

PLANNING A FUNERAL SERVICE

*Yet Even at the Grave
We Make Our Song:*

*ALLELUIA
Alleluia * Alleluia*



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 nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God in 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. So while we rejoice that one we love has entered the nearer presence of the Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

*from **The Book of Common Prayer***

The burial liturgy of the Episcopal Church is a celebration of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The emphasis of the service is on the deceased's witness to the resurrected life of Christ. There are many ways to plan the liturgy and celebration. This guide outlines some of the choices available to you. The service follows one of the forms in *The Book of Common Prayer*, which begin on page 469 or 491. The staff of St. Thomas will prepare a bulletin so that the congregation may easily follow the order of service.

Choice 1: Funeral Home

Services of a funeral home are necessary at a St. Thomas funeral only if a casket will be present, not if the body is being cremated or the casket will not be present. The family may bring the ashes from the crematorium to St. Thomas. *Note that we do not have guest books available.*

Choice 2: Chapel or Nave

The Chapel of Reconciliation can comfortably seat up to 45 people. The Nave can comfortably seat up to 200 people downstairs, with room for more in the choir balcony. An organ is available in the chapel. Organ and piano are available in the nave.

Choice 3: Rite I or Rite II

Rite I is similar in language to our 8am service and uses older English expressions. Rite II is similar in language to our 10:30am service and uses more contemporary language.

Choice 4: Holy Communion

You may choose to celebrate communion during the service, at another time with family, or not at all. We invite all Christians of any denomination to share in Holy Communion – you do not have to be an Episcopalian or a member of St. Thomas to participate.

Choice 5: Scripture Readings

Funeral services include at least one scripture reading and may include up to four or more. If communion is celebrated, a gospel lesson must be read. A list of recommended readings is available (found in *The Book of Common Prayer* on pages 470-478 for Rite I or pages 494-495 for Rite II), but any scriptures may be chosen. The officiant can choose for you if you prefer.

Choice 6: Participants

The Rector of the Church, if available, will lead any funeral service taking place at St. Thomas. Other participating clergy should be invited through the Rector. Friends or family members may read Scripture Lessons or serve as chalice bearers or acolytes. One or two close friends or family may be invited to share brief remembrances of the deceased's life and faith, but due to the emotions of the moment, these remembrances should be written ahead of time and last no more than five minutes. We do not invite spontaneous remarks during the funeral service. The Rector may do so at the graveside or reception if the family wishes. The Rector will give a Homily at the funeral service, focusing on the deceased's faith and on our shared Christian faith in God.

Choice 7: Music

If music is desired, the priest and parish musician will assist you in choosing music. Music should be sacred and not secular. There may be organ, piano, or other instrumentalists. A soloist may sing or the congregation may be invited to sing. If a song is to be sung by the congregation, it should be easy to sing for the number of people expected at the service. Easter themes and themes of hope are appropriate. Suggested hymns are listed on the reverse. Scheduling and availability of instrumentalists and soloists should be worked out with our parish musician and fees will vary. Payment is due prior to the service.

Choice 8: Flowers and Photos

The church will be decorated as for a Sunday service. Altar paraments for the burial office are white. If a casket is present, a beautiful brocaded pall, or casket cover, is used in lieu of a blanket of flowers. If cremation is chosen, a smaller pall covers the ashes. The only flowers used in the chapel or nave are 2 arrangements for the altar. These may be ordered from a professional florist or made by the St. Thomas Flower Guild for a donation of at least \$125. Other flowers may be delivered to the family's home or displayed at St. Thomas in the narthex or parish hall and taken home by the family at the end of the service. Photos and memorabilia of the deceased may be displayed in the parish hall.

Choice 9: Burial in the Columbarium

The Columbarium is located in a garden off the hallway between the Parlor and All Saints Hall. It is available to parishioners and their family members for the interment of ashes. Ashes are interred in bags made from linen previously used on the altar (these are made and provided by the church). Specific burial sites are not marked in the garden, but are recorded on a grid kept in the church office. The fee for interment is \$300, which includes the cost of a bronze nameplate of the deceased to be placed on the plaque located in the garden. The Columbarium is managed and planned by the church.

Choice 10: Reception

St. Thomas offers hospitality to family and friends immediately following a funeral service. Refreshments are served in our parish hall where guests, friends and family are able to relax and provide comfort through fellowship with each other. A donation of \$100 for groups of 100 or fewer and \$200 for groups larger than 100 is welcome but not required. Beer and wine, if desired, may be provided by the family.

The prayers and assistance of the parish are with you. You may contact us by phone at 706-324-4264 or e-mail at office@stthomascolumbus.org. Our mailing address is St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 2100 Hilton Ave., Columbus, GA 31906.

Suggested Hymns from Hymnal 1982

<u>Number</u>	<u>Hymn Name</u>	<u>Tune Name</u>
178	Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks	<i>Alleluia No. 1</i>
191	Alleluia, alleluia! Hearts and voices	<i>Lux eoi</i>
208	Alleluia! The strife is o'er, the battle done	<i>Victory</i>
287	For all the saints, who from their labors rest	<i>Sine Nomine</i>
288	Praise to God, immortal praise	<i>Dix</i>
293	I sing a song of the saints of God	<i>Grand Isle</i>
335	I am the bread of life	<i>I Am the Bread of Life</i>
379	God is Love, let heaven adore him	<i>Abbot's Leigh</i>
400	All creatures of our God and King	<i>Lasst uns erfreuen</i>
416	For the beauty of the earth	<i>Lucerna Laudoniae, or Dix</i>
427	When morning gilds the skies	<i>Laudes Domini</i>
429	I'll praise my Maker while I've breath	<i>Old 113th</i>
482	Lord of all hopefulness	<i>Slane</i>
487	Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life	<i>The Call</i>
488	Be thou my vision	<i>Slane</i>
490	I want to walk as a child of the light	<i>Houston</i>
517	How lovely is thy dwelling-place	<i>Brother James' Air</i>
593	Lord, make us servants of your peace	<i>Dickinson College</i>
608	Eternal Father, strong to save	<i>Melita</i>
625	Ye holy angels bright	<i>Darwall's 148th</i>
645	The King of love my shepherd is	<i>St. Columba</i>
656	Blest are the pure in heart	<i>Franconia</i>
660	O Master, let me walk with thee	<i>Maryton</i>
662	Abide with me	<i>Eventide</i>
663	The Lord my God my shepherd is	<i>Crimond</i>
664	My Shepherd will supply my need	<i>Resignation</i>
671	Amazing grace!	<i>New Britain</i>
680	O God, our help in ages past	<i>St. Anne</i>
688	A mighty fortress is our God	<i>Ein feste Burg</i>
690	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah	<i>Cwm Rhondda</i>