

3.0 FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL – THE RITE OF BURIAL

In every funeral or memorial service the focus must be – and remain – on the Resurrection. The Burial Rite is filled to overflowing with Easter references and imagery – hence white as the liturgical color. The service celebrates not the person who has died but the new life that Jesus Christ is giving them. In this connection the definition of *celebrate* is instructive, and it is beneficial to keep it in mind: *To observe (an event) with respect, festivity, or rejoicing; to perform (a religious ceremony); to extol or praise; to make widely known.* Here are guidelines for these services:

Appropriate Venues (1) An Anglican church building is normative, if one of appropriate size and location is available; (2) Another church building may be used; (3) If neither of the foregoing options is available, utilize a mortuary chapel or a gathering place where the congregation normally meets for worship services.

The Casket or Urn The body is not required; however, it is a good thing to have the body in the worship building to remind those present of their own mortality and their need of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The casket must be closed and covered by a pall. Flowers are not appropriate on the casket. In the case of cremation, the cremains shall be vested and placed on the altar, or if available, on a table nearby the altar and prepared for the placement of cremains during the worship service.

Ministry of the Word Normally the sermon will be given by a member of the clergy. It is most appropriate to have an evangelistic theme and message. The Gospel Lesson is presented by a priest or deacon. Selected readings may be read by a lay person or persons.

Testimonies Eulogistic messages laudatory of the deceased are inappropriate; rather, the emphasis should be on the Gospel of Christ. A few moments may be set aside for members of the assembly to share testimony of how this person represented Christ to them. Subject to family wishes, these should have as their point the “gifts or blessings from God” that the speaker received from his or her relationship with the decedent.

Donations There is no expectation of a monetary donation in the case of services for congregants, other than for extra costs, e.g., a paid organist or paid musicians.

Music Sacred music is strongly preferred during the Liturgy. Popular music may be offered before or after the Liturgy, at the discretion of the Celebrant or Officiant and is most appropriate at a reception or during a slide-show, should one be prepared.

