

## GUIDANCE FOR FUNERALS

**Hymns:** Any of the following hymns are suitable for funeral services and it is advisable to have between one and three hymns:

- Praise my soul the king of heaven
- Love Divine, all loves excelling
- Amazing grace
- Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
- Lord of the Dance
- Abide with me
- The day thou gavest Lord has ended
- All things bright and beautiful
- The King of love my shepherd is
- All my hope on God is founded
- Now thank we all our God
- The Lord's my Shepherd
- Thine be the glory
- Eternal Father, strong to save (appropriate for seafarers).

*(The full versions of these hymns can be found on the internet)*

**Readings:** There is space in the Order of Service for a reading. Some examples are below:

1 John 14: 1-6

### **Revelation 21: 1-7**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

### **Mark 10: 13-16 (suitable for a child or young person):**

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

### **John 6: 35-40:**

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

### **Lamentations 3: 21-33:**

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.' The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth, to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it, to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope), to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not reject for ever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

**Tributes and Eulogies:** A tribute or tributes in memory of the deceased is a very important part of the service and care and attention should be given to this aspect. There are different ways in which this can be approached. Either a member of the family can both compose and deliver the tribute, or it can be written by the family and read out by the officiating minister. As mentioned above, one of the benefits of having a service in St. Giles is that there is plenty of time for the deceased to be remembered adequately and fully.

**Poems:** At sad and difficult times a well written poem can express our deepest feelings and experiences. Please find below some suggested poems:

Death is nothing at all ... I have only slipped away into the next room.  
I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other that we are still.  
Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way which you always used.  
Put no difference in your tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.  
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.  
Let it be spoken without effort, without the ghost of a shadow on it.  
Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was; there is absolutely unbroken continuity.  
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?  
I am waiting for you for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well.

*Henry Scott Holland*

Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there. I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there; I did not die.

*Anon left by Stephen Cummins,  
a soldier killed in Northern Ireland*

As you love me, let there be  
No mourning when I go -  
No tearful eyes, no hopeless sighs,  
No woe, nor even sadness.  
Indeed, I would not have you sad,  
For I myself shall be full glad  
With the high triumphant gladness  
Of a soul made free  
Of God's sweet liberty.  
No windows darkened, for my own  
Will be flung wide, as ne'er before,  
To catch the radiant in-pour  
Of Love that shall be in full atone  
For all the ills that I have done.  
No voices hushed; my own, full-flushed  
With an immortal hope, will rise  
In ecstasies of new-born bliss  
And joyful melodies.  
Rather, of your sweet courtesy  
Rejoice with me  
At my soul's loosing from captivity.  
Wish me 'Bon Voyage' as you do a friend  
Whose joyous visit finds its happy end  
And bid me both 'Adieu' and 'Au revoir'  
Since, though I come no more  
I shall be waiting there to greet you  
At His door.  
And, as the feet of the bearers tread  
The ways I trod,  
Think not of me as dead, but rather -  
Happy, thrice happy, he whose course is sped  
Has gone home - to God,  
His Father.

*attrib. John Oxenham*

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,  
Put crepe bows around the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policeman wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one;  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W.H. Auden *Funeral Blues*

They are gone for now,  
But we shall rejoin them,  
Be one with them again,  
Happy with each other, for eternity,  
In God's kingdom,  
A place for all.  
They shall not grow old,  
Nor will they die.  
Reunited we can live the life that never was,  
Together, not apart,  
A family once more.

Dan Bovington from *Loss. on the death of pupils  
in the Hadleigh High School minibus disaster*

You touched my life  
And turned my heart around.  
It seems when I found you  
It was me I really found.  
You opened my eyes  
And now my soul can see  
Our moments may be over,  
Of just you here with me.

Love lives on beyond Goodbye  
The truth of us will never die.  
Our spirits will shine  
Long after we've gone,  
And so our love lives on.

There was so much  
I didn't understand  
When you brought me here  
Far from where we all began.  
The changes you made  
To my life will never end.  
I'll look across the distance  
And know I have a friend.

Love lives on beyond Goodbye  
The truth of us will never die.  
Our spirits will shine  
Long after we've gone,  
And so our love lives on.

And so our love lives on.

Anon

**Prayers, Commendation and Committal:** The funeral service will also need to contain these other items. During the prayers we will be remembering the deceased with thanksgiving, praying for those who mourn and asking God for the gift of faith and hope. At the commendation we will commend our loved one back to God's care and mercy and at the committal we acknowledge our frailty by saying goodbye to our loved one's physical presence with us.

**Holy Communion:** For those who are regular members of the Church and practising Christians, a service of Holy Communion can be very fitting as part of the overall funeral service. It is customary to have a shortened version of Holy Communion and to extend a warm welcome to the Altar rail to all mourners whether they want to receive bread and wine or a blessing. If you would like a service of Holy Communion (popularly known as a Requiem) please discuss this with the officiating minister.

**Floral Tributes:** St. Giles Church is seldom without flowers and floral decorations (greenery only during Advent and nothing in Lent). This means that for the majority of the year there will always be some flowers to help brighten up a sad occasion such as a funeral. If you would like additional flowers, either sprays or pedestals, please contact the Parish Office and officiating clergy.

**Arrangements on the day:** Parking spaces will be reserved at the top of Church Road and the clergy and Verger will be there to meet the chief mourners. The Clergy and Verger will then respectfully lead the coffin, the pall bearers and chief mourners to the door of the Church and the congregation will be asked to stand. Several pews on the left-hand side of the Church will be reserved for the chief mourners and furnished with hymn books and Order of Service sheets. If you planning to use a CD please can you mark clearly with a post-it note the track number which you wish to have played. It can sometimes be the family's wish to have a retiring collection for a specific charity, in this case collection bowls will be left on the table at the back of the Church for mourners to use if they wish.

**Seating:** St. Giles can seat 250 people and there is ample accommodation for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Please note that there are no toilets at St. Giles or any longer in Church Road, The nearest facilities are to be found in The Woodman Public House, High Street, Farnborough. There is reasonably adequate parking in Church Road.

**Administration arrangements:** For all administrative details please contact the Parish Office ....

Please also be assured of the clergy's help and support as you plan for this important event in your family's life. We appreciate how very difficult the loss of a loved one and a funeral can so we are here to help in whatever way we can.

**After funeral care:** After the funeral the real work of grieving and mourning begins. Grieving for a lost one can be a very long, painful and arduous journey. We are more than aware that people need support over a long period of time as they learn to come to terms with life without their loved one and the painful feelings this brings. It can be very comforting and helpful to talk through your feelings with others who are going through the same thing. To this end we run three Bereavement Support Groups, two of which meet fortnightly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 12.45 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. in the St. Giles Centre and the third meets on Sunday evenings between 7.45 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. (this group is specifically for people who have lost their partners at an early age). The main Bereavement Group are open to all people irrespective of the type of loss they have experienced and although they are run by the Church membership of the Church, belief or faith is not a pre-requisite for attendance. Members are entitled to stay as long as it is helpful but people often leave when they have worked through their initial feelings following the death of a loved one. This can take anything from one to three years. If you would like to attend please contact the Rector ..... We will also write to you to remind you of our groups directly after the funeral.

If groups seem daunting then the clergy are available for individual meetings so you can talk through your feelings.