

# FUNERAL AND BURIAL GUIDELINES NORTH BUCKINGHAM PARISH

## *About these Guidelines:*

These guidelines are prepared to provide some guidance in how funerals are conducted within our Parish. If you are reading this for the first time during a time of loss, please accept our sympathy and we promise to do all that we can to support you in the love and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## SUPPORT TEAM

Members of our pastoral team are available to offer support in your grief and in coming to terms with the sad loss you have experienced. We understand that the pain and loss of death must not be minimized or ignored and offer support, not only at the time of the funeral, but also as you and your loved ones who sorrow, return to the duties of your lives.

## FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The first point of contact for arranging a funeral is a Funeral Director. The Funeral Director is a person or company of your own choosing and the Funeral Director will contact the Parish to arrange a place, date and time of the funeral. The Funeral Director will guide you through this process and will liaise with our ministerial team. After your initial contact with a Funeral Director, a member of our ministerial team will contact you and arrange a visit to discuss all details concerning the funeral with you and those whom you like to be present at that meeting.

## CREMATION OR BURIAL

Essentially there are two options for the funeral of a deceased person, a burial or a cremation. With a cremation it is common to have a separate service for the burial of the ashes of the deceased some time after the funeral service. This will take place in one of the five churchyards in our Parish, which are in Akeley, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Dayrell, Lillingstone Lovell and Maids Moreton. More details about this are to be found in our Churchyard policy.

Cremations have to take place in a crematorium, which offers the possibility of a Chapel in which the funeral service can be held. After this funeral service at the crematorium it is possible to have another service in the Church for the burial of the ashes of the deceased in a specially designated part of the churchyard. The scattering of ashes is not an option in our churchyards and if ashes are to be interred in any of our churchyards a member of the ministerial team is required and expected to be present. Cremated remains may be buried in an existing grave with the consent of the family concerned, but only in accordance with our churchyard policy and the Diocesan churchyard rules.

It is also possible to have the funeral service in church, within an atmosphere of dignity, with no rush for time and in which the knowledge of centuries of Christian worship are a comfort and support at this difficult time. If the cremation has taken place before the funeral service, the service thereafter will be a service of remembrance or thanksgiving for the life of the deceased. This option is preferable when the immediate family and close friends do not want to separate themselves from others when they meet for refreshments directly after the service in church.

Burials take place immediately after the Funeral service in church has come to an end. A burial service confines the process of the funeral into one moment of time at the same place. There is no need for travel except to the church and no other service is required except the service in the church

and at the grave side when the mortal remains of the deceased are laid to rest. The service has to be led by one of the members of our ministerial team, because the deceased will be laid to rest in consecrated ground.

#### FUNERALS AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

A funeral in the Christian tradition creates a moment in time to ponder upon the mystery of death and life. Such funerals are an expression of faith in the salvation and coming resurrection to eternal life, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At a Christian funeral God will be thanked for the life of the deceased, but even more so hope and thankfulness will be expressed in the promise of the new life God has given us beyond death. The format of the funeral service will follow the authorised structure of such services by the Church of England. This means that most services are in compliance with the *Common Worship* standard format in accordance to the *Pastoral Services of the Services and Prayers for the Church of England*. It is also possible to have the funeral service in accordance to the *Book of Common Prayer - 1662*, but this format is hardly used. Congregational singing and participation in the readings and tributes during the services is encouraged. The format of the funeral service will be discussed with those arranging the funeral. Personal choices for readings, tributes, eulogies, music and other parts to the funeral service can be accommodated as long they are not in contradiction with the authorised rules and regulations for funeral services in the tradition of the Church of England.

#### OTHER NOTES CONCERNING THE SERVICE

A member of the ministry team will meet the coffin, the pallbearers, and the bereaved at the entrance of the church or chapel of the crematorium. The bereaved may arrive and go to their seats prior to the beginning of the service, but it is customary to follow the deceased into the church or chapel. The coffin remains closed throughout the service. The coffin is placed in a position with the feet toward the altar. The position reflects the accustomed role of the deceased in the church as part of the congregation — facing east, the direction of the altar table, Jerusalem, the rising of the sun, and the direction that scripture informs us Christ will come again.

##### *The Sermon or address*

The sermon may include recognition of the life of the deceased, but its purpose is not to give a eulogy or tribute but a proclamation of the hope and comfort the Christian faith offers for those who (have a desire to) believe and have to come to terms with their grief.

##### *The Commendation*

The Commendation is a prayer which asks God to receive the deceased in mercy. The prayer is a concluding statement of trust to console the living with God's care for the departed. The commendation follows after the prayers and for burials happens near the end of the service in church, before the congregation leaves for the churchyard for the final part of the service which is the interment of the mortal remains of the deceased.

##### *The Committal*

The committal happens at the grave side for burials, when the coffin is lowered into the grave. Earth may be cast on the coffin by family members and others present at the funeral. The final blessing and dismissal, is said by the minister and after that, all generally leave the churchyard. It is not possible to inter mortal remains after sunset or before sunrise. At a cremation in the chapel of the

crematorium the committal follows directly after the commendation. Different chapels offer different options like closing a curtain, or closing a veil after the commendation has finished.

### *Flowers*

Flower tributes are both possible for burials and cremations. At the burial side all flower tributes will be laid on the grave after the ground has been brought back to order. The flower tributes will remain on the grave as long as possible and it is expected that the flowers will be removed by those who had arranged the funeral after they have withered or earlier if appropriate. At a crematorium the flower tributes will be put on display for a short period of time only and after that removed by employees from the crematorium. Flowers in church, during a funeral service in that particular church, are allowed, but are the responsibilities of those arranging the funeral. Flower stands are available in each of the parish churches.

### *Donations*

It is possible to leave donations in memory of the deceased after the service. When the service happens in church, the Funeral Director provides both the information to which the donations will be made to and a box, or other means to leave donations in. This is not the responsibility of the church, nor can the church be held responsible for the collection of the donations left in memory of the deceased. Because there will be no offertory during the service, the church will put a plate out in which separate donations for the church can be left.

### *Costs*

The costs of a funeral totally depend on what choices are made for the funeral. Cremations and burials differ in costs and so do the use of particular elements during the service in church or chapel. The Funeral Director can give you a rough outline of the costs for different funerals.

### *Tombstones and other Memorials*

Further information on this issue is given in the policy of the Churchyards and the Diocesan rules and regulations.