

Ideas for my service

Name



“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.”

John 14:27 (NIV)



Remember you can update your funeral outline at any time if your ideas change. Why not review it each year? Also, tell your family about your plan. It's possible to save your plan where others can access it, for example in shared folders on the internet (Google Drive is one place which offers this), but tell your family where you have saved it and safely store a paper copy too, (though not as part of your Will, as this is often not read until after a funeral).

WELCOME

Funerals are on all our minds at the moment. In the present situation many of the usual practical things that need to happen after someone dies are happening differently, including the kind of service that is possible. Thinking and talking about your own funeral service now and making your wishes known will help you, your family and friends in all sorts of ways.

You may like to think of the service in two sections: what will happen on the day, and what might happen later at a time when family and friends can gather.

This leaflet gives you space to make some notes and begin to think about your ideas, including the sort of music and readings you might like, and the venue where you'd like it to take place. You could then use it to share with those around you.

Wherever it happens, a Church of England funeral can be designed to reflect your story, making it personal, unique and meaningful. These are some of choices that can be made. Remember this is not set in stone. You can revise your ideas as often as you wish.

First things first

When the time comes, your relatives will see a Funeral Director and be asked to make a number of decisions, including:-

- Whether your body is to be buried or cremated.
- Where your funeral is to be held.
- Who will lead the service (e.g. the local vicar or someone different).

Depending on the local situation you may also be able to choose things like the coffin, transport, donations and flowers.

You may like to think about some of these decisions and write down your preferences. It will really help your relatives to have this information at an undoubtedly difficult time.

Remember that neither you nor your family need to have been church attenders to request a church minister. Or, you may have had connections with church from long ago. A minister can take a funeral at a graveside, a crematorium, a cemetery or a woodland/green burial site. You may be able to have a service at a later date in a church or chapel.

**“Be there at our sleeping and give us we pray,
your peace in our hearts Lord at the end of the day.”**

Extract from Lord of All Hopefulness*



Finally, You might also want to think about whether you want the service recorded or not. Some families find this very helpful, especially for those who can't attend.

- Yes, I would be happy to have my funeral recorded No, I would not like my funeral recorded

Music and hymns

Usually there is music played as the coffin enters and as it leaves. Although at present it may not be possible to have live music or singing, hymns can often help people express their feelings in a way that words alone can't. It may be possible to share words or listen online on the day of the funeral and sing at a later date. Thinking about the hymns you love, bear in mind how those present will be feeling, and what will be suitable to the occasion. Write a few ideas here for hymns and music, if anything comes to mind:

For funeral hymn ideas see www.churchofengland.org/funeralsmusic

Thinking of you

If those present at your funeral or a later service could pay tribute to you in some way, with music, special poems or words, symbolic things to place near your coffin, (for example photographs, items which signify your hobbies or interests, or flowers), what do you think could be offered?

Jot down any ideas you might have:-

Readings

You can have extracts from literature, poems and other types of readings, as well as the required Bible reading, although at the present time is limited, so only one reading will be used. There are many Bible readings which offer comfort and hope to those who are grieving. Here are just a few popular examples:

Psalm 23 Romans 8 v 31-39 Revelation 21 v 1-7 John 14 v 1-6 1 Corinthians 13

Do you have a preference for any of these? Tick any you like.

Or, do you have ideas of your own for Bible readings, or readings from other places? Jot down any readings you really like. For more ideas visit: www.churchofengland.org/funeralsreadings

Talk/Sermon

There are two parts to a talk at a funeral: the first is about telling your unique story and the second focuses on sharing the hope that death is not the end. At the moment, depending on time, it may be that the vicar combines these in a really special way. Later, at a gathering of family and friends, a friend or relative may be able to talk about your life more fully. It's really helpful for the vicar or anyone else to have an idea about what the important life moments for you and your family were. Basic facts like where you grew up or what work you did in life can be so helpful to have on record. Remember your life will have touched a variety of people in different ways.

Make some notes and use a separate piece of paper if you need to.

Prayers

Prayers are one of the best ways of making a funeral feel special. Are there any special prayers you would like to be included? They might include prayers for particular people who will be at your funeral, or for particular things that you have held close to your heart in your lifetime. If anything obvious comes to mind, write it here:

Afterwards

Think about special ways you might like to be remembered after this time is over. It may be that you want to think about where your ashes are placed, or have ideas for a headstone – or even for a party! But remember there may be restrictions depending on the location you want. You can explore this well in advance to check what can be done, particularly in the case of ashes and headstones in church graveyards.