



The Funeral Customary

St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church
Blowing Rock, North Carolina

The Burial of the Dead - An Easter Liturgy

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.

—*Book of Common Prayer*, page 507

A Funeral at St. Mary's

St. Mary's uses the *Book of Common Prayer*, 1979 for its services, funerals included. The Holy Eucharist is normatively celebrated at funerals. All baptized Christians present who receive communion in their own church will be invited to receive Holy Communion.

The Prayer Book Service of The Burial of the Dead lasts approximately 45 minutes to an hour, depending upon the number of people receiving communion. A homily is offered at all funerals at St. Mary's. Eulogies are not typically part of the Episcopal funeral liturgy, though they may be permitted at the discretion of the Rector. Alternatively, eulogies may best be offered by family and friends at visitation or at a reception following the funeral.

The date and time of the service should be confirmed with the St. Mary's parish calendar and clergy before these details are published so that any conflicts might be avoided. Because there are regularly scheduled services in the parish, some days and times may not be available for a service.

The burial/committal should immediately follow the service. If the burial is not at the parish, or in the immediate area, please coordinate this with the clergyperson officiating the service.

There is no cost for a funeral service at St. Mary's – the burial of the dead is a work of mercy of the Church. A burial service typically costs the church approximately \$200 (printing, staff support, etc.); contributions to defray these costs are graciously accepted and appreciated. Similarly, there is no cost for the services of the St. Mary's clergy. Contributions to the clergyperson's discretionary fund allow the priest to support the ministry of the church and the needs of the community.

The Day of the Service and Arrival at Saint Mary's

Family members should arrive at the church approximately 30 minutes before the service. Upon arrival, family members will be directed to gather in the Parish Hall. Ten minutes before the service begins the officiating priest will join the family for a prayer and to speak briefly about the service. The family will be seated in the Church immediately after this prayer or will join the body for the procession.

Music at the Burial Service

The hymns from *The Hymnal 1982* and other sacred music express our belief in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Secular and recorded music are not permitted for services held at St. Mary's. The burial office is a service of worship intended to involve the entire congregation; however, solo vocal performances may be permitted. Additional choirs/soloists/musicians are subject to the approval of the organist/choirmaster.

Congregational hymns appropriate for the Burial of the Dead:

208 The strife is o'er	541 Come labor on
287 For all the saints	551 Rise up ye saints of God
304 I come with joy to meet my Lord	608 Eternal Father, strong to save
314 Humbly I adore Thee	620 Jerusalem my happy home
324 Let all mortal flesh keep silence	635 If thou but trust in God to guide thee
343 Shepherd of souls refresh and bless	636 How firm a foundation
376 Joyful, joyful we adore thee	645 The King of love
383 Fairest Lord Jesus	652 Dear Lord and Father of mankind
388 O worship the King	657 Love divine, all loves excelling
390 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	662 Abide with me
397 Now thank we all our God	663 The Lord my God my shepherd is
400 All creatures of our God and King	664 My Shepherd will supply my need
410 Praise my soul, the King of heaven	665 All my hope on God is founded
423 Immortal, invisible God only wise	671 Amazing grace!
448 O love, how deep	680 O God, our help in ages past
460 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus	685 Rock of ages
470 There's a wideness in God's mercy	687 A mighty fortress is our God
473 Lift high the cross	690 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah
474 When I survey the wondrous cross	691 My faith looks up to thee
482 Lord of all hopefulness	694 God be in my head
488 Be thou my vision	699 Jesus lover of my soul
490 I want to walk as a child of the light	707 Take my life
493 O for a thousand tongues to sing	708 Savior, like a shepherd lead us

The organist for the service is paid a fee of \$250 by the family.

(St. Mary's organist may be available to play the service; if not, we will work with you to find an organist familiar with the organ and the Episcopal liturgy.)

Additional soloists/musicians may require additional fees (typically \$150 per musician).

Please note that these fees are not tax-deductible contributions.

Readings from Holy Scripture

The following readings are those authorized for the service of The Burial of the Dead:

Old Testament:

Isaiah 25:6-9 (He will swallow up death in victory)
Isaiah 61:1-3 (To comfort all that mourn)
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33 (The Lord is good unto them that wait for him)
Wisdom 3:1-5, 9 (The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God)* *from the Apocrypha*
Job 19:21-27a (I know that my Redeemer liveth)

New Testament:

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 (The glory that shall be revealed)
I Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58 (Raised in incorruption)
II Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things which are not seen are eternal)
I John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)
Revelation 7:9-17 (God shall wipe away all tears)
Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

Psalms:

Psalm 23, Psalm 27, Psalm 42:1-7, Psalm 46, Psalm 90:1-12, Psalm 106:1-5, Psalm 116, Psalm 121, Psalm 130, Psalm 139:1-11.

Gospel:

John 5:24-27 (He that believeth hath everlasting life)
John 6:37-40 (All that the Father giveth me shall come to me)
John 10:11-16 (I am the good shepherd)
John 11:21-27 (I am the resurrection and the life)
John 14:1-6 (In my Father's house are many mansions)

Additional selections from Holy Scripture may be considered, in consultation with the officiating priest.

Members of the family may read the lessons, or lectors from St. Mary's may be appointed to read. One lector is appointed per lesson. Family Members may also lead the Prayers of the People.

Flowers

Family members are responsible for securing appropriate altar flowers for the service. A local florist may be used, provided they are familiar with our flower guidelines and containers are available for them to use for the flower arrangements. Additional flowers may be displayed in other areas, such as the foyer or parish hall.

The casket or urn is covered by a pall, provided by the church. The pall is a vestment of the Church, symbolizing one's baptismal identity. Floral sprays or flags will be removed from the casket at the entrance into the church and returned when the pall is removed as the casket is leaving the church to go to the cemetery.

Service Bulletins

Saint Mary's will produce an adequate number of service bulletins for those attending the service. Printing of the obituary, remembrance cards, etc. are the responsibility of the family and cannot be included in the service bulletin.

A guest book may be placed in the foyer prior to the service and in the Parish Hall following the service. Guest books are not provided by St. Mary's.

Receptions

The parish hall may be used for a brief reception, no longer than ninety minutes, following the funeral. If a longer event is desired, another time and place will likely be more suitable. Please coordinate with the parish office about space availability and time. Alcoholic beverages may be served at a reception in accordance with the church's alcohol policy. Liquor is not permitted, and equally attractive, non-alcoholic beverages must be readily available. A donation to the Friends of St. Mary's is kindly requested to cover the costs of the reception.

Ushers

Volunteers from St. Mary's may be scheduled to serve as ushers to assist in the service.

Reserved Seating

Pews will be reserved at the front of the church for family members and pallbearers. Please let the officiating priest know ahead of time how many family members and pallbearers will be seated in the reserved area so that adequate seating may be provided.

Memorials

The St. Mary's Memorial Fund provides opportunities for people to make contributions to the parish in memory of a departed loved one. Like all gifts to St. Mary's, memorial contributions are tax deductible. Acknowledgements are sent to family members of the deceased noting that a gift was given, and by whom it was given.

The Mary Garden at St. Mary's

Burial is available in the parish's Mary Garden to members and their immediate families. Others may be considered at the discretion of the Rector.

If the deceased person is to be buried in the Mary Garden, there is no need to purchase a durable container from the funeral home, as it will not be used. The ashes are brought to the church from the funeral home in a simple container, which will be covered by the pall for the service. At the committal, the ashes are interred directly into the ground.

The fee for interment is \$300. Please note that this fee is not tax-deductible. This cost includes the cost of the engraving of a plate with the person's name and dates of birth and death. This plate is then placed on bronze plaque. The interment fee also covers the perpetual care of the Mary Garden.