

**Facing Death with Hope:
Planning Your Funeral Service
The Rev. Everett Perine: 02/01/23**

Initial thoughts

- Service is an Easter Liturgy celebrating the resurrection
- Joy & Hope
- Also recognizing and allowing for grief at loss
- Belief that God's love can heal our pain
- Celebration of life & Time for Remembrance
- Remember this is a gift you are offering to them
 - When the time comes, they will need to make decisions how, where and when the funeral will occur
 - Those decisions will be demanded when they are grieving
 - Consider your planning as guidance in helping them make those decisions

Thoughts to consider about your service

- Service reflects your life and how you want to be remembered
- Consider personal touches that could be added (e.g. In funeral bulletin or displayed)
 - Poems, readings
 - Scripture verses
 - Photos
 - Art work, crafts
- It is also a service for your family, a time to say goodbye, seek closure
 - Consider what is meaningful to family
 - Discuss your funeral preferences with them
 - If you have a spouse or significant other, consider planning each other's service together
- People that might wish to participate (allowing for the passage of time)
 - Especially non-family members whom family can call upon when the time comes

Types of services

- Memorial Service
 - The body is not present
 - May be held at any time, any where
 - Focus is on Celebrating a life and Remembering
- Funeral Service
 - The body is present
 - Generally held shortly after death
 - Focus is on Celebrating a life and Remembering
 - Commending the departed to God
- Graveside Service
 - At the site of burial or interment of ashes
 - Liturgical act of committing the body or ashes to the earth, the deep, the elements or resting place (mausoleum)
 - May be done in addition to or in lieu of a memorial/funeral service

The Service in the Episcopal Church (4 basic parts to a traditional service)

- Burial Office
 - Anthems celebrating resurrection
 - Prayers for the deceased, the Christian community, promises of eternal life
 - Readings from OT, Psalms, Epistles, Gospels
 - Time of remembrance: clergy & family/friends
- Communion
 - Ultimate expression of our hope in Resurrection
 - Episcopal Church generally is open Communion – anyone wishing to receive may
 - Many guests will not participate
- The Commendation
 - Done at the body/ashes
 - Commends the deceased to God's loving care
- The Committal
 - Done at the site of burial or interment
 - May be immediately after the funeral service or at a later date

Options for the Service (Planning Sheet)

- Will the body or ashes be present
 - If body present, service will occur within a specified window (generally 3 to 5 days)
 - If cremation, then time frame is extended
 - **Important you talk to family about your wishes whether or not to be cremated!**
- Where and when will the service occur
 - Consider the number likely to attend
 - Family only or open to public
- Will your service be Rite 1 or Rite 2
 - Know your guests: Rite 1 may be best for you, but may seem strange to younger members or non-Episcopalians
 - Generally speaking, Rite 1 is more penitential, Rite 2 is more celebratory
- Communion
 - Ultimate expression of our faith and hope we have in resurrection
 - Guests will be a mixed bag: other denominations & faiths
- Readings from Scripture
 - Choose from OT, Psalms, Epistles (NT), Gospels
 - As few as one, as many as 3 plus 2 psalms
 - If Communion, last reading must be Gospel
 - Non-Scriptural readings are at the discretion of priest but copies should be on file
- Time of Remembrance
 - Clergy may preach/give Eulogy
 - Family or friends may speak
 - Recommend: no more than two, limit to 3-5 minutes (NO OPEN MIC)
 - Other remembrances can be personally shared at reception and in days ahead
- Participants in service
 - Opportunities in readings, ushers, pall bearers, speakers
 - Provide list of non-family members who might be included as well as family

- Music – Deb will lead us in that
- Flowers (florist contact info)
- Memorial donations in lieu of flowers
 - Church
 - Special organizations
 - Charities
- Military honors are available to all Veterans & arranged through local VFW or American Legion
- Masonic Rites, Red Cap services and other special services you may wish should be included in your planning with contact people noted

Final Thoughts

- These details should be reviewed on regular basis with clergy of your parish & family
- Local customs and clergy preferences differ from place to place
- Have copy of your wishes on file with your personal papers as well as with your parish, a family member and lawyer/executor of estate
- Our personal wishes may not always be in sync with family members – HAVE CONVERSATION!!!