



*Guide for Planning  
Funeral Services*



Grace Episcopal Church  
4 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940

A funeral finds all its meaning in the Resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, shall be raised. Our worship, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that, in Paul's words from his Letter to the Romans, "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 Lazarus. So, while we rejoice that the one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

At Grace Church, we seek to provide family, friends and the entire faith community the opportunity to gather together and give thanks to God for the life of a loved one.

The Christian understanding of death is that, in the words of the Preface in the Eucharistic Prayer, the Commemoration of the Dead, "life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens." (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 382). Nevertheless, the death of a loved one can be an emotional and difficult time for family, friends, and the faith community. In the midst of grief, a series of decisions must be made. We offer this information to make it easier for family and friends to make appropriate decisions in preparing for a funeral so that we may share beautiful and meaningful worship.

## AT THE TIME OF DEATH

When a person is near death, or has died, regardless of the hour, a priest of Grace Church should be notified, in order that final prayers may be offered. Please call the Church at (973) 377-0106 to request a pastoral visit by a priest.

Please contact the clergy at or near the time of death so that the priest-on-call may come to the home or hospital to visit and pray with those who are bereaved. If death is not sudden or unexpected, we hope the family will have been in touch with the clergy prior to death. It is also possible and encouraged to make plans for one's own burial, and to leave those plans on file with the Church.

## CREMATION

Cremation is a practice honored by The Episcopal Church. Grace Church maintains a columbarium—a place where the urns holding cremated remains are kept— which is located behind the church. For further information concerning the the Columbarium, please speak with our parish administrator.

## ABOUT THE WORSHIP

Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church. The service should be held at a time when the congregation has opportunity to be present. By ancient tradition, funerals are not celebrated on Sundays which is reserved as the Lord's Day. A funeral can be very brief, without music, with only a few members of the family present, or it can be an occasion of great celebration, with music, and many family and friends participating. *The Book of Common Prayer* also provides two forms for worship, Rite I with traditional language, and Rite II with contemporary language. Either service is most appropriately set within the context of the Holy Eucharist. The choice of the type of worship is made by the family in consultation with the officiating priest.

A priest from Grace Church will officiate. In some instances, the family may desire that another clergy person assist. Should this be the case, an invitation from the Rector of Grace Church is required, in accordance with the canons of The Episcopal Church.

## READINGS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

*The Book of Common Prayer* provides recommended readings from the Old and New Testaments and these can be found at the back of this booklet. At the Memorial, a reading from the Old Testament, one or two Psalms, a reading from the New Testament, and a Gospel reading, are desirable. Fewer readings can be used in consultation with the officiating priest. Additional lessons or readings other than those authorized by *The Book of Common Prayer* are used only at the discretion of the officiating priest.

Family members, friends, or members of the church may read from the Old Testament and the New Testament, may lead the congregation in the reading of the Psalm(s), and can lead the Prayers of the People. One person reads each lesson. If the family would like someone to read a lesson, please take into careful consideration the emotional state of that person with respect to the deceased. Grace Church generally uses the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* translation for all readings.

## MUSIC

Beautiful and appropriate sacred music from *The Hymnal 1982* and other resources are available for use. Music should be selected in consultation with our Director of Music. Neither secular nor taped music is permitted. Vocal and instrumental musical offerings are allowed. Should any outside singers or instrumentalists be desired, our Director of Music must be consulted.

## BEFORE WORSHIP

Should there be a coffin, it is closed before the worship. The priest meets the body at entrance to the church. At this time, a pall (a cloth which covers a coffin at a funeral or memorial service) is draped over the coffin. The body is then brought into the worship space. Should there be an urn containing ashes, is also received with reverence at the beginning of the worship. The urn is placed on a pedestal and covered with a small pall.

## THE HOMILY AND REMEMBRANCE

During the worship service, the officiating priest will offer a homily, which will remember and celebrate the life of the deceased, and that person's participation in the life of Jesus.

Remembrances by family members and/or friends are optional. A remembrance should be brief (no more than one typed page), prepared beforehand in writing, and reflect the deceased person's qualities, and how these qualities might inspire worshippers. It is neither necessary, nor desirable that the speaker attempt to give a life history of the deceased, or to repeat what is already contained in an obituary. Any reflection should be reviewed by the officiating priest and rehearsed in the worship space. The remembrances are given after the prelude music and before the worship service begins.

## FLOWERS

Grace Church arranges for all flowers used in the church for any memorial services. Flowers are placed on either side of the cross behind the altar and, if the service is held on a Friday or Saturday, remain in the church for the following Sunday with this notation in all worship bulletins:

*"The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God,  
and in thanksgiving for the life of [the deceased]."*

The custom of the church is that the flowers are white. A coffin spray may accompany the coffin to and from the church, but will be removed and replaced with a funeral pall before entering the worship space. No other flowers are permitted in the worship space.

Families are invited to place as many as three photographs of the deceased and their family and friends on a small table in the worship entry area. More extensive displays may be used at the visitation or reception.

## LIVE-STREAM OF SERVICE

Live-streaming may be available on our Grace YouTube channel. Please contact the Parish administrator for availability and cost.

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorial tax-deductible gifts may be made to *Grace Church*, or another charitable organization in memory of a departed loved one. Gifts to Grace Church are always acknowledged and family of the deceased are advised that a gift has been received and the name of the donor.

## Recommended Scripture Readings

### *Old Testament [ Select one ]*

#### **ISAIAH 25:6-9**

*He will swallow up death in victory*

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

#### **ISAIAH 61:1-3**

*To comfort all that mourn*

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor, and the day of vengeance of our God,, to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who moum 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. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

## **JOB 19:21-27A**

*I know that my Redeemer liveth*

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! Why do you, like God, pursue me, never satisfied with my flesh?

“O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

## **LAMENTATIONS 3:22-26, 31-33**

*The Lord is good unto them that wait for him*

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not reject for ever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

## **WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3:1-5, 9**

*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God*

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

## *Psalm [Select one]*

*If there isn't music, you may select two Psalms.*

Psalm 42:1-7

Psalm 139:1-11

Psalm 46

Psalm 23

Psalm 90:1-12

Psalm 27

Psalm 121

Psalm 106:1-5

Psalm 130

Psalm 116

## *New Testament [Select one]*

### **ROMANS 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39**

*The glory that shall be revealed*

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 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 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58

### *Raised in incorruption*

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16—5:9

*Things which are not seen are eternal*

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

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. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 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*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he\* is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

## REVELATION 7:9-17

*God shall wipe away all tears*

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

## REVELATION 21:2-7

*Behold, I make all things new*

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true. Then 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 water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

### *The Gospel [ Select one ]*

#### **JOHN 5:24-27** *He that believeth hath everlasting life*

Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life.

Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of Man.”

#### **JOHN 6:37-40** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*

Jesus said, “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 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 on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

**JOHN 10:11-16** *I am the good shepherd*

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

**JOHN 11:21-27** *I am the resurrection and the life*

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “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. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

**JOHN 14:1-6** *In my Father's house are many mansions*

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

## *Recommended Hymns from The Hymnal 1982*

*[Typically three hymns are sung.]*

174	At the Lamb's high feast we sing
207	Jesus Christ is risen today
208	The strife is o'er
287	For all the saints
293	I sing a song of the saints of God
304	I come with joy to meet my Lord
324	Let all mortal flesh keep silence
376	Joyful, joyful, we adore thee
379	God is Love, let heaven adore him
383	Fairest Lord Jesus
390	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
397	Now thank we all our God
416	For the beauty of the earth
423	Immortal, invisible, God only wise
460	Alleluia! sing to Jesus!
473	Lift high the cross
482	Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy
516	Come down, O Love divine
609	Where cross the crowded way of life
618	Ye watchers and ye holy ones
620	Jerusalem, my happy home
625	Ye holy angels bright
645	The King of love my shepherd
657	Love divine, all love excelling
671	Amazing grace!
680	O God, our help in ages past
687	A mighty fortress is our God
690	Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
701	Jesus, all my gladness
711	Seek ye first the kingdom of God

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## Grace Episcopal Church

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