

FUNERALS AND END-OF-LIFE PLANNING AT THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS

If a member of our Church (or immediate family member) is nearing the end of life or has died, please call the Parish Care Office to receive assistance from clergy and other Church staff.

Parish Care Office: 843-707-4174

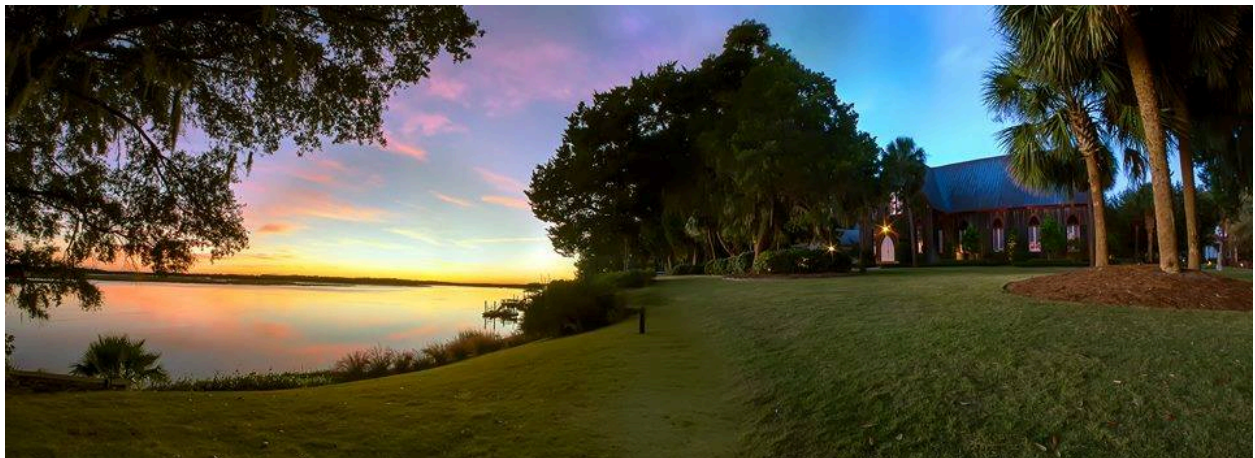
Outside Office Hours/Weekends: 843-422-0295

You may also call the Office to receive additional information about the funeral or committal planning process and to leave your wishes on file at TCOTC.

PLEASE NOTE: We do not reserve burial sites/bricks in the Memorial Gardens OR meet with families to plan funeral services until after a death occurs.

The Anglican Book of Common Prayer (ABCP) has always admonished Christians to be mindful of their mortality. It is therefore the duty of all Christians, as faithful stewards, to draw up a Last Will and Testament, making provision for the well-being of their families and not neglecting to leave bequests for the mission of the Church. In addition, it is important while in health to provide direction for one's own funeral arrangements, place of burial, and the Scripture readings and hymns of the burial liturgy, and to make them known to the Priest.

(ABCP, page 246)



The following document was created to help our Parish family understand the importance and process of funeral planning at The Church of the Cross. We encourage you to read through these “frequently asked questions” and reach out as needed for additional information.

+ + + + + + + + + +

What happens when the Church is informed that a member has died?

When we hear that a member (or immediate family member) has died, our Parish Chaplain (or other clergy) will call the family directly to offer pastoral support. If the family would like to discuss a funeral or committal service, the Pastoral Care Coordinator will then call the family to answer immediate questions, discuss a service date and schedule a time to meet in person to begin the service planning process. A notice of death will also be posted in the Church E-News weekly newsletter along with any on-campus service announcements.

What is a Biblical perspective on death?

The Christian teaching is that death is a defeated enemy. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul writes that “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” Death’s defeat began at Christ’s resurrection, but its destruction is not yet complete. Such is the “already/not yet” nature of the Kingdom of God on earth.

From the *Book of Common Prayer* (p. 246): “The burial of a Christian is an occasion of both sorrow and joy—our sorrow in the face of death, and our joy in Jesus’ promise of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”

Why is it important to consider having a funeral service?

“The Christian burial liturgy looks forward to eternal life rather than backward to past events. It does not primarily focus on the achievements or failures of the deceased; rather, it calls us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and his triumph over death, even as we celebrate the life and witness of the deceased (ABCP p. 246).

Funeral rites of one kind or another are as old as humanity. In addition to the important liturgical function of the Christian funeral stated above, the processes of preparing and carrying out a funeral constitute important mile markers in the grieving process of a bereaved family and community. To quote Thomas Lynch, "A good funeral gets the dead where they need to go and the living where they need to be."

What is the difference, if any, between having a full body burial or cremation?

Casket burials and interment of cremated remains are both common and permitted at TCOTC, although the rate of cremation has risen greatly in recent decades. If you would like to discuss the cultural forces involved in this trend and Christian perspectives on it as a part of your family's funeral planning process, please schedule a meeting with the Parish Care staff.

What are the different types of services that are offered at TCOTC?

Funeral services are a benefit of membership at TCOTC. There are essentially 3 types of services offered, all following the liturgy as laid out in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, 2019. A casket or ashes (cremains) may be present.

1) Funeral Service in the Historic Church or The Chapel (with or without communion)

**Funerals are not conducted on the Historic Campus on Thursdays and Saturdays; also, funerals are not conducted in The Chapel on days that Cross Schools is in operation.*

2) Graveside Service at the Memorial Garden (no communion)

3) Committal Service at the Memorial Garden (burial of ashes only)

If you would like to have a service and/or burial off of TCOTC property, you may inquire about a TCOTC priest leading or participating in the service.

[For more on death and burial in the Christian tradition - and specifically in the Anglican way - please [CLICK HERE](#) to read more from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.]

Can a funeral or committal service be planned in advance of a member's death?

All members are encouraged to plan, discuss and write out the details of their final wishes with their families, friends and/or legal representatives. This can include, but is not limited to, the following preferences:

- Casket burial or cremation
- Location of service
- Location of burial
- Hymn/sacred music choices
- Scripture reading choices
- Communion
- People you wish to participate in the service
- Priest preference (honored if possible)

Church staff will not do any detailed service planning with a family until after a death occurs, but all members are welcome to submit a copy of their service wishes/preferences to the Church to keep on file for a future family meeting. If a member would like to meet in person with the Pastoral Care Coordinator to ask questions or receive basic funeral planning information, an appointment may be scheduled.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of the TCOTC Future Planning Document. You may also submit your wishes/preferences in other formats, handwritten or typed. A digital scan will be made to keep on file at the Church.

We also encourage all members to participate in the yearly *"Goin' Home Workshop: Transition from Earthly Life to My Heavenly Home."* This educational workshop offers the opportunity to hear from local Hospice staff, a tax law attorney and funeral home director, as well as TCOTC staff and clergy. The purpose is to provide information and resources to aid and encourage members in making important decisions and plans related to the end of life.

What fees are associated with a funeral or committal service at TCOTC?

There is no fee for the use of the Church or property. Depending on the type of service that is planned and the specific choices that the family makes, there will be some service fees that are separate from the funeral home or crematorium fees. These can include flowers, musician/vocalist, sound technician, cleaning

and reception, along with a suggested honorarium for the priest. An invoice will be generated once a service is planned.

Can a member do pre-planning with a funeral home or other cremation and burial service?

Yes. Members are welcome to make pre-planning arrangements, including pre-paying, with any funeral home or crematorium of their choosing, indicating their desire for a service at TCOTC if applicable. If a service and/or burial is then planned at TCOTC or will involve a TCOTC priest, Church staff will coordinate with the funeral home or crematorium as needed when the time comes.

What are the requirements and/or guidelines for burial in the Memorial Garden on the Historic Bluff or the Memorial Garden at The Chapel?

We do not reserve burial sites or bricks in either of the Memorial Gardens until after a death occurs. Please [CLICK HERE](#) for a Resource Sheet specific to TCOTC Memorial Gardens.

Who do I contact with additional questions or for more information?

If further assistance is needed, please reach out to the Pastoral Care Coordinator for support by phone, email or in person. Meetings can be scheduled by appointment.

Elisabeth Markle
TCOTC Pastoral Care Coordinator
Parish Care Office: 843-707-4174
emarkle@thechurchofthecross.net