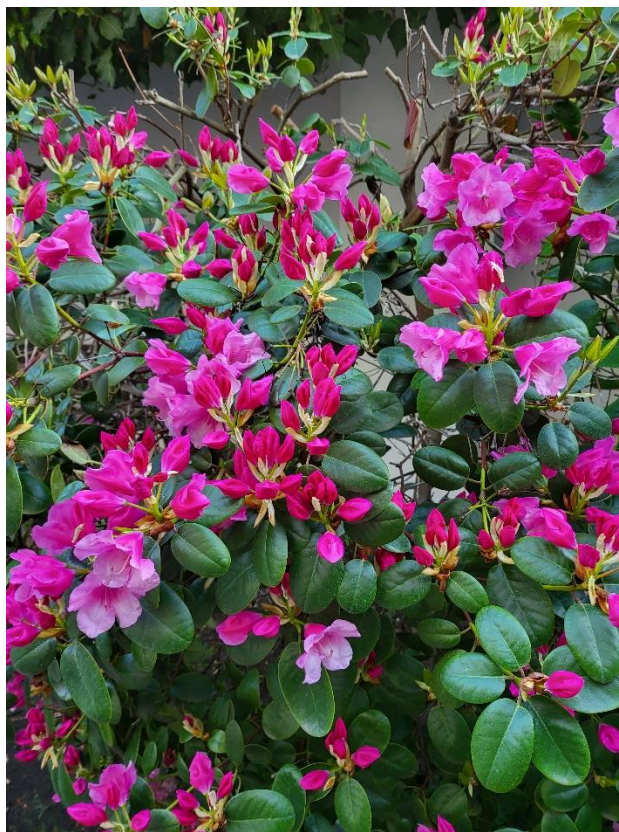


THE BENEFICE OF BRIZE NORTON WITH CARTERTON AND BLACK BOURTON



HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR
PLANNING THE FUNERAL SERVICE

FROM THE TEAM RECTOR

Of course it is very sad that your loved one is no longer with you, and now you must plan for their funeral. This is part of the difficult journey ahead for you and your family. You will have received a lot of information from your chosen funeral director, and they will have contacted me to assist in arranging the funeral. I have produced this guide to help you with organising the funeral as you have elected to have a Church of England service. Please study it in advance of my visit to you as it may answer many of your questions and help you to write down any other questions you may have as well.

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THE BENEFICE

There are three parishes and churches in the benefice:

St Britius, Brize Norton

St John the Evangelist, Carterton

St Mary the Virgin, Black Bourton

Even though the churches are in a group, they operate semi-independently of each other. This means that the person usually must have the church service within the parish boundary of where they lived. If you are unsure which is the local parish church, visit www.achurchnearyou.com. Enter in the address and it will show you which is your church.

A churchyard is the area around a church that is used for burials. The Carterton town cemetery is in Black Bourton, behind St Mary's church. St John's Church does not have its own churchyard. Brize Norton churchyard is across the road from St Britius church. St Mary's churchyard is within the grounds of the church.

If there is to be a cremation this can be at any of the local crematoria and can occur either before or after the church service.

CAN ANYBODY HAVE A CHURCH OF ENGLAND FUNERAL?

Yes. Anybody who is resident in the parish is entitled to a Church of England funeral, and can be buried in the churchyard or designated cemetery (if has not closed because it is full). People may be buried in approved coffins, or after cremation have their ashes interred in a new or existing family plot. There are rules on such matters which can be discussed with you.

WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE FUNERAL?

There are different types of funeral service.

1. The funeral service at the church followed by a burial.
2. The funeral service at the church followed by the crematorium.
3. The funeral service at a crematorium.
4. A private service at the graveside or crematorium followed by a service of thanksgiving (also called a memorial service) at the church.

The funeral will be conducted according to the Rites of the Church of England. Therefore, it will be religious in nature, and be in a certain format, containing prayers, and references to God and the Christian promise of salvation for all. Some people ask that the funeral have a “light touch on faith and God matters”; but if you desire it to be a Church of England service, this cannot be the case as nothing can be omitted from the funeral liturgy. The Rector or designated minister conducting the funeral will wear traditional vestments. You may of course, after discussion with the Rector, add things to the service which will greatly personalise the funeral.

The general outline of a funeral is below. You will see areas for readings and hymns or songs. Consider what you would wish to have and be prepared to discuss them at the funeral meeting with the Rector. Having considered these things will greatly aid the planning for the funeral.

Outline of a funeral service with burial or cremation:

At the church

- Music on entering
- Opening sentences and introduction
- Hymn
- Prayers
- Eulogies
- Readings
- Hymn
- Bible Reading
- Reflection from the priest
- Prayers including The Lord's Prayer
- Hymn (the number of hymns is up to you)
- The Blessing
- Music on leaving

Move to the cemetery or crematorium –

- Introductory Prayers and a psalm (if a psalm is requested)
- Commendation and Committal
- Final Blessing

Outline of a funeral service first at the graveside or crematorium, followed by a thanksgiving service:

- Introductory prayers and psalm (if a psalm is requested)
- Any hymns
- Any eulogies or family tributes
- Bible reading
- Prayers including The Lord's Prayer
- Commendation and Committal
- Blessing

The memorial service then follows and whilst not a funeral (as this has already taken place), it is a time to celebrate the life of the person. This may include personal tributes, hymns, poems, readings and an additional Bible reading, and a reflection from the priest. A thanksgiving service cannot be wholly secular in nature, because it is within a consecrated church building.

ORDER OF SERVICE BOOKLET

Many families make a short order of service booklet for the funeral, but it is not mandatory. Such a booklet includes pictures of the person and a brief outline of the service. It generally includes the words for any hymns and songs, and also The Lord's Prayer. You should liaise with your funeral director over the layout. However, you must get it approved by the Rector before going to print to ensure that there are no errors in it, such as mistakes in the sequencing of the order of the funeral. Therefore this approval eliminates any sequencing or spelling errors or differences of versions of words of hymns or songs that can creep in. There can be a few different versions of hymns, with some nuances in the language too.

SUGGESTED SECULAR READINGS

You may want to have some non-religious readings or poems in the funeral service. Here are some suggestions, but you are free to choose your own, provided they are appropriate:

Into the West (from Lord of the Rings)

Lay down your sweet and weary head.
Night is falling: you have come to journey's end.
Sleep now. Dream of the ones who came before.
They are calling from across a distant shore.
Why do you weep? What are these tears upon your face?
Soon you will see – all of your fears will pass away.
Safe in my arms: you're only sleeping.
What can you see on the horizon?
Why do the white gulls call?
Across the sea a pale moon rises.
The ships have come to carry you home.
And all will turn to silver glass - a light on the water.
All souls pass.
Hope fades.

Into the world of night through shadows falling: out of memory and time.
Don't say we have come now to the end.
White shores are calling: you and I will meet again.
And you'll be here in my arms, just sleeping.
What can you see on the horizon?
Why do the white gulls call?
Across the sea a pale moon rises.
the ships have come to carry you home.
And all will turn to silver glass – a light on the water.
Grey ships pass into the west.

If I should go

If I should go before the rest of you,
break not a flower nor inscribe a stone.
Nor, when I'm gone, speak in a Sunday voice,
but be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must, parting is hell,
but life goes on, so sing as well.

All is Well

Call me by the old familiar name,
Speak of 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 name that it always was.
Let it be spoken without an effort, without the trace of a shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and 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.

The Existence of Love

I had thought that your death
Was a waste and destruction
A pain of grief hardly to be endured.
I am only beginning to learn
That your life was a gift and a growing
And a loving left with me,
That desperation of death
Destroyed the existence of love,
But the fact of death
Cannot destroy what has been given.
I am learning to look at your life again
Instead of your death and your departing.

Miss Me – But Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road
and the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room:
why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little, but not too long,
and not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared:
miss me - but let me go.
For this is a journey that we all must take
and each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan;
a step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick of heart
go to the friends we know,
and bury your sorrow in doing good deeds:
miss me – but let me go.

What is dying?

I am standing on the seashore.
A ship sails to the morning breeze
and starts for the ocean.
She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her
'til at last she fades on the horizon
and someone at my side says,
"She is gone"
Gone? Where?
Gone from my sight; that is all.
She is just as large in the mast, hull and spars
as she was when I saw her,
and just as able to bear her load of living freight
to its destination.
The diminished size and total loss of sight
is in me, not in her, and just at the moment
when someone at my side says, "She is gone"
there are others who are watching her coming,
and other voices take up the glad shout,
"Here she comes!"
And that is dying.

Love and go on

You can shed tears that she/he is gone,
or you can smile because s/he has lived.
You can close your eyes
and pray that s/he will come back;
or you can open your eyes
and see all that s/he has left.
Your heart can be empty
because you can't see her/him;
or you can be full of the love that you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow
and live yesterday,
or you can be happy for tomorrow
because of yesterday.
You can remember her/him and only that s/he is gone;
or you can cherish her/him memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind,
be empty and turn your back;
or you can do what s/he would want:
smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

Stop all the clocks

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 round the white necks of the public doves, let the traffic policemen
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.

Do not stand at my grave and weep

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 sun 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.

SUGGESTED BIBLE READINGS

The funeral service must have a Bible reading. Some suggestions are below, but you are free to choose any of your own. The readings below are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible, but you may use other authorised translations.

Rev Barry will give a reflection based on the Bible reading and the Christian faith will and commend the person to God's care.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

John 14 :1-6, 27

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.' ⁵ Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶ Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

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. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; ³⁸ for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ 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.'

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones,
and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace,
and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

Psalms 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.

WHAT IF THE PERSON HAS LEFT WISHES FOR THEIR FUNERAL

Many people plan for their own funerals and what they would wish to have included in it. It is good and loving to honour the wishes of the person. The departed may want elements in their service that are similar to others they had attended themselves, such as having the same readings or hymns, and that of course is fine. We must always try to understand the whilst the funeral is for memory of the person who has died, it is also be as much, if not more, for the people who have been left behind, as they must learn to live with the loss. Therefore, there may be differing opinions that need to be considered, and perhaps catered for, rather than applying the overall notion of “that is what the person wanted so that is what they must have”. A well thought out funeral service that has input from all key people in the family can help in the journey of closure.

WHO CONDUCTS THE FUNERAL

Within the benefice, Rev Barry, the Rector, usually performs the funeral. He may occasionally delegate this authority to another licenced Church of England minister in the parish or deanery. If you wish to have your own priest conduct the funeral, then do ask so we can see what is possible.

FUNERAL COSTS

The funeral director will inform you of all costs of the funeral and will collect all monies and distribute them to all parties after the funeral. The church funeral costs are included and not billed separately.

DECLARE ALL THINGS

The person who has passed away will have a funeral service conducted for them in good faith (in honesty with sincerity without any hidden motives). During the preparations and meeting with Revd Barry or his designated representative, and also the funeral directors, you should endeavour to disclose all relevant information, which adds to the loving transparency of the whole commitment.

A PRAYER FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

God our father, We give thanks for the life of (name of person). Be with us all in our family during this very difficult time of grief, and profound sadness. We ask for your comfort in our pain and sorrow. Give us all strength in the coming days as we prepare for the funeral.

Help us to be reassured by your word that he/she is now at peace.

Hold each of those known to (name of person) in your loving arms so that they may learn to find peace.

May the souls of the departed rest in peace and rise in glory, to be in a new life with you forever.

Amen

A very useful website that accompanies this booklet is:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/arranging-funeral>.