

Funerals and Memorials, Planning Your Own and Others
The Rev. Reed Loy, St. Andrew's Hopkinton 2/23/20

- Ministry at the time of death
 - When a Christian is near to death, it is good and appropriate to contact your pastor. Episcopal practice commends this as a time for quiet, reconciliation, blessing, and the assurance of Grace as known in the Holy Eucharist. What are popularly known as “last rights”, are appropriate when death is near, even if it may be some unknown length of days or hours.
 - When a non-Christian is near to death, a pastor is also available, though the Christian rights would not be appropriate (as they would have little meaning to the person), unless Baptism is desired.
- Care of the Body
 - Be in touch with local funeral homes, cremation organizations and green burial sites.
 - For burial in St. Andrew's Memorial Garden, remains must be cremated. Our custom is to bury ashes only, and the urn is then disposed of. You may make arrangements for your own burial by talking with the Office. Burial has no financial cost. (Engraving a paver may happen whether your remains are in the garden or not. For reservations and cost, please talk with the Office.)
- Funerals and Memorials
 - A “Funeral” is a service with the body or ashes present. A “Memorial” is a service without either present.
 - It may take place from a few days after death, to months afterwards.
 - Sooner helps us grieve and celebrate together soon after our loved one has died, but there is not one “right” time, and delay is sometimes chosen in order to gather the family, in particular.
 - *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.” 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 one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.* -The Book of Common Prayer, pg. 507
 - An Episcopal service of Burial is intentionally reflective of Sunday worship. It is focused upon the Resurrection of Christ, and through our Baptism, our resurrection with Christ. It is in this way that it is “about” the person who has died, since they are the most recent among us to join Christ in the resurrection of the body. “Remembrances” of the deceased, if given, are therefore appropriately few in number, and kept brief in the context of the Eucharist. Gathering time

before and/or after the service is a wonderful, perhaps crucial time for the grand storytelling about the deceased that also needs to take place.

- Planning the service
 - Planning your service ahead is a way to “remember” and move towards peace with your own mortality, and towards deeper peace in God
 - It is also an act of love towards your family and Christian community, who will know that you chose the readings, or music, or other elements of the liturgy