



GRACE EPIPHANY CHURCH – MT. AIRY
FUNERAL GUIDELINES

In the context of our Christian faith, the death of a loved is both personal and communal—as the family acknowledges their grief, the community of faith, the church, also gathers to offer support and the reassurances of our shared faith in the Lord Jesus through worship. Now worship—the liturgy—is the primarily the act of God’s people and is shaped not only by the personal experiences of those worshipping but primarily by our faith that for those who believe, “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” (BCP, p. 382).

At Grace Epiphany Church, we strive to accommodate, as much as we are able, the needs of the family; and also foster a worshipful experience that demonstrates our faith in the resurrection, particularly in the Funeral Liturgy. To this end, we offer guidelines to assist the family in crafting a service that is both personal and faith-filled.

VIEWING / BEFORE THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. Viewing the body may take place at church; and must be communicated in advance to the church administration when funeral arrangements are made.
2. Unless the volume of attendees prohibit it (usually in excess of 150 people arriving at the same time), it is our custom to:
 - a. Receive the body at the belfry doors and lead it to the open space at the rear of church—the Narthex.
 - b. Have the body remain at the Narthex in the rear of the church until immediately before the service.
 - c. Position the body in the Epistle side of the Narthex.
3. During the viewing, mourners may sit anywhere in the church, except for the pews designated for the family. This section is usually cordoned off by a rope.
4. The casket may remain open during the viewing; and flower arrangements may be placed in the casket’s lid.
5. Additional floral arrangements—except for the one that is attached to the lid of the casket—will remain at the rear wall of the church during the viewing and actual service.
6. If the number of mourners prohibits the viewing from taking place at the rear of the church:
 - a. The casket may be placed in front of the free-standing altar at the transept.
 - b. The casket may be left open during the viewing and be adorned with one floral bouquet or spray attached to the lid.
7. At the conclusion of the viewing, the casket is closed and covered with the Pall, which symbolizes the white garment received by Christians at their baptism.

THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. The funeral liturgy is from [the Book of Common Prayer 1979](#) (pp. 468-507).
2. Rite 1 (Traditional language) or Rite 2 (Contemporary language) may be selected.
3. The Funeral Liturgy may be celebrated with or without the Holy Eucharist.
4. Regardless of the type of service selected, the casket is to be closed before the service and covered with the Pall.
5. While it is common practice to read the Obituary at the beginning of the service, we respectfully ask that the family or those charged by them to assist in communicating with the church to observe the following when selecting other speakers—outside of the designated person reading the Obituary.
 - a. The speaker should be a close or immediate family member of the deceased.
 - b. The speaker should prepare his/her remarks in writing as much as possible.
 - c. The speaker should speak no more than four (4) minutes (the equivalent of 1 double spaced page using 12 point type read slowly).

6. The number of speakers is limited a *total* of four persons.
7. Friends or other members of the family may be invited to participate in the Liturgy by serving as reader(s), intercessors, gift bearers (if there is to be a Eucharist), or Pall Bearers.
8. To assist you in planning the Liturgy, an Outline is provided with this resource.

MUSIC FOR THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. Music for the Funeral Liturgy, as with all music in church, must be scripturally based; these may be found in the *Hymnal 1982* or *Lift Every Voice and Sing 2*—the standard hymnals of our church.
2. Hymns are sung by the congregation; and will likely require the printing of a leaflet for the lyrics, especially if a large number of mourners are expected.
3. Anthems may be sung as a solo piece by singer(s). At the moment, we do not have a singer or choir at Grace Epiphany; please communicate your need for a soloist or singers ahead of time.
4. Hymns may be sung:
 - a. After the Psalm and before the reading of the Gospel.
 - b. After the Sermon, if there is to be no Holy Eucharist.
 - c. As the offerings are prepared, if there is to be a Holy Eucharist
 - d. After Communion, if there is to be a Holy Eucharist
 - e. At the conclusion of the service—with our without the celebration of the Holy Eucharist
5. If your hired musicians are not familiar with the worship of the Episcopal Church, please have them contact the church before the date of the funeral service.
6. Our organ is a three manual Skinner pipe organ with a 32-note AGO pedalboard. A piano is also available in the church.
7. A wireless microphone is available for use by the soloist/singer, if this is desired.

AFTER THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. Families or those assisting them may opt to use the Cline Auditorium and its kitchen for the preparation of a repast after the Funeral Liturgy. If this is your wish, please communicate this in advance to the church administration. There is a separate fee structure for the use of Cline Auditorium.
2. It is customary for the repast to take place immediately after the service; and *before* the departure for the cemetery or crematorium.
3. If the repast is planned at Cline Auditorium *after the return from the Cemetery*, please communicate this ahead of time.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. There are separate fees for the use of the sanctuary; and use of Cline auditorium. These are usually in hourly increments.
2. The fee for the current church organist is separate from the fees associated with the use of the facilities.
3. The fee for the clergy is also separate from the facility fees.
4. We realize that the viewing, funeral liturgy and repast are all part of the day of burial. We also wish that the worship services of the church take place in a dignified way worthy of the Lord and of the memory of your loved one; and equally important, we want to be respectful of your schedule—knowing well that cemeteries or crematoria may be at a distance and may close at a certain time.
5. It is to these ends that we furnish you with these guidelines; and that we ask certain limits on those parts of the service that may impede the timeliness of your schedule.

OUTLINE OF THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. We will be bringing our own clergy: Yes. No.
If yes, please provide the name(s) of the clergy persons:

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2. We will be bringing our own organist/musicians: Yes. No.

3. We wish to celebrate the liturgy using the following form (select 1):
 Burial Liturgy Only (without Holy Eucharist)
 Burial Liturgy with the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist
(select 1) Rite 1 (Traditional Language) Rite 2 (Contemporary Language)

4. Obituary will be read by:

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5. Remembrances will be shared by (limit of four total):

1.

3.

2.

4.

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6. Scripture Lesson will be read by:

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- a. Scripture citation (excludes the Book of Psalms):

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7. The Psalm will be read by:

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- a. We wish to use Psalm:

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8. If only one scripture lesson is selected, skip #8 and proceed to #9.

If two scripture lessons are desired, the Second Lesson/Epistle will be read by:

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- a. Scripture citation (excludes the Book of Psalms)

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9. The Gospel we wish to use is (provide scripture citation below):

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10. The Prayers of the People will be led by:

[IF THE FORM SELECTED EXCLUDES THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST, YOU MAY STOP HERE.]

11. If an offertory procession is desired, the offerings will be carried by (maximum of two persons):