

A Funeral
at St. John's Anglican Church
280 St. James St., London, ON N6A 1X3 519-432-3743

This booklet has two parts.

- Part One, a set of frequently asked questions. They refer you to specific locations in Part Two;
- Part Two is a step-by-step guide to arranging for a funeral at St. John's; this part contains the answers to most of the questions you might have;

Part One

Frequently asked questions:

1. Should the funeral service be held at the funeral home
or in church? see Part Two, Section 6.b
2. Can a friend give a eulogy? see Part Two, Section 9.b
3. Can we invite our own soloist? see Part Two, Section 9.g
4. Will there be a "viewing" of the body? See Part Two, Section 10.d
5. What are some fees I might expect? see Part Two, Section 9.0
(see also Part Three)

***For applicable fees and suggested donations please contact the office.**

Part Two

Steps in arranging a funeral

1. **Call the clergy**
2. **Select the Funeral Director**
3. **Get some rest**
4. **Call the people who matter**
5. **Think about the type of "disposition" you want**
Is the body to be given to science, cremated, or buried?
6. **Plan for the three essential components of funerals**
 - 1) the Committal Service,
 - 2) Public prayer and thanksgiving,
 - 3) Greeting your well-wishers
7. **Make appointments with clergy, and with the Funeral Director**
8. **Decide what times you would prefer for the Funeral and the Committal**
9. **Go to your appointment with the clergy**
Items to be discussed with the clergy are listed below
10. **Go to your appointment with the Funeral Director**
Items to be discussed at the funeral home are listed below
11. **Begin choosing those who will participate in the service**
(based on your discussion with the clergy - Section 10)
 - a. A eulogist,
 - b. Readers of scripture, prayers,
 - c. Pallbearers, if needed
 - d. Altar servers, communion ministrants(if there will be a Eucharist)
12. **Plan the reception in conjunction with the caterer.**

*Please contact the Priest for any required fees and suggested donations.

Details for each step listed above...

1. **Call the clergy** - If the death is the result of a long illness, it is expected that you will have kept St. John's informed from the beginning about how things are progressing. Members of the Pastoral Care team, and the Priest of St. John's will in all likelihood have visited, and prayed with you from time to time.

However, whether the death has been long expected, or whether it has come suddenly, the Priest makes it a very high priority to come immediately, and will leave whatever he or she is doing to be with you for a while, and to offer prayer.

Please use all the phone numbers at the back of this booklet until you reach the Priest.
2. **Select the Funeral Director** - After a suitable interval, the medical caregivers will ask you to designate a Funeral Director, and will offer to call them in your behalf to come and take away the body.
Take your time selecting the Funeral Director. If you do not have an established relationship with a funeral home, try not to let yourself be hurried at this point. Funeral care is costly, and very much a matter of personal taste, so the selection of a Funeral Director should be made calmly. Get some rest, then make some inquiries, until you can be certain you are employing the Funeral Director who will most closely meet your expectations.

Personal care homes and hospitals usually do not recommend Funeral Directors, and most are willing to hold the body of your loved one while you take the time you need to choose your own.
3. **Get some rest** - The next few days will be very hectic, and very likely you have not had much rest, so try to have a brief period to catch up on sleep, reflect and be peaceful.
4. **Call the people who matter** - They want to know, they will need to grieve, and some will want to help. Discern who will be coming from far away. Do they need to be at the committal? Will they need to see the deceased?
5. **Think about the type of "disposition" you want.**
Is the deceased to be given to science, cremated, or buried?
 - a. **Giving a body to science** - Usually this has been determined long before your loved one dies. If you choose this disposition, a medical school is called, rather than an Funeral Director, to come and pick up the body. The body then remains about one year in the laboratory of the medical science institution, after which you will be consulted about appropriate burial or cremation.
 - b. **Earth burial.** This is the most familiar form of disposition. You will need to buy a plot in an authorized burial ground. Your Funeral Director can help arrange for this, and for the digging of the grave. The key moment of this disposition happens when the casket containing the body of your loved one is placed in the grave.
 - c. **Cremation** - In this form of disposition, the body is efficiently reduced to ash in a kiln-style furnace..

6. **Plan for the three essential components of funerals**

These are: 1) the Committal Service,
2) public prayer and thanksgiving,
3) greeting your well-wishers.

The traditional funeral combines all three in one event: first, the deceased is carried to the church, where there are remembrances, prayers, and thanksgivings; then the deceased is taken in procession to the graveside, or to the crematorium, for the Committal Service. A reception for guests, friends and family, completes the day. For financial reasons and /or for convenience, these three components are sometimes done separately, and in a different order, but all are essential, and all must take place before the funeral can be said to be complete.

- a. **The Committal Service** - This is the central act of letting go, and the most traumatic for you. The deceased loved one is placed over an open grave, or in front of the retort. The famous line, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is said, and the body is put into the place where it will decompose or be consumed by fire.
Many people wish to avoid this component, leaving it to the Funeral Directors, but your grief will be engaged in more cleanly if you and all the next of kin attend to this in person. When you purchase "immediate" cremation or burial from the Funeral Director, the "Committal Service" component often takes place prior to the public prayers and the reception.
- b. **Public Prayer and Thanksgiving** - Normally done in the church, this component consists of some spoken remembrances of the individual who has died, followed by prayer and scripture reading. This needs to be carefully planned with St. John's clergy and with the organist and choirmaster. You will be asked to appoint a person to speak about the deceased, another person to read the scriptures, and someone to lead part of the prayers. When the deceased is brought to the church as part of this service, you will also have to appoint six able-bodied people to be "pall bearers."
You will need to decide whether there will be hymns for everyone to sing, whether the service should be contemporary or traditional in wording, and whether or not there will be Holy Communion.
A service of Public Prayer and Thanksgiving may be held in the Funeral Home if access to it is more convenient for the aged or infirm; or if space at St. John's cannot possibly be available at the preferred time of the funeral.
- c. **The Reception** - If you don't speak personally to your well-wishers at the time of the death, there may be awkwardness when you meet them later in other settings.
They need to tell you they care.
It is not necessary to have a huge reception, so long as you connect with those who come out to the funeral. However, because we tend to mingle better over coffee and tea, it is good to plan some kind of official reception. This can take place at St. John's, or anywhere you like. Catering is your responsibility.

7. **Make appointments to plan the funeral**

You will need to spend at least an hour with the clergy, going over details of the funeral service and the events leading up to it. If possible, try to schedule the session with clergy prior to an equally long session with the Funeral Director.

These two meetings have very different functions:

- the one with the clergy has to do with the big picture...what elements are essential to a Christian funeral, and what is extraneous;
- the one at the funeral home has to do with concrete details: caskets, flowers, embalming, cremation, burial, graveyards, monuments, and government permits.

It is always desirable to go to the second meeting having worked out with the clergy the elements that are appropriate to your spiritual needs.

8. Decide what times you would prefer...

Four factors influence timing:

- a. the type of disposition you choose (see above);
- b. when out-of-town family members and friends can be present;
- c. when the church and the clergy are available;
- d. when the funeral home and/or graveyard are available.

Now you are ready for your appointments.

9. The planning session with the clergy

- a. Date and time of the funeral, committal,, and reception:

With some exceptions, the Priest will adjust his appointment calendar in order to be as much help to you as he can. As well, most groups, rentals, and other activities in the parish hall will be asked to change their timing to accommodate the funeral.

- b. A friend or family member will be invited to give a eulogy.

Personal remarks about the deceased are best given by those who were closest to them throughout their lives.

- c. Friends or family members will also be invited to do the following:

- read the Scriptures (a list of selections is available from the church office)
- lead some of the prayers
- be pall bearers (able-bodied people, either men or women)
- (when there is Holy Communion) if a family member has training as an altar server, or if he or she is licensed by the Bishop to administer the sacrament, they may assist at the altar.

- d. Pall Bearers - In a traditional funeral, when the body is carried in and out of the church, it is necessary for six healthy people to be pall bearers. They should be strong enough to carry a casket up some stairs. Similar height is also a good idea. If you don't know enough people to fill this role, make sure you arrange with the funeral home for staff to help out. If you do not plan to have the deceased at the church, then pall bearers are not needed.

- e. Seating - Family members and close friends are seated at the front of the church. You usually enter in procession just before the clergy.

When the casket is brought to the church it is put in place before the service and is closed at all times while in the church.

- f. Tolling the bell and other duties of the Verger

Verger, who tolls the bell as the casket is brought into the church, operates the P.A. system, and makes sure everyone finds their place at the start of the procession. The

Verger will welcome you as you arrive, help you find cloakrooms, washrooms, and the Prince of Peace chapel.

There is a fee for the Verger at the funeral (see last page of this booklet).

- g. The order of service: St. John's is well known for its beauty of worship. Ceremonial participation, readings, or symbols from anything other than Christian sources must be approved by the priest. Secular poems and anecdotes, and favourite songs, may be quoted or referred to in the context of a eulogy.
We are unable to use any recorded music. Any other musician whom you wish to have sing or play at the funeral will need to coordinate with the Organist. Use of instruments other than piano needs to be reviewed by the priest.
- h. St. John's parishioners can provide ushers for the service.
We would like to greet your guests in behalf of the parish, and assist in seating them. We will guide them to any guest registers you may wish to use, and hand them service leaflets.
- i. A Funeral leaflet
We will produce a worship program, detailing whether to stand, kneel, or sit, and inviting full participation in the service.
- j. Covering the casket - The covering is known as a "pall" and is a large drape of fine fabric ornamented with a cross. Floral displays are not put over it, so if there is an arrangement placed on the casket, it is removed and kept at the back of the church during the service. The casket is never opened at the church.
- k. Flowers - Members of St. John's altar guild will set up all floral displays that are delivered to the church. Please note that no flowers may be placed on the altar. After the service all funeral flowers are to be taken to your home, or distributed the others to nursing homes and hospitals (Please note that most institutions do not allow scents, so oftentimes flowers are not allowed).
- l. Greeting your well-wishers
It is important that you see - and connect with - those come out to the funeral. As some will hurry back to work following the ceremony, it is quite acceptable for you to stand near the church entrance before the service begins to greet them as they come in. Don't feel you must be hidden from view, although our quiet lounge is available if you are too upset to greet people before the service.
- m. The reception
Usually St. John's parish hall will be made available for a reception; Within reason, we try to ask activities, parish groups, and those who rent our hall to adjust their schedules to accommodate the funeral.
- n. St. John's parishioners will set out coffee and tea;
If the reception is to be in the parish hall, we are happy to play host to your friends and relatives. However, we ask that you take responsibility for other food and refreshments

at the reception. If you wish, we will refer you to a caterer who is familiar with our kitchen and equipment.

o. Costs

For Contributing parishioners, there is no charge for the clergy, the church, or the parish hall. However, if you would like to make some donation then please talk to the priest for suggestions.

There are set fees for the musicians, however, and for the Custodian. They are listed on a separate sheet that can be obtained from the priest.

10. **The Planning session with the Funeral Director**

a. Cremation, Burial, or "Giving the body to science" (see also Section 6, above) Funeral directors help in planning and coordinating the whole process of the funeral, but their fees are separate from those of the cemetery or crematorium.

Sometimes it is necessary to make three different appointments: one with the cemetery to purchase a plot or mausoleum space; another with the Funeral director to plan for embalming, caskets, obituaries, and other physical details; and a third with a provider of headstones or other markers.

b. Embalming

Some Funeral Directors always insist on embalming, others do not. Embalming is necessary if the committal service, cremation or burial takes place many days after death; if there is to be a publicly attended time of "viewing;" or if the final disposition is to be in a mausoleum (See subsection "k," below).

c. Caskets

Caskets vary in appearance and expense. Most are of furniture-quality materials. Some funeral homes rent and re-use caskets. If you are concerned about the appearance of the casket during the service, remember that St. John's covers all caskets with a "pall." All are equal in God's Family.

d. Viewing

Commonly well-wishers are invited to come to the funeral home the night before a traditional service. The casket is open, and anyone is welcome to touch the body, or to "pay their respects." This is a helpful practice in grief particularly for those who were close to the one who has died, and were not able to sit with the body immediately after the death occurred.

The Priest of St. John's does not usually attend viewings. The casket is never opened in the church. It is covered with the "pall" (see above). For funerals in a funeral home the casket is never opened again after an Anglican service has begun, though sometimes it is open before the worship starts.

e. Obituary notices - Most Funeral Directors can help you write a funeral notice and place it in the newspapers. However, you are perfectly free to take charge of this yourself.

f. Flowers

Decide, with the Funeral Director, if there are any charities which might receive donations "in lieu of flowers."

Many families like to place flowers in the grave as a part of the Committal Service.

f. Guest books

Funeral homes provide books for your guests' signatures, or you can provide your own.

h. Limousines - The Funeral Director can provide these cars to pick up you, the pallbearers, and/or your family; to convey family and pallbearers in a motorcade to the cemetery or crematorium; and to be at your service before and after the reception. Limousines can be useful in keeping everyone together, particularly for a ceremonial procession. However, there are extra costs for these cars, and the funeral can take place perfectly well without them. The only essential vehicle is a "coach," or hearse, to carry a casket.

i. The Procession - When the funeral follows the traditional format and the clergy and people convey the body to its final resting place as part of the service, it is necessary to form a compact motorcade. Funeral directors are skilled at leading this procession, but it is helpful if your friends who drive their own cars are prepared to stay in close formation for the journey through city traffic.

j. A burial plot - A small piece of land which forms part of a cemetery. These are usually purchased, and are, in some senses your "property." However, what you put on them - gravestones and/or markers - are governed by the rules of the cemetery.

k. A mausoleum - Embalmed bodies in caskets can be permanently placed in an above-ground building called a "mausoleum." Several cemeteries offer such spaces for sale or lease.

l. Disposition of ashes - The "cremated remains" are made available to you as early as 24 hours after cremation. If you do not purchase a special urn, they will usually come in a cardboard box inside a velvet bag. You may store the ashes in a "columbarium" - a place with small cupboards or "niches" in which to place an urn. Although St. John's does not do so, some parishes will sell or lease a columbarium niche to you within their church building.

All cemeteries offer the burial of ashes in burial plots. When buried, the cremated remains do not need to be in an urn. The box and velvet bag are sufficient for burial.