

Last THINGS

AN END OF LIFE JOURNAL FOR FAMILIES



"God's Peace" by Dick Wertz

 *Calvary* EPISCOPAL CHURCH
STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT

Forward

“I am the resurrection and the life, says our Lord.” These words from Holy Scripture begin the liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer we use for funerals--they are words of hope, celebration and comfort. Yet at the time of the death of a loved one, families and friends are often overcome with grief and other emotions. They ask, “what would our loved one want us to do? what sort of service? what of other details at this time?” Over the years, I’ve found that one of the greatest gifts we can give is a clear answer to just those questions... it is a great relief to those responsible to know our wishes before we depart.

“Last Things” was prepared to help members of our community and others prepare personal guidelines for their end of life wishes. Having served at many funerals, I realize how helpful it is for family to be informed of our wishes ahead of time. Church leaders and funeral directors also appreciate our pre-planning. By completing as much of this form as you desire, we will know logistical details, family traditions, favorite scripture, preferred hymns, poetry and prayers. My hope is that you and your loved ones find this guideline helpful. This is not a required document but is meant to cover many aspects of end of life issues. The church is interested in the items related to our service and care plans. Others may be interested in the other details presented in the booklet. You may be surprised how relieved family members might be happy to know your thoughts and needs.

I hope that your family will know your wishes and the location of this document. We are happy to keep the section that pertains to the church. If you have any questions about “Last Things” you may contact the Rector or Pastor of your Church.

THE REV. GILLIAN R. BARR.

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Introduction

The end of life as we know it is one of the few things of which we can be certain. And yet, in spite of its inevitability, the time of death -- our own, or the death of a loved one -- is nearly always experienced as a time of emotional stress.

The intensity of the stress will vary considerably depending upon many factors: For example, how close we were to the person who has died, how dependent we were on the person, the circumstances of death, and the amount of “unfinished business” that remains in our relationship with the person. But a critical variable is how prepared we are to face death.

Unfortunately, in many aspects of our lives, we tend to avoid the fact of death. Therefore, in spite of its inevitability, the time of death brings not only suffering but stress as we are forced to do what we don't want to do, and to make important decisions for which we have not carefully planned. As a result, the stress deepens and can become even more painful and disorienting, and the emotional and financial repercussions can be immense.

THIS BOOKLET BEGINS WITH CERTAIN PREMISES:

- * Grieving is natural and healing.
- * The Church seeks to support mourners through the grieving process.
- * The more carefully we consider the issues surrounding death and grief, the better we will be able to cope with the loss of a loved one, and to face death ourselves.
- * Planning for our own death can ease the stress for our survivors, and as such, is a profound gift of love.
- * The Christian faith speaks directly to us about death and grief.
- * The rites and practices of death and burial ought to be both a comfort to survivors, and a reflection of our understanding of death in the light of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.
- * We bear primary responsibility for ourselves - in both life and death. Yet it is essential that we discuss our final arrangements with our significant others.

The information in this booklet is offered to help you reflect on, and prepare for your own death and burial from the Episcopal Church.. It should also be a value in helping others with this preparation. In addition, the Burial Instruction Form can serve as a guide for planning a burial for which no advance preparations have been made. The clergy and staff of Calvary stand ready to assist in clarifying the contents of this booklet or in answering any questions which may arise from its use.

Grief

Within the scope of these few pages, we will address the emotional, psychological, physical, social and spiritual facets of grief. If you want to learn more, there are fine books and pamphlets on the subject; the Calvary clergy and parish library have some to lend. The purpose of this section is to present some reflections based on wisdom gleaned from grief literature and on personal experiences of loss.

WHEN A LOVED ONE BECOMES TERMINALLY ILL

In the case of a prolonged illness, grieving may begin long before death. In fact, when the family and the dying person are able to share what is happening, they are often able to move through various aspects of grief together. This can lead to a more peaceful death for the dying, greater comfort for the survivors, an enhanced ability to plan for the future, and a less complicated bereavement process for those who remain. Often the dying person can minister to others as much as they minister to him or her.

A terminal illness poses important end-of-life choices. For example, when medically and physically feasible, a person may choose the home or an in-patient hospice facility as the place to die. Hospitals emphasize services when there is a need for acute care and hope for a cure. It is sometimes difficult for the medical team to change the focus of care for the patient and family when little hope remains for survival. Standard hospital procedures, rules, and settings may mitigate against mutual ministry of family and patient and may even seem to deny the inevitability of death. Usually more comfortable and care-oriented, the home or in-patient hospice setting may be more conducive to ministering to and with the dying.

Nonetheless, in our society, death often occurs in a hospital. In that setting, it is essential to communicate the needs and wishes of the patient and family to physicians and hospital staff. Frank discussions among family members clarifying these issues can be very helpful. Ideally, the patient will have already drafted a State of Connecticut Living Will Declaration and Health Care Power of Attorney to ensure that his/her wishes are known to all and (if possible) are carried out. Without direction from the patient and family, the hospital staff may be required to initiate treatment which is costly and of little or no benefit to the dying patient. The Calvary clergy are available to assist with prayerful consideration of these difficult matters.

Beyond the major decisions, patients and families should also express their needs for privacy, exceptions to visiting rules, and any other wishes which will aid the patient and family move through the process of grieving and dying.

Gone From My Sight

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side,
spreads her white sails to the moving breeze and starts
for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck
of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then, someone at my side says, "There, she is gone."

Gone where?

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast,
hull and spar as she was when she left my side.
And, she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.
Her diminished size is in me -- not in her.

And, just at the moment when someone says, "There, she is gone,"
there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices
ready to take up the glad shout, "Here she comes!"

And that is dying...

Henry van Dyke

THE *Grieving* PROCESS

Whether grieving begins before death or after, it is the natural process of personal adjustment to the loss of a significant person in our life, and to the inevitable changes that follow. Grieving helps each of us:

- Deal with the reality of our feelings toward the person who has died and the loss of that person;
- Grow toward acceptance of the death;
- Search for meaning in the death and for our own life;
- Become reintegrated into our communities, and
- Begin to move on with our own life.

Grieving tends to follow a fairly predictable pattern. Knowing about these so-called “stages” of grief may be quite helpful – particularly in reassuring us that the intense, aching, up and down turmoil is “normal.” However, it is crucial to remember that, even though grief is a universal human experience, each of us is affected by death differently, and each one of us moves through grief in our own way.

When someone around whom our lives found meaning is gone, we typically experience a host of feelings: sadness, emptiness, depression, guilt, regret, anger, loneliness, anxiety, dread, relief, apathy, combinations of these and many others. These feelings aren’t “good” or “bad.” They just are. And they must be faced. Talking, crying, or simply being quiet – especially in the supportive company of others who care about us – can help us get in touch with our feelings, and often bring a measure of comfort and release.

After the initial shock, people often tend toward avoidance and denial. What we say or don’t say, our preoccupation with details, and even our displays of emotion are often designed to buffer ourselves from the painful yet unyielding reality of death.

All the while we find ourselves compelled to delve deeper and deal with the questions of ultimate meaning. Human beings are creatures who ponder our purpose in life and our destiny in death. The burial rite of the Church can be profoundly helpful in beginning to sort out these significant issues. Prayer, conversation, and counseling can also help.

As time passes and we begin to accept the fact of death in the depths of our being, we discover that – in spite of the occasional setback – we are indeed beginning to heal and to move on.

A key transition takes place as we gradually return to our usual rhythms of worship, family life, work, education, and recreation, and become reintegrated into our communities. Often, we will not feel like doing this. We might question whether or not our old routines are worth the effort. And we might feel inclined to retreat and turn in upon ourselves. This is perhaps most evident when a spouse dies and we are no longer a “couple” but a “single”, and we feel uncomfortably isolated in that new role. It is not unusual for widows and widowers to feel unwelcome. But, more often than not, this is simply a reflection of our own grief, and the discomfort of others who truly want to help but just don’t know how.

Of course, getting on with our lives doesn’t mean forcing ourselves in frenzied activity for the sake of “keeping busy.” Nor does it mean forcing ourselves into making hasty decisions on important matters (for

Children & GRIEF

example, selling a home or changing jobs). But as we gently return to our customary activities, and to those associations and relationships that have given our life pleasure and meaning, we find that although our lives have been changed forever, we are indeed, able to cope.

To grieve is to feel and to reflect; to hold on and to let go; to remember and to move on. We must do it ourselves. But there are family members, friends, associates, church members, support groups, clergy, and professionals, who stand ready to help us work through the ache of loss. Above all, there is God who loves us, and who is with us in the midst of our suffering and struggles. Personal prayer and worship with your parish family can be an enormous source of strength and sustenance.

One of the most difficult problems for families is helping move through the crisis of death. Adults have understandable desire to shield children from the distress, sadness, and pain of grief. When death comes, however, children, like adults, need the opportunity to deal with the hard reality of their loss and their turbulent feelings of grief.

Ideally, adults can help children begin to understand death long before it comes as a family crisis period. Even young children see and hear about death on television, on social media, in stories, in nature, when a funeral procession passes by, or when a beloved pet dies. In these moments, open and honest communication with someone they trust can help children learn reliable, helpful information and begin to accept death as a natural part of life. Age-appropriate books are a great teaching tool and provide an opening for conversation. When someone close dies, children should be told and allowed to participate with everyone else in the season of grief. This does not mean forcing the child, but allowing the child to see, hear, ask, and talk. Children experience the same range of emotions as adults and should be encouraged to express those feelings in words, crying, play, songs, drawings, and questions. Adults should not be hesitant to allow children to see their own sadness and tears.

It is appropriate to include even young children in rituals at the time of death. While the decision about how children will participate is a family judgment, it does seem that children often benefit from being included in some way. The children's feeling of exclusion and fantasies about death may be more difficult and frightening than the experience of actually seeing, knowing, and being a part of the family in saying goodbye. Along the way, it is very helpful to explain in advance what the child can expect to see, hear, and do.

Children tend to have very concrete questions about death. They also tend to take our words literal-

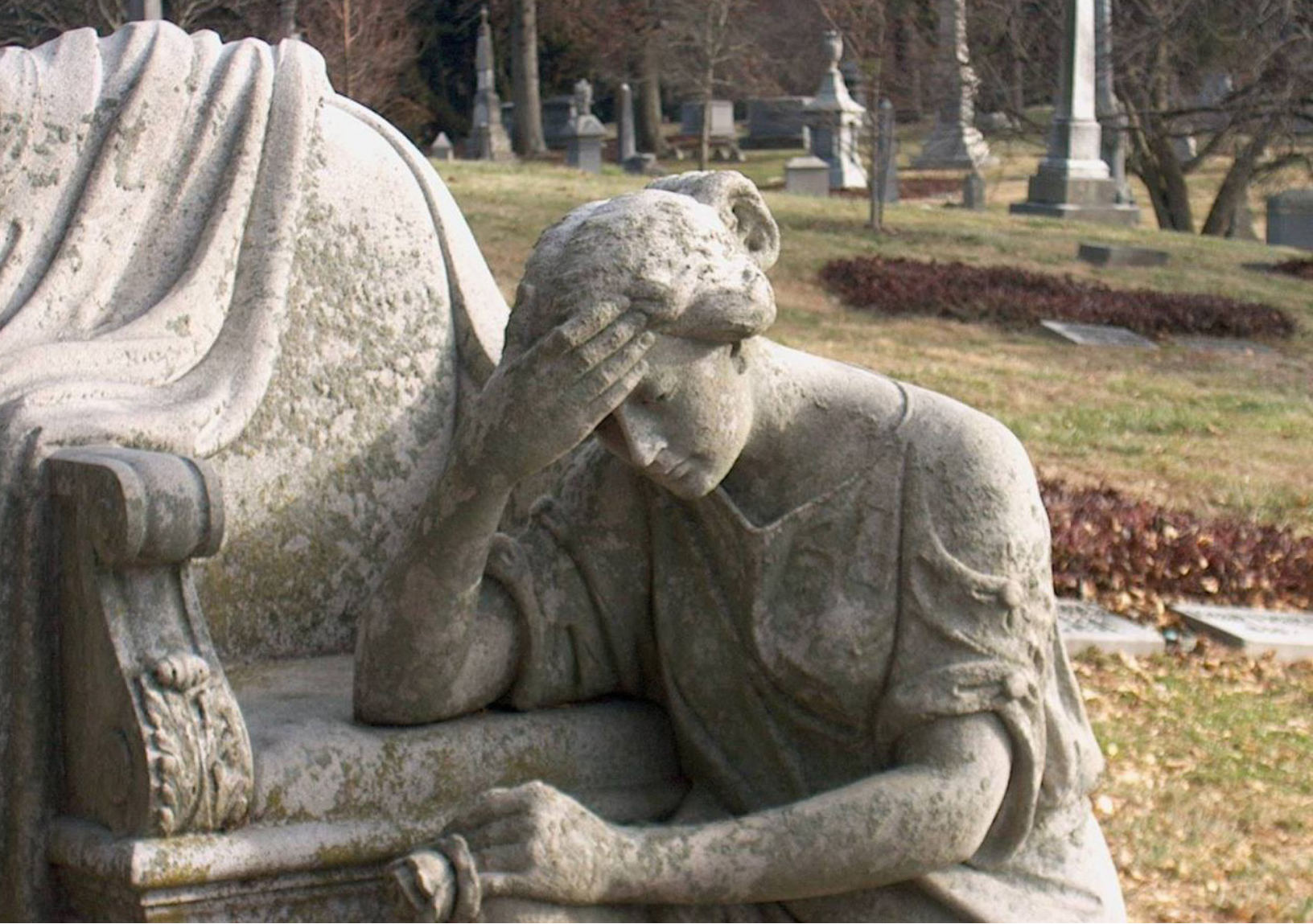


CHILDREN AND GRIEF CONTINUED

ly. Therefore, adults should use language carefully, providing clear, simple explanations. For example, to speak of the death person as “asleep” is confusing and may even make a child afraid to fall asleep. To say that God “took someone because God needed him or her more” can make a child wonder about the goodness of God and feel angry because the child still needs the person who died. Rather than anticipating what a child might say or ask, listen carefully to what the child’s thoughts, ideas, and concerns are. And be patient – children may need to ask the same questions again and again.

Be sure that the child’s teachers and counselors are aware of the death, which allows support at school.

The most helpful response to the grieving child’s needs is warm reassurance from a caring adult. We can convey to children our faith in the loving presence of God who cares for the departed, and who will continue to care for us through the hands and hearts of God’s people.



HOW TO *Help* THOSE WHO MOURN

How can we care of those who have suffered the loss of a loved one? This is a challenge; sometimes because we ourselves are uncomfortable with death, sometimes because we don't know the family's state of mind (and occasionally don't even know the family), and sometimes because we simply don't know what to do or say.

Here are several suggestions. First and foremost, don't be afraid to help! Mourners often feel terribly isolated. These feelings are exacerbated when family and friends, feeling awkward and unsure, avoid them. A good rule of thumb is simply this: "Be there; Be yourself." There is not always a need to do or say anything at all. The fact that you cared enough to be present is itself a precious gift.

However, if the bereaved seem ready and willing to open up and talk about their feelings and concerns, be prepared to listen. You don't have to supply profound answers. Just thank God that these people trust you enough to share their suffering with you. And trust that in your companionship, conversation, and shared silences, God in Christ is truly present and bringing the healing Spirit to bear.

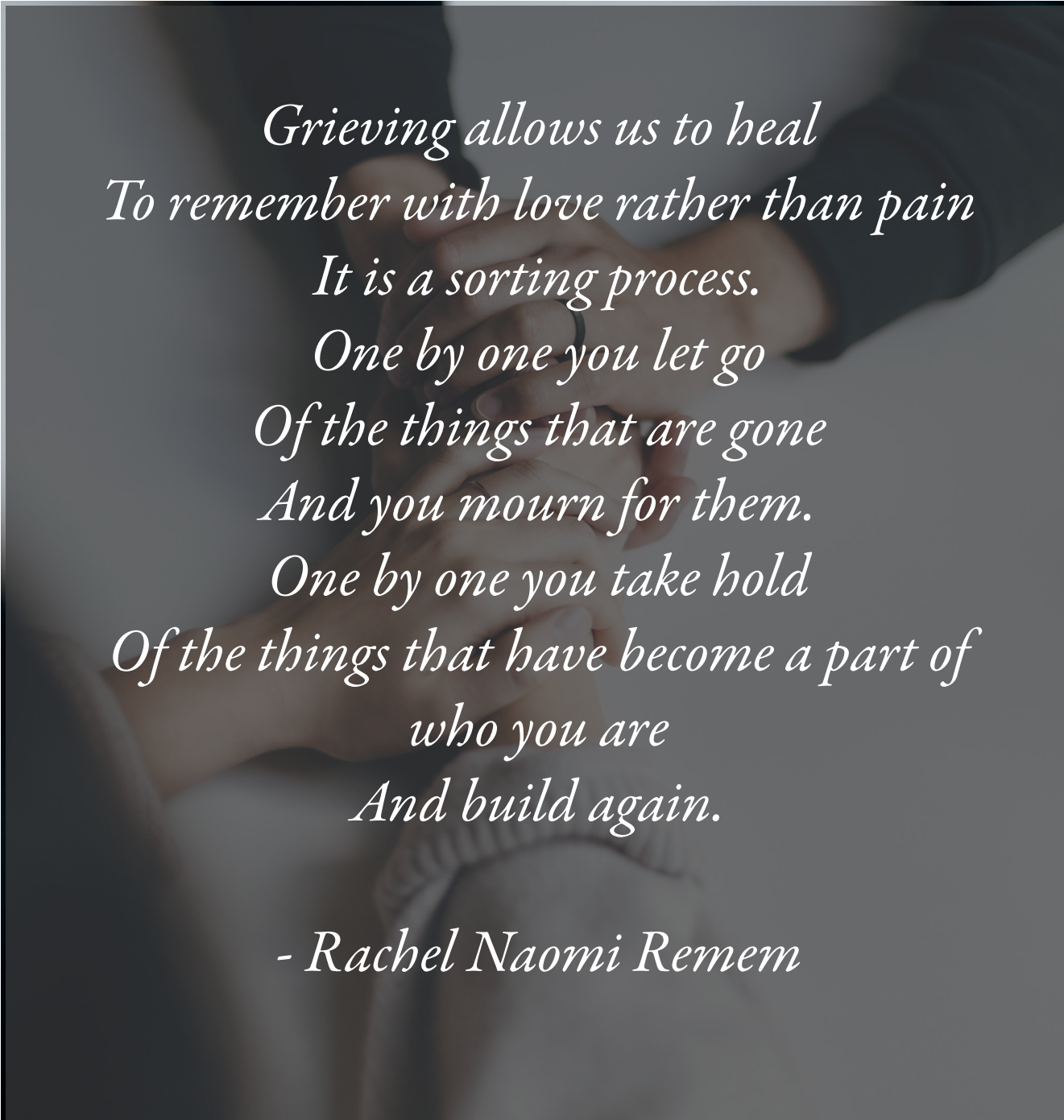
If you feel moved to speak, express what you are thinking and feeling about the deceased out of your own

HOW TO HELP CONTINUED

experience – if this can be done without laying a greater burden on the family. (Remember: The grieving family doesn't need to minister to you as well as to themselves!) One caveat: It is not wise to say, "I know how you feel". You may not.

Take the initiative and ask about the needs of the bereaved. What you learn from them and from your own observations, can guide you into meaningful and practical assistance for the family.

Finally, call on those who mourn a month, three months, even a year or two after death. Holidays, anniversaries, and other special occasions can be especially difficult times for those who grieve. It is often well after the caring crowds have melted away that our friends are in the greatest need.



*Grieving allows us to heal
To remember with love rather than pain
It is a sorting process.
One by one you let go
Of the things that are gone
And you mourn for them.
One by one you take hold
Of the things that have become a part of
who you are
And build again.*

- Rachel Naomi Remem

AT THE *Time* OF DEATH

The time of death is inevitably a time of sadness as we lose the physical presence of one that we have known and loved. From a Christian perspective, death is a time of joy for in death we are freed from the constraints of our physical body and begin a new spiritual life. In our earthly life, we have only partial knowledge of our God, but in death we come face to face.

For now we see through a glass, darkly: but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

I CORINTHIANS 12:13

From a practical point of view, there are many things that need to be done. Having plans for the disposition of the body and the funeral will make this time easier for those who are mourning.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

The services of a funeral director are usually sought at the time of death. It is difficult for the family who do not have the time, energy or expertise to make all the necessary arrangements. The funeral director has the expertise to handle these matters efficiently.

It is important to be able to communicate to the funeral director what you want to happen. Pre-planning the funeral can be very helpful in this regard. The funeral director will be able to help you accomplish what you want and can offer suggestions to help you make decisions.

The funeral director will give you an itemized list of all their services that you request. It is customary to discuss the services and costs with the funeral director.

The family is responsible for making the arrangements for the burial. The church (in consultation with the family) is in charge of the funeral service.

OBITUARY

An obituary can be written in advance. Some people like to write their own obituary to be sure the important events and achievements of their lives are included. Often, however, the family of the deceased will write the obituary. The funeral director will assist you in getting the obituary to the newspapers. Most newspapers charge a fee for an obituary that will be included in the fee paid to the funeral home. An outline for an obituary might be as follows:

1. name of deceased, place and date of death
2. place of birth and names of parents
3. names and places of residence of surviving family members
4. education
5. details of employment and career
6. significant volunteer work

AT THE TIME OF DEATH CONTINUED

7. interest/hobbies
8. names and places of residence of surviving family members
9. funeral arrangements, visiting hours, memorial gifts to institutions or charities

ORGAN DONATION

The donation of organs for transplantation can be of great benefit in helping to restore health to others. Organs such as the heart, liver, kidneys and lungs are often donated as well as corneas and skin and bone tissue. Those who want to be organ or tissue donors can have this indicated on their driver's license or by carrying a Uniform Donors card with them at all times. Organs must be harvested immediately after death after which the body can be buried or cremated. It is important to discuss your wishes with your family so that they will feel comfortable with your decision and know whom to notify at the time of death.

DONATION OF THE BODY FOR RESEARCH

Some people elect to give their body to a medical school for use in training medical personnel or for other research. These arrangements are made in advance with the medical school. When death occurs, the medical school will accept the body if they need it and if it is not severely damaged. The body will be transported directly to the medical school. If the funeral will take place before this happens, the body will be embalmed. The medical school will often pay for the transportation and cremation of the body afterwards. They will either bury the ashes or return them to the family if requested.

Although donating the body to science for research has many positive aspects, it is important to discuss this decision with the family. Consideration should be given to how important it is for the family to have the physical presence of the body when they are mourning. The donor and the family should consult an attorney and the funeral director to be advised of any laws or regulations pertaining to the donation of the body for research.

AUTOPSY

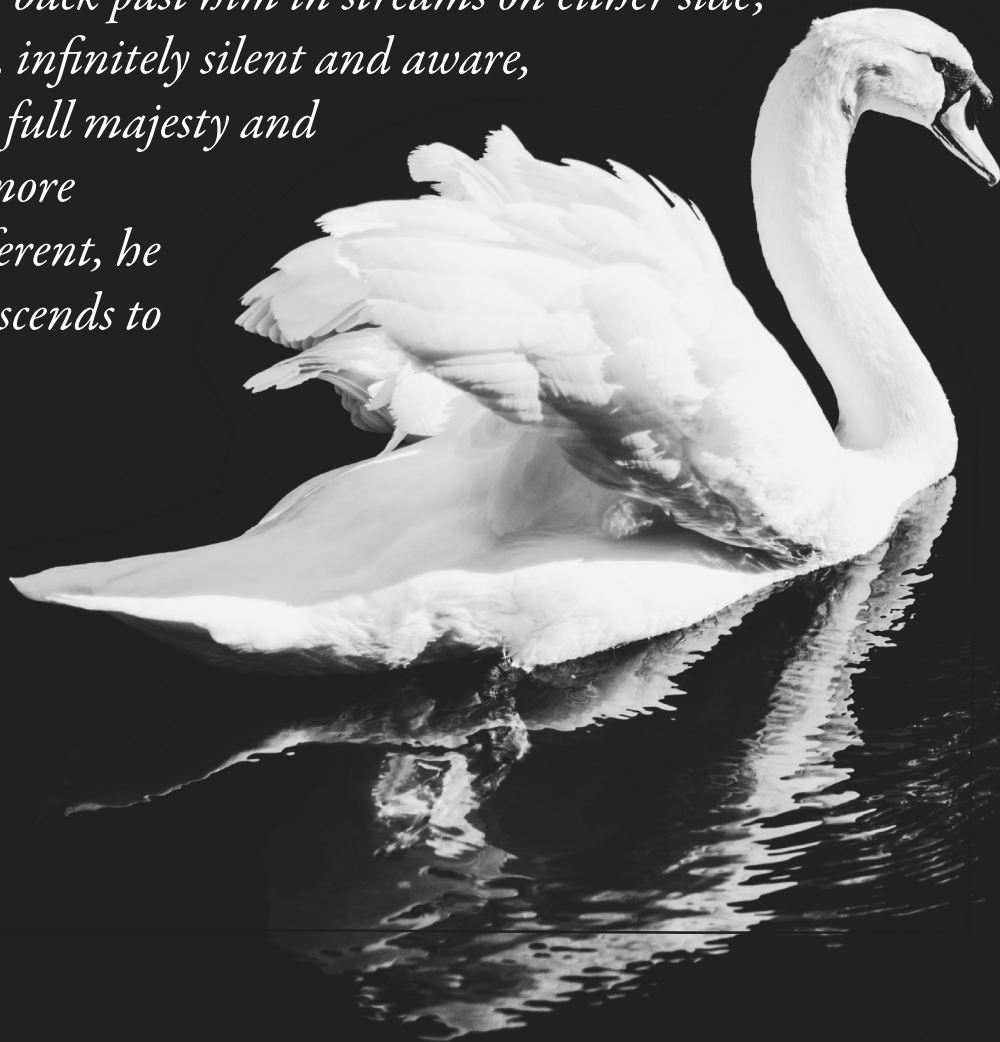
An autopsy is not always done particularly if a person dies at home of natural causes. If a person dies in the hospital, the family may be asked if they want an autopsy. The medical knowledge gained from an autopsy is useful to physicians in cases where it is unclear what caused death. Only in a few cases is an autopsy required under the jurisdiction of a coroner. Autopsies are done with respect for the human body and should not interfere with viewing the body. If a person does not want an autopsy, he should make his wishes known to his family and doctors before death.

The Swan

*This laboring through what is still undone,
as though, legs bound, we hobbled along the way,
is like the awkward walking of the swan.*

*And dying – to let go, no longer feel
the solid ground we stand on every day –
is like his anxious letting himself fall*

*into the water, which receives him gently
and which, as though with reverence and joy,
draws back past him in streams on either side;
while, infinitely silent and aware,
in his full majesty and
ever more
indifferent, he
condescends to
glide.*



BURIAL *Practices*

There are two options for the disposition of the body at the time of death: whole body burial and cremation.

WHOLE BODY BURIAL

Whole body burial entails a number of decisions which the funeral director can assist you in making. Several of these are discussed below. The body is usually interred in a cemetery or family plot. It is the family's responsibility to make these arrangements.

EMBALMING

Embalming is done by funeral homes if the body will be viewed in an open casket or if there will be a period of time between death and burial. Embalming is not necessary if the body will be cremated, or if burial will take place soon after death. The funeral director can provide additional information about the process of embalming.

CREMATION

Today many people choose cremation because they believe it is more environmentally correct. Ashes take up little space and can be sprinkled in more than one place if desired. If a permanent grave site is desired, ashes can be interred in a columbarium or a memorial garden. Members of Calvary Church can have their ashes interred in the Calvary Memorial Garden.

Cremation may be done immediately after death as soon as the doctor's certificate of death is obtained. A coroner's approval is not usually necessary. Although cremation is usually done right after death, it can be done after the funeral. In this case, the body would be embalmed and returned to the funeral home after the funeral.

Some people are uncomfortable with the idea of cremation for theological or emotional reasons. For this reason, it is something that should be decided and discussed with family.

COFFINS (CASKETS)

Coffins come in many designs and materials with a wide range of prices. The main purpose of the coffin is to be a receptacle for the body during the funeral and burial. In our culture once the body is buried, we desire that it return to the earth; therefore it is not necessary to purchase an expensive coffin that will preserve the body. If the body is to be cremated, the ashes may be placed in an urn if burial is desired. Like coffins there are a variety of designs and materials for urns. The funeral director can help you with making this choice.

VAULTS/LINERS

Vaults or liners made of metal or cement are required by most cemeteries. The reason for this is to prevent the ground from collapsing as the coffin or urn deteriorates. It is not necessary to purchase an expensive vault which will prevent the coffin and body from deteriorating.

LYING IN STATE

Having the body lie in state with either an open or closed coffin occurs at some time before the funeral. Lying in state can take place in a home, but more commonly these days in a funeral home. Visiting hours at home or at a funeral home give friends an opportunity to pay their respects to the deceased

BURIAL PRACTICES CONTINUED

and the family in a more informal setting than the funeral.

GRAVE MARKERS

Grave markers come in a variety of styles and sizes. Some cemeteries have requirements for grave markers. Veterans are eligible for special markers that can be obtained through the Veterans Administration. The grave marker provides a lasting memorial to the deceased for the family and future generations.



rites of the Church

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

JOHN 11:25-26

The rites of the church are at the center of our burial practices. These rites are acts and prayers offered by those who mourn. They allow us to dispose of the body of our loved one with the support of family and friends as we affirm our Christian belief in a spiritual life after death. There are three occasions when these rites are offered:

- Last rites when death is imminent
- Burial service in the church
- Committal at the final resting place

PRE-FUNERAL SERVICES

“The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the Resurrection.” BCP p. 507

The Book of Common Prayer contains several pre-funeral services for the time when death is close at hand. If possible, the family will gather around their loved one and a member of the clergy will be summoned to minister to the dying person. Holy Communion may be offered. The family will pray together and the dying person can participate if he is able. The following prayers may be used if desired: The Rites of Reconciliation of a Penitent or Penance (Prayer Book, p. 447), Ministration to the Sick or Unction (Prayer Book, p. 453).

When death occurs, the minister is called. The family may want to gather for a time of prayer and reflection. A priest, deacon, lay person or family member may lead the family in a “Litany at the Time of Death” (Prayer Book, p. 462).

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The funeral service in the Episcopal Church is a celebration of the life of the deceased. The emphasis in the liturgy is on the resurrection and our hope for a spiritual life after death. The liturgy is found in The Book of Common Prayer. Either Rite I (p. 469) or Rite II (p. 490) may be used.

The clergy will assist the family with planning the details of the service within the framework of the liturgy. There is flexibility to allow the family to choose favorite passages from scripture or other meaningful poems or meditations. They may also choose favorite hymns and include special music in the service. Many families like to have one or more family members or close friends give a brief remembrance of the deceased.

rites of the church CONTINUED

SCRIPTURE

The following are some suggested scripture passages:

LESSONS:

Old Testament

Isaiah 25:6-9 The Lord 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

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8:14-19, 34-35, 37-39 Nothing can separate us from the love of God

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-45, 53-58 The body raised in glory

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:9 Things unseen are eternal

Revelation 7:9-17 God will wipe away every tear

Revelation 21:2-7 Behold, I will make all things new

PSALMS

Psalm 2 The Lord is my shepherd

Psalm 27 The Lord is my light and my salvation

Psalm 42:1-7 My soul longs for God as a deer for the water brooks

Psalm 46 God is our refuge and strength

Psalm 90: 1-12 Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another

Psalm 106: 1-5 Remember me, O Lord with the favor you have for your people.

Psalm 116 I will walk in the presence of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 121 My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth

Psalm 130 Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord

Psalm 139: 1-11 Lord, you have searched me out and known me.

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



MUSIC

Music has great power to comfort us and give us hope in times of grief. For this reason, people often choose to include favorite hymns and instrumental or choral pieces in a funeral service. Many families have musical selections in mind when they plan their service. For those who need help selecting music, the organist choir director can help. For more information about music at Calvary, visit the website: [www. www.calvarychurchstonington.org](http://www.calvarychurchstonington.org) or e-mail the director of music, organistchoirmaster@calvarychurchstonington.org.

Most services include two or three hymns. The following is a list of suggested hymns. Easter hymns and hymns of thanksgiving are particularly appropriate. When choosing hymns, consider the following:

- Familiarity: Is this a hymn that most people attending the service will know?
- Singable: Are the notes within the range of the average singer?
- Appropriateness: Are both the tune and the text appropriate for the occasion?

rites of the church CONTINUED

The following Hymns are found in The Hymnal 1982. Your choices are not limited to this list. Other personal selections may be discussed with the clergy or music director.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 208 | The strife is o'er | 488 | Be thou my vision |
| 287 | For all the saints | 688 | A mighty fortress is our God |
| 376 | Joyful, joyful we adore thee | 690 | Guide me, O thou great Jehovah |
| 379 | God is love, let heaven adore thee | 691 | My faith looks up to thee |
| 382 | King of glory, king of peace | 694 | God be in my head |
| 383 | Fairest Lord Jesus | 517 | How lovely is thy dwelling place |
| 388 | O worship the King | 525 | The church's one foundation |
| 390 | Praise to the Lord | 556 | Rejoice, ye pure in heart |
| 397 | Now thank we all our God | 558 | Faith of our fathers |
| 409 | The spacious firmament | 608 | Eternal father, strong to save |
| 410 | Praise, my soul, the King of heaven | 618 | Ye watchers and ye holy ones |
| 411 | O bless the Lord, my soul | 624 | Jerusalem the golden |
| 423 | Immortal, invisible | 625 | Ye holy angels bright |
| 432 | O praise ye the Lord | 645 | The King of love my shepherd is |
| 433 | We gather together | 652 | Dear Lord and Father of mankind |
| 439 | What wondrous love is this | 657 | Love divine, all loves excelling |
| 441 | In the cross of Christ I glory | 658 | As longs the deer for cooling streams |
| 457 | Thou art the way | 660 | O master let me walk with thee |
| 470 | There's a wideness in God's mercy | 662 | Abide with me |
| 482 | Lord of all hopefulness | 671 | Amazing grace |
| | | 680 | O God our help in ages past |
| | | 685 | Rock of ages |



DESCRIPTION OF A SERVICE

The service is preceded by a time of quiet reflection as people gather. During this time, there may be instrumental music. As people enter the church, the ushers will encourage them to sign the guest book and help them find seats.

The service begins with the tolling of the church bells, usually once for each year of the person's life. When the bells are finished, all stand for the funeral procession. The family may enter just ahead of the clergy or they may be seated at the front of the church beforehand. If the remains of the deceased are brought to the church in an urn or casket, they are covered with a white pall symbolizing our baptismal garment and carried to the altar escorted by the acolytes and the clergy. The officiating clergy will offer the opening acclamations and a prayer for the deceased. The first part of the service includes one or two hymns and one or more readings from the Old Testament, Book of Psalms or poetry. Remembrances by one or more family members or close friends may be given at this time. An interlude of choral or instrumental music is often included. Following the gospel, the priest will give a sermon in which

rites of the church CONTINUED

he will give thanks for the life of the deceased and express our Christian belief of hope even in a time of grief. Holy Eucharist may be celebrated after the sermon. The service concludes with the prayers of Commendation with which we express our belief in God's loving care in both life and death.

THE COMMITTAL SERVICE

If the deceased is to be buried in a cemetery, it is necessary to make the arrangements with the cemetery in advance. The cemetery staff will do all the preparation and complete the burial after the service.

The Committal Service (BCP, p. 501) is conducted at the graveside either before or after the funeral usually with a smaller group of close friends and family. The priest offers prayers commending the deceased to God's everlasting mercy and care. The urn or casket is placed in or near the grave for burial later by the cemetery staff. The family may choose to add some additional ceremony. At a recent mother's committal service for example, each person was given a rose to be buried with the deceased.

Additional Things to Consider

WORSHIP BULLETIN

When the service has been planned and the music and scriptures selected, the office staff at Calvary can prepare the service sheet. The cover page is often a pen and ink drawing of the church with the name of the deceased and the date and time of the service. Some families like to put a picture or a favorite poem on the cover. The inside pages give the order of service with all the musical selections, scriptures and prayers. The names of the clergy, musicians, readers and those giving remembrances are also included.



FLOWERS

Flowers remind us of the beauty of God's creation even in death. For a funeral service there are customarily two large matching arrangements behind the altar. If desired, there may be additional arrangements in front of the lectern or the altar. The family makes arrangements with a florist for the purchase and delivery of the flowers to the church.

RECEPTION

For those who would like to hold a reception at the church following the funeral service, arrangements can be made to use Parish Hall. The family is responsible for providing any refreshments. In some cases, friends of the deceased and the family will join together to cater the reception or employ a professional caterer.

HONORARIUMS

For those who are not members of Calvary Church, a gift to the clergy is appropriate. For members, no gift to the clergy is expected, but it is much appreciated and is typically put into a discretionary fund. Fees for the organist choirmaster and musicians are negotiated on an individual basis.

STEWARDSHIP IN *Death*

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. (The BCP, p 445)

The inevitability of death gives rise to the need to plan ahead. This process involves two basic types of planning:

- planning for the disposition and burial of your body and
- planning for the disposition of your estate.

The planning of your estate helps you to:

- ensure financial security and adequate income during your life and
- leave the maximum amount to your heirs and the charities of your choice.

We strongly encourage you to seek legal and financial counsel on these matters.

The following suggests several methods for your consideration for Stewardship in Death.

WILLS

A properly drawn will is essential. Without a legal will on file, State law will decide how your assets are to be distributed. A bequest statement in your will stating your wishes for passing on your financial wellbeing is suggested. The federal government encourages gifts by allowing an estate tax charitable deduction for gifts to qualified organizations.

If you make a bequest to a nonprofit be sure to include the name address and tax-exempt number in the will. If you are making a donation to Calvary use the following information.

Calvary Episcopal Church
27 Church Street
Stonington, Connecticut 06378
Tax ID Number: 23-7251492

Your bequest can be a specific sum of money, a certain percentage of your estate, or a particular personal or real asset. Your bequest can be placed directly in your will when it is written, or it can be placed in a codicil (“amendment”) to your will. Your lawyer will assist you with this process.

EXPENDABLE FUNDS, ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Calvary’s ministries are primarily supported by the annual giving (pledges) of its active members. This is encouraged by the parish leadership because they believe it’s important for the members to “own” the ministry of the congregation. All expenses that are not covered by pledges are covered by gifts by both living and deceased members and friends.

OTHER GIFTS OR ASSETS CONTINUED

A loving way to celebrate your life or another is to make a memorial contribution that will in some way continue to bless others within and beyond our walls. A gift made as unrestricted funds to be used as determined by the church leadership is known as an expendable fund.

If you decide to establish an endowment fund for a specific purpose the church is limited to using the income earned by the fund or up to 5% of the historical value of the fund each year. There is more permanence with an endowment but has less flexibility.

To guide and encourage the giving of others, it is helpful to list the designated memorials in both the obituary and the worship bulletin at the funeral.

OTHER GIFTS OR ASSETS

Gifts, direct or by bequest, can be given to Calvary in three forms: cash, appreciated securities, and real property. Gifts must be designated as unrestricted or restricted by the donor for a particular purpose, such as one of the special funds.

You may want to discuss trusts, annuities and life insurance with your attorney.

We strongly encourage you to consult with the Rector as well as a financial counselor and attorney about gifts before making arrangements. This will assure that a particular gift can actually be accepted and used by Calvary.



HOW TO GET *Started*

If you desire to give financially to Calvary upon your death, there are three things we suggest you do now.

- * Prepare a will or amend your existing will. Explore options that fit with your financial holdings. Consult with the Rector and your attorney carefully. Inform your family about these plans.
- * Determine what, in cash or stock or other form, you might give now, totally apart from your will and annual pledge, on a one-time gift basis.
- * Celebrate the abundance with which you have been blessed and know that all that is given will be used with thanksgiving for your generosity.



Concluding Remarks

A variety of feelings will be evoked as you search for the best way to complete these papers.

The next time you talk with God, ask for guidance and courage to face your mortality. You will not feel alone. We encourage you to read, talk with your family and the Rector, as you find your way to make your wishes known. There are many articles and books to read about death and dying. Contemplation of death now can lead you to steps that will deepen your faith and make the rest of your life richer and more meaningful. We pray for God's Grace to enrich and strengthen you as you prepare.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Many people contributed to writing this document for Calvary Episcopal Church in Stonington, Connecticut. Our former Rector, Father Alfred Tisdale, who offers end of life pastoral counseling to many requested that "Last Things" be created. He thought it would be useful to have a more comprehensive written support for our members, staff and others.

Cami O'Donnell, Candy Sanford and Karen McGee met to make a plan. Notes from the church files were reviewed. Research was done by reading the literature and we requested resource documents from other churches. A comprehensive guide was received from Church of the Redeemer, an Episcopal parish in Cincinnati. Their Rector, Father Charles Baumbaugh and the Vestry created "Last Things" after consulting with other Episcopal churches. They offered their booklet to us to use freely. It was their booklet that we used as a format.

Phyllis Nowakowski, Calvary Executive Secretary, formatted the document and helped to edit the content. Mary Hughes, Joey Ripka, Alan Murchie and Karen McGee contributed photos.

We thank all those who contributed and our hope is that it will be helpful to others.

*Left, Calvary Church Memorial Garden
by Cami O'Donnell*

