



## The Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter Charlotte, North Carolina

### Information for Planning a Funeral Liturgy

This packet contains information about Holy Comforter's usual practices and policies surrounding funeral liturgies and the many details that go into planning and carrying out such services. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the pages in the packet as you make plans for your funeral liturgy. Several forms in the packet can be returned to the church office and kept on file, using the stamped envelope provided with this packet.

The clergy and staff of the parish are available to help you with planning and to answer questions you may have along the way. Some important contacts are:

The Rev. Greg Brown, Rector

E-mail: [gregb@holycomfortercharlotte.org](mailto:gregb@holycomfortercharlotte.org)

Holly Williams, Parish Administrator

E-mail: [hollyw@holycomfortercharlotte.org](mailto:hollyw@holycomfortercharlotte.org)

Jessica Dunlap, Keeper of funeral records

E-mail: [jessicad@holycomfortercharlotte.org](mailto:jessicad@holycomfortercharlotte.org)

Patrick Pope, Director of Music

E-mail: [patrickp@holycomfortercharlotte.org](mailto:patrickp@holycomfortercharlotte.org)

All staff can be reached by phone by calling the church office at (704) 332-4171.

### Checklist

- Basic information sheet with wishes for your funeral liturgy
- Next-of-kin sheet with wishes for burial or cremation
- A list of scripture readings appropriate for funerals
- A list of hymns appropriate for funerals
- A pamphlet outlining planned giving opportunities for estate planning, etc.



# The Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter Charlotte, North Carolina

## A Guide for Planning a Funeral Liturgy

*“I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord;  
he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;  
and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die.” John 11:25*

Christians are an “Easter people.” As Christians our liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we too shall be raised. The Christian faith calls us to witness, even in death, the new life that God gives in Christ through his death and resurrection.

Christian burial is marked by three characteristics. First and foremost, it is an act of worship wherein we glorify God for the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Second, it is a time when family and friends gather in the Holy Spirit to comfort one another and to offer mutual assurance of God’s abiding love. Third, it is a liturgy of celebration whereby we give thanks for a deceased loved one and commend that person to the care of Almighty God.

The earliest records of Christian burial tell us that the following elements were included:

- Prayer in the home before the burial took place
- A gathering of the community for a burial service, consisting of thanksgivings, psalms, hymns, readings from the scripture, and prayers for the departed and those who mourn
- Celebration of the Holy Eucharist
- A procession of lights and torches to the place of burial
- The interment of the remains

As part of the preparation for burial, the faithful are urged to counsel with members of the clergy. It is also of great benefit to read the service in *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP, pages 468-507). The rubrics (instructions) on these pages are of particular interest.

**The following documents have been prepared to assist your own planning for a funeral liturgy and the details surrounding that event. Thoughtful preparation and attention to these details will be a great gift to your family and friends at the time of your death, so that their focus may be on love and care for one another as they experience the grief of a close personal loss.**

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER  
2701 PARK ROAD  
CHARLOTTE, NC 28209

Funeral Liturgy Planning Sheets

*Please return this sheet to the church office using the stamped envelope provided.*

Date filed with church office: \_\_\_\_\_

The death of a member of the Church should be reported as soon as possible to the Church and arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with the Rector. Baptized Christians are properly buried from the Church. The service should be held at a time when the congregation has the opportunity to be present (see the *Book of Common Prayer*, page 468). It is the expectation that all funerals at Holy Comforter will include Holy Communion. Completion of this form is an opportunity for you to make your wishes known for your own funeral liturgy. This document will be kept on file at the church, so that the liturgy will be one in which you have a part in planning. We recommend you also keep a copy in your personal files, as well as sharing a copy with your next-of-kin.

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address	
City, State, ZIP Code	
Telephone	
E-mail address	

Name of desired funeral home/service: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer for my funeral liturgy to be held:

- At the church                       At the funeral home

I would like for my funeral liturgy to include music:

- Yes                                       No

*See the list of suggested hymns later in this document to assist in your planning.*

I would like flowers on the altar for my funeral liturgy:

- Yes                                       No

Kind(s) preferred: \_\_\_\_\_

Florist preferred: \_\_\_\_\_

The church owns two (2) beautiful palls (casket/urn covers) which are properly used in the Church. This eliminates the expense of a casket spray.

I would like a reception for family and friends following the liturgy:

- Yes                                       No

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**Next-of-kin:**

Name	
Relationship to you	
Address	
City, State, ZIP Code	
Telephone	
E-mail address	

**Memorials** should be designated for and sent to:

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(It is customary, when Holy Comforter hosts a funeral, that the church be included as one of the recipients of memorial gifts.)

Name and contact information of person who should receive memorial acknowledgements:

Name	
Address	
City, State, ZIP Code	
Telephone	
E-mail address	

**Interment**

*Cemetery Plot?*  Yes  No  
If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you desire Cremation?*  Yes  No  
If yes, where do you wish your ashes to be placed?

- Cemetery Plot (list location) \_\_\_\_\_
- Holy Comforter Memorial Garden\*
- Holy Comforter Columbarium\*

If you desire a casket, please list names of pall bearers:

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- 1) Ashes may be placed directly into the ground in the Holy Comforter Memorial Garden. There is no cost for this service. If you would like your name plaque added to the wall in the garden the cost will be assessed at the time of interment. **Please spell my name on the plaque as:**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) If you prefer, Columbarium niches are available. Ashes will be transferred to a cardboard box and placed in a niche of your choosing. For more information regarding columbarium interment including choosing a niche please contact the Parish Administrator. You may reserve your niche once payment of \$1,500.00 has been received; other costs will be assessed at the time of interment.

\*Please be aware of expenses, should you choose these options (a list of current costs is maintained by Holly Williams, Parish Administrator, 704-332-4171 or hollyw@hollycomfortercharlotte.org).

- Honorarium for organist and/or additional musicians
- Altar Flowers

## Scripture Readings for Funeral Liturgies

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The funeral liturgy most often used at Holy Comforter is formally known as *Burial of the Dead: Rite Two* as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pages 491-505. It is highly recommended that you read through this liturgy, and spend time with the Scripture readings which are prescribed for it. During the Liturgy of the Word (pp. 494-495), typically three or four of the following readings are chosen (Old Testament; *Psalms*; New Testament; Gospel):

### Old Testament

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

### Psalms

- 23
- 27
- 106:1-5
- 116

### New Testament

- Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 (The glory that shall be revealed)
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58 (The imperishable body)
- 1 Corinthians 4:16-5:9 (Things that are unseen are eternal)
- 1 John 3:1-2 (We shall be like him)
- Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)
- Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

### The Gospel

- John 5:24-27 (He who believes has everlasting life)
- John 6:37-40 (All that the Father gives me will 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 rooms)

## Suggested Hymns for Funeral Liturgies

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A typical funeral liturgy at Holy Comforter includes the singing of congregational hymns. Usually, five or six hymns are chosen:

- Sung between the Old and New Testament readings (if a Psalm is not chosen)
- Sung before the reading of the Gospel
- Sung at the Offertory, as the table is prepared for Communion
- Sung during the distribution of Communion (can be more than one)
- Sung as the body/remains are carried out of the church

Because this liturgy is a celebration of Christ's resurrection, hymns for the Easter season are always appropriate. Some which are well-known at Holy Comforter include (page numbers are from *The Hymnal 1982*):

- 174 *At the lamb's high feast we sing*
- 178 *Alleluia! Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord*
- 207 *Jesus Christ is risen today*
- 208 *The strife is o'er, the battle done*
- 210 *The day of resurrection*

Other hymns whose texts provide measures of strength, comfort, and confidence at the time of a loved one's death include:

- 287 *For all the saints, who from their labors rest*
- 293 *I sing a song of the saints of God*
- 376 *Joyful, joyful, we adore thee*
- 390 *Praise to the Lord, the almighty*
- 525 *The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord*
- 620 *Jerusalem, my happy home*
- 645 *The king of love my shepherd is* [a well-loved paraphrase of Psalm 23]

Hymns appropriate for congregational singing during distribution of communion include:

- 304 *I come with joy to meet my Lord*
- 325 *Let us break bread together on our knees*
- 335 *I am the bread of life*
- 529 *In Christ there is no east nor west*
- 608 *Eternal Father, strong to save* [especially suitable for veterans]

**This list is not exhaustive, but rather meant to aid in your planning. Other suitable or desired hymns may be included, in consultation with the clergy and musician.**