them to say goodbye, to visit with each other, and to "watch and pray" until you are laid to rest. This can be done at home, at the Funeral Home, or at the Parish. You may have some special instructions as you entrust this decision to the church or your family. _____

Do you have a Will, Trust, Letter of Testamentary? _____

Your Attorney _____

Contact Information _____

Your Executor _____

Contact Information _____

Any Trustees _____

St. Benedict's, REC 100, the Diocese are included in my Will: YES _____ NO _____ Other ministries

are included in my Will, who should be notified _____

*(Filing instructions for your Will, as it affects St. Benedict's or other ministries,
greatly helps these ministries, as well as your Executor.)*

Are your sacramental records fully recorded in your parishioner file? _____

Are there persons whom you wish (or do not wish) to write your obituary? _____

Final Arrangements - Worship

Unless circumstances prevent, all active parishioners should be buried from their own parish. Inactive members, and others, may request a service to meet their needs, at the discretion of the Vicar and Vestry of St. Benedict's. The Vicar (or a clergyman whom he appoints) is the Officiant and Celebrant at all Parish services. Guest clergy may participate, with the Vicar's prior approval. All services follow parish use of the Book of Common Prayer. Requests will be honored as possible, with all final decisions made by the parish. Worship services do not generally include eulogies. If an obituary is to be read, it will be done before the liturgy begins; the service may include a homily.

Does your service need to be elsewhere than at St. Benedict's? _____

Location (and contact), if elsewhere: _____

Is there a Parish (or other) clergyman or lay server(s) you especially hope can serve at your funeral? _____

Type of service; please indicate:

_____ Funeral - My body (in casket / in urn [*circle one*]) will be present, to be buried by the Church, awaiting the Resurrection.

_____ Memorial - This is a Memorial Service only, separate from my burial plans.

If a funeral, will there be Pallbearers? _____ Who? _____

Do you prefer to have music as a part of your Service? _____

Organist? _____ Choir? _____

Favorite Hymns (at the discretion of the Officiant), preferably from the REC Hymnal _____

Favorite Holy Scripture(s), requested to be included, if possible _____

Do you desire to have Holy Communion as a part of the Service? (encouraged by our clergy) _____

How many people might be expected to attend? _____

Final Arrangements - Burial

All baptized Christians should receive Christian burial. Graves not in soil already consecrated will be blessed prior to committal. Historically, Christians have resisted cremation as a pagan rite, but it is more common, and allowed by the Church, provided we still receive Christian burial. Our clergy will travel anywhere necessary (or coordinate with sister parishes) to provide Christian burial to all her members. The Body is lowered during the service, committed by those gathered. Given the contemporary climate, parishioners should clearly mark their preference to be buried with full Christian rites; especially if this is a change of mind from the past.

Where will you be buried?

- Church graveyard elsewhere _____
- Cemetery elsewhere _____
- Other plans (please describe) _____

Do you own a cemetery plot? _____ a mausoleum? _____ a columbarium niche? _____

Location _____

Contact Information _____

Have you discussed other disposition preferences with family? Are any likely to resist burial because of other wishes you might have expressed in prior years? _____

Other details for burial _____

Other specific requests _____



St. Benedict's
ANGLICAN CHURCH

Finances & Offerings

Notes

- Facilities:** *An offering to cover expenses for Altar Flowers, Altar Guild, personnel, and church usage.*
\$500.00
- Reception Catering:** *In Parish Hall, contracted directly. Ask for approved vendors.*
- Music:** *Checks or cash payable to Organist (and Choirmaster, if the Choir is used). Musicians are contracted separately. A gift to the Music Fund is always appreciated, especially if the Choir is used.*
\$300.00 each
- Clergy:** *Honoria may be given to the clergy, or through the Parish Office.*
- Thank Offerings:** *In Holy Scripture, worshipers bring Thank Offerings into God's presence. Offerings of any amount to St. Benedict's "Gifts and Memorials Fund," given by friends and family, will be distributed to Parish ministries especially dear to your loved one, with a memorial plaque or notice. They provide a meaningful way for the faithful to be remembered in God's holy Church.*
- Others:** *Additional gifts to those who have been helpful to you may be given directly, or through the Parish Office.*

The Funeral Directress will assist you with the above, through the Parish Office.