

FUNERALS

A Christian funeral is a reverent mix of grief and joy. Joy, because we are confident in the promise of God that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Consequently, the liturgy for the dead is properly an Easter Liturgy. It finds all meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we too, shall be raised. The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that in death, "life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens" (BCP, 382). Through prayers, hymns, and scripture readings, the burial service moves us from death to resurrection.

Such joy, however, does not make our grief unchristian. Quite the contrary, our grief is an expression of our love. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

At the time of death, people turn to the Church for rituals which allow them to recognize their loss, express their grief, remember and give thanks for the life of the one who has died, mark the end of relationships which exist in this life, allow them to seek strength and comfort in their faith, and provide dignity and meaning to the end of life. The rites of the Church are appropriate at several junctures in the passage from life into death. Long before death is a reality, the church can help people plan for the funeral and address other issues and concerns. Near the point of death, the Church can be present in a ministry to the dying person and his or her family and friends. After death, there is the funeral service and committal of the body to a final resting place.

At St. Matthew's we will do all we can to provide a meaning filled funeral for your loved one. We recognize that, upon the death of one we love, there are many arrangements to be made and concerns to be settled. Therefore, we will strive to make your experience here as easy and well-supported as possible.