

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Funeral Policies

We welcome your inquiry concerning funeral services at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The information below presents our policies and procedures for a funeral in The Episcopal Church tradition. You are encouraged to read it carefully, and if you have questions or are interested in arranging a funeral at St. Mark's, please call the parish office at (480) 964-5820.

When Death Occurs

If at all possible, a clergy person should be notified when a person is near death in order that the ministrations of the Church may be provided. When death occurs, the parish office should be called at once. All arrangements for the funeral must be made only in consultation with the Rector and Parish Administrator.

The Funeral Service

The funeral service 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" (Romans 8:38-39). This joy, however, does not make human grief un-Christian. So, while we rejoice that the one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we join in sorrow and sympathy with those who mourn (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 507).

Since the Episcopal funeral service is a service of worship, it is properly held in a church, unless considerations of space prohibit. It is virtually impossible to carry out the worship of the Church in a funeral home, because our services assume the presence of an altar with its sacred vessels, linens, vestments, Prayer Books, and other appurtenances of worship, which are not available in a funeral chapel, or are transported there only with great inconvenience.

It does not matter whether the deceased was a member of the Church or not, or whether the survivors are members. The Church and its services are available to all. St. Mark's Episcopal Church uses the Book of Common Prayer for its funeral services. The Holy Eucharist is customarily celebrated at funerals. All baptized Christians are invited to receive Holy Communion.

Though eulogies, or remembrances, are not a part of our funeral liturgy, we understand that they can play an important role in comforting those who are grieving. Therefore we do allow up to 3 people to deliver brief remembrances of the deceased. Each should be no more than 3-5 minutes, and not be a detailed litany of life achievements. Rather they should tell a story, or paint in broad strokes a picture of the joy of life and the Christian hope in death. This will be followed by a brief homily delivered by the officiating priest.

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Only the Rector is authorized to make funeral plans with the family and perform the funeral service. The Rector has complete authority over the contents and conduct of the service, authorizes the date and time of service, and which church property space may be used. No funeral services will be conducted at the church when the Rector is unavailable or out of town, or if it conflicts with other previously scheduled church events. Permission to use another Episcopal priest to conduct the service in the absence of the Rector is granted solely by the Rector.

The church will provide printed programs to aid the congregants in following the service. The seating capacity in the church is around 300.

Pall for the Coffin

The coffin is to be closed before the service and it remains closed thereafter. A white pall to cover the coffin during the service in the church is provided by the church. This reminds us of the equality of all people before God. In the case of a veteran of the United States military, the coffin may be covered at the burial site by an American flag, if desired. Military funeral ceremonies are appropriately conducted outside the church or at the burial site.

Cremation

The Episcopal Church has no objection to cremation. The cremation may take place after the service or beforehand. The ashes may be present at the service, and blessed during the Commendation, if desired.

Columbarium

The Columbarium of St. Mark's is open to all members of our parish family as a final resting place for cremated remains. The cost of interment is a donation of \$600, which will include the cost of the burial niche. An application for interment and the policy for burial in the Columbarium can be picked up in the parish office or by speaking with clergy.

Dates of Services

It is the policy of this church that funeral or memorial services not be held on Sundays, on Mondays (church is closed), and other days that conflict with church events.

Music

The music for the funeral or memorial service should be taken from hymnals and other sources approved by The Episcopal Church for use in worship services. More importantly, music selections should be appropriate for a funeral or memorial service. Recorded music is not permitted.

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The selection of all music for the service is done in consultation with the clergy. St. Mark's Organist/ Music Director will play at all funerals or memorials with music. There is a fee for his services. Musicians requested by the family, in addition to the Organist, are welcome to participate in the service. However, they and their music selections must be approved by the Rector.

If desired, a bagpiper from the Mesa Caledonian Pipe Band is available to play at the funeral. The fee they charge is \$ 200 and is payable directly to them prior to the start of the service.

Flowers and Memorial Table

Inside the church, flowers at a church funeral are usually displayed as on Sundays, on the vase stands behind the Altar. Flowers are not to be placed on the coffin. The church has a floral ministry which utilizes silk flowers and plants, which have been pre-arranged. We are happy to accommodate requests for a particular arrangement from our inventory to be used, without cost. Other flower arrangements may be placed in the narthex of the church for display. A memorial table may be set up in the narthex and the church allows a small memorial table in the front on the church, when there is no coffin or cremated remains present. The items in the church are limited to pictures and appropriate items of remembrance.

Wills

"The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses" (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 445)

Please don't forget St. Mark's in your will! Clergy is willing to talk to you about the different options available for you to leave a legacy at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. A "Living Will" (Advanced Care Directives) would be helpful to the doctor and to family members should one become unable to make decisions for oneself.

Information regarding end-of-life issues can be obtained from the clergy.

Funeral Service Honorariums & Fees

When practical it is expected that all fees and honorariums will be paid prior to the funeral service. The fees for use of the church facilities should be made in a cash or check payable to St. Mark's. The fee for the priest's honorarium should be paid in cash or check payable to the priest. The honorarium for the Organist should be paid directly to them.

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Use of the church (up to 100. including service booklet costs)		
	By members in good standing*	No charge
	All others	\$ 500
Organist		\$ 175
Priest's honorarium		\$ 300
Use of the parish hall		
	By members in good standing*	No charge
	All others	\$ 400 (\$50-Cleaning Fee)

Receptions

Contact the office for more information regarding Receptions.

** According to the Constitution and Canons of the Church, members in good standing are those adult communicants who have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. At St. Mark's we generally recognize a communicant in good standing to be those who regularly attend worship services, engage in the life of the parish, and are current financial contributors of record (by pledge or other identifiable contribution) to the general support of the parish. Membership extends to the baptized dependent children of communicants in good standing.*