

We recommend that everyone make a funeral service plan long before it is needed!

If you do so, you will be doing your family and your friends a huge service. The death of a loved one is a time of grief and stress. Decide whether you want a traditional burial, cremation, or some other option. Choose the funeral home you plan to use and when possible, pre-pay for the services you choose.

And we strongly urge you to use this resource to plan your church funeral service. This will help your loved ones a great deal. They will not have to guess which bible readings you might have wanted, what music you hoped to have, who you might have wanted to read some of the lessons or share personal stories about you.

For Christians planning a funeral means three things.

First, we do so in the hope of the resurrection. We do indeed believe that "... this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40) Our hope is not in our power, ability, or goodness, but in the love, mercy and grace of God. When we help someone near death plan, or plan for ourselves, or plan a service for someone who has departed this life, we plan a service that has Jesus' resurrection at the center.

Second, a funeral is a public and formal way to honor and say goodbye to a beloved person. It is appropriate to remember the person, their accomplishments, their likes and dislikes, their strengths and weakness. We honor the image of God in that person, and their uniqueness.

Third, we come together, because we do not exist in isolation. The body of Christ is more than metaphor, and when a member is ill, or dies, all of us are affected. We form an eternal fellowship, of people both living and dead, and we come together to worship God, to commend our brother or sister to Christ, and to offer love and support to those who are in the midst of loss and grief.

An Episcopal Church funeral services follow much of what we do in a regular Sunday service: music, readings from scripture, a sermon, and often Holy Communion. All of this can be adapted to particular circumstances, so please contact us to start the planning process whether you are planning your own service or a loved one has passed away and you are planning a service for them.

Included in this document are:

- 1) A list of hymns often used at funeral services: These are hymns that others have found helpful. Keep in mind that musicians are not always available depending upon the date and time of the service.
- 2) A list of funeral readings: In a regular Episcopal service there are usually four readings, an Old Testament lesson, a Psalm, a reading from one of the New Testament letters or the book of Acts or the Revelation, and a lesson from one of the New Testament Gospels.
- 3) We recommend that you also look at the sample funeral program pdf on this page too.

We hope these resources are helpful to you and we are always honored to work with you in this process

Below are suggested readings and music ideas for funerals and memorial Services

At Christ Church, Laredo we usually read 3 lessons and a psalm. A hymn can also be sung in place of the psalm.

- 1) A reading from the Old Testament
- 2) Followed by a psalm
- 3) Followed by a reading from one of the New Testament letters, Acts, or Revelation
- 4) Followed by a reading from one of the Gospels: John, or Matthew, Mark or Luke.

At least one bible reading is required. And if there is Holy Communion, one of the readings should be from one of the four Gospels.

Some often chosen bible passages are below.

(These passages were taken from the Revised Standard Version. but we can use almost any other version you might want.)

From the Old Testament: Please pick one.

Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death for ever)

6 ¶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. 7 And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 8 He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 61:1-3 (To comfort those who mourn)

1 ¶ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

Lamentations 3:22-33 (The Lord is good to those who wait for him)

21 ¶ But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. 28 Let him sit alone in silence when he has laid it on him; 29 let him put his mouth in the dust--there may yet be hope; 30 let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. 31 For the Lord will not cast off for ever, 32 but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; 33 for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men.

Job 19:21-27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)

21 Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! 22 Why do you, like God, pursue me? Why are you not satisfied with my flesh? 23 ¶ "Oh that my

words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! 24 Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock for ever! 25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; 26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Other Old Testament lesson, please list: _____

From the Psalms: Please pick one. (*A hymn can be used in place of a psalm.*)

Psalm 23 (King James Version)

The Lord is my shepherd; *I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; *he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; *he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; * for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; * thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, * and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Other Psalms often used

Psalm 27 - The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

Psalm 42:1-7 - As the deer longs for the water-brooks, so longs my soul for you, O God.

Psalm 46 - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 116 - I will walk in the presence of the LORD in the land of the living.

Psalm 121 - I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?

Psalm 130 - Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice;

Psalm 139:1-12 Where can I go then from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Other Psalm, please list: _____

From the New Testament letters, Acts, or Revelation: Please pick one.

Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

13 ¶ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Romans 8:14-19,31-39 (The glory that shall be revealed)

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 ¶ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God;

31 ¶ What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; 34 who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 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 15:20-26,35-38, 42-44,53-58 (The imperishable body)

20 ¶ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

35 ¶ But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 53 For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on

immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 ¶ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal)

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. 17 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 because we look not to the things that are seen but to the

things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

1 ¶ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

1 John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)

1 ¶ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

1 ¶ 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. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; 3 and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment. 7 He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.

Other New Testament lesson, please list: _____

From the New Testament Gospels : Please pick one.

John 14:1-6 (In my Father's house are many rooms)

1 ¶ "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 ¶ And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.

John 5:24-27 (He who believes has everlasting life)

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 "Truly, truly, I say to

you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, 27 and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.

John 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will come to me)

37 All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; 39 and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 10:11-16 (I am the good shepherd)

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, 15 as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

John 11:17-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)

17 ¶ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26

Other New Testament Gospel lesson, please list: _____

Music Suggestions for Funerals

This selection is not meant to be complete, but to share music that others have found to be helpful. Please feel free to suggest other songs. Again doing any music is dependent upon the musician's capability and schedule. *(The numbers below correspond to various Episcopal Hymnals. All the titles below are things our regular musicians are familiar with.)*

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God 688
Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord 78
All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name 450
Alleluia Sing To Jesus 460
Almighty Father, strong to save 579
Amazing Grace 671

Blessed Assurance *Levas* 184
Blessed be your name - Redman

Christ is alive 182
Come away to the Skies 213
Come thou fount 686
Crown Him with many crowns 494

Eternal Father, strong to save 608

For all the saints 287

Glorious things of thee are spoken 522
Guide me o thou great Jehovah 690

Here I am Lord
Here I am to worship
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty 362
How firm a foundation 637, 636
How great Thou art *Levas* 60

I am the Bread of Life 335
I come with joy to meet my Lord 304
I come to the garden alone *Levas* 69
In Christ Alone
I love to tell the story *Levas* 64

Jerusalem my happy home 620
Jesus Christ is Risen Today 207
Jesus, remember me
Joyful, Joyful we adore thee 376
Just a closer walk with thee *Levas* 72
Just as I am 693

Lead on O King Eternal 555
Lord of all hopefulness 482

Love Divine 657

My faith looks up to thee *Levas* 88

My Jesus I love thee *Levas* 89

Nearer my God to thee *Levas* 54

Now thank we all our God 397

On Christ the Solid Rock *Levas* 99

One bread, one body *Levas* 151

Pescador de Hombres – Tu has venido

Praise my soul the King of Heaven 410

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty 390

Precious Lord take my hand *Levas* 106

Santo, Santo, Santo

The old rugged cross *Levas* 38

10,000 Reasons, (Bless the Lord O my soul) - Redman

When Morning guilds the skies 427