

United Benefice of St Francis and St Mary, West Wickham

A Christian Funeral: Remembering & Celebrating

When you experience the pain of losing a loved one, the prospect of making an important set of decisions about their funeral service is not easy. There's so much to deal with, so many people to tell, so many feelings to take on board, that the details of a funeral service can easily take second place. Who you entrust to lead this important service can make all the difference. We aim to provide a capable and personable presence - someone who is able to listen, as well as being able to give help, advice and long term support.

We are part of the Church of England which has a tradition of coming alongside those who are grieving, conducting funeral services and providing pastoral care for those in the community long after the service is over. Clergy in the Church of England have a responsibility for the pastoral care of all who live locally in their parish, regardless of whether they attend church services.



To contact a minister: your funeral director can make the initial contact, so that a date can be set for the funeral service before meeting up. If you would like to speak to someone before this happens, please contact the Reverend Hazel O'Sullivan on 020-8777-5034.

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A Christian Funeral: our service

Our service will help you to prepare a service appropriate to your loved one. You might find the following points helpful:

- You will always receive a warm welcome whoever you are – we will meet with you before the service to get to know you better. The person involved will be sympathetic and careful to listen, taking into account how you're feeling.
- You won't need to conform to a particular set of beliefs or adopt certain practices.
- Services can be held in church, at a crematorium, a cemetery or a burial ground, wherever you decide is most appropriate.
- A Christian funeral doesn't have to be formal or complicated. The minister will be able to give advice based on a long experience of how to make a service personal and memorable. It can include favourite songs, music or poems and other readings that celebrate the life being remembered. There's no requirement to sing hymns if you'd prefer not to.
- We can involve family members or close friends in the service in a variety of different ways.
- After the service is over we will, if you wish, ensure that there is continuing pastoral care through visiting, praying for you and your family and inviting you to remember your loved one at occasions such as Memorial Services. You're free to decline this follow-up care if you prefer.

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