

Preparations for the Celebration of Life
St. John's Episcopal Church
Ross, CA

"The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provisions for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses." -from the liturgy "Thanksgiving for a Child," Book of Common Prayer p. 445

The clergy and staff of St. John's Episcopal Church recognize the importance of honoring the wishes of parishioners upon their death. Too often, though, these wishes are not put into writing, making the planning of one's burial liturgy and celebration of life service more challenging for the immediate family, the clergy and staff and our parish family.

This booklet, "Preparations for the Celebration of Life" is intended as a guide for you as you prayerfully and carefully begin to make the arrangements and plans that you desire to see enacted upon your death, allowing you to make choices and suggestions that will guide your family, friends and your clergy as we endeavor to create a celebration of life that honors you in your death and calls to mind the eternal life of new birth for which you are destined in Christ. By engaging in this holy exercise, you are truly giving the greatest gift to your immediate family, friends and your parish family. In this process, you live out our experience of Christ in the resurrection we share in Him through the grace of our Baptisms---"In dying we live!"

Below, you will find a form that will guide you in making choices, both for your care and comfort at the end of life...and for the consolation and support of your loved ones. Please complete these forms as much as you are able. Do not be afraid to revisit these plans from time to time. Your choices and tastes may change over the years! Include as much information as you are comfortable in providing to the benefit of those who will be enacting your wishes upon the event of your death. If there are other notes you wish to attach, please feel free to do so, and make sure they are submitted to those you choose to hold these documents in the months, and years, to come. We suggest that you provide copies to:

- The clergy and staff of St. John's Episcopal Church
- Your family member or executor of your will
- Your attorney
- Your primary care physician
- A funeral director of your choice

St. John's staff will be happy to provide additional copies of this form. St. John's will keep your information secure and strictly confidential.

-The Reverend Chris Rankin-Williams, Rector

The following person(s) will be responsible for carrying out the arrangements for my burial—

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

The following person(s) is the executor of my estate—

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Have you included St. John's and other charitable organizations in your estate plans? Yes No

The following are my primary care physician(s)—

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Have you completed a Living Will? Yes No

Have you completed any forms for Medical Directives? Yes No

Are you a registered Organ Donor? Yes No

Do you wish to donate your body for medical research before Burial?
Yes No

If yes to any of the above, who has copies of these documents and is the executor/power of attorney for these directives in the event that you cannot express your desires?

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Do you wish to be buried or cremated? _____

Do you wish to have your ashes interred in St. John's Memorial Garden? Yes No

Do you want a memorial plaque placed in St. John's Memorial Garden? Yes No

Are there any special instructions for burial/interment/scattering? _____

If you have a burial plot please complete the following:

Name and Address of Cemetery or Burial Ground: _____

Phone: _____

Lot Number: _____ Section Number: _____

I have made arrangements with the following Funeral Director: _____

The Funeral Director will arrange for the publication of the death notice in local newspapers. Please attach a copy of your prepared death notice (if possible) to this form, and indicate the newspapers that should be notified. Also, include any special requests (for example, "In lieu of flowers, the family request that memorial contributions be made to...")

Newspapers and Institutions to be notified:

Special Requests:

Newspapers tend to limit space offered for death notices, and sometimes the very rich and rewarding parts of your life experiences are not always included. These events can be incorporated into your celebration of life in other ways. They can be attached to the service bulletin, as a part of the remembrances and remarks by family and friends, in the homily offered by the clergy, etc. Please include here or on a separate sheet and information you wish to share such as date, location of your birth, family or genealogical information, names of spouse or partner, children, descendants, etc., vocations and careers, hobbies and interests, organizational memberships, awards, honors, etc.

Celebration of Life Liturgy Planning

Planning the liturgy for your Celebration of Life is founded in the rich, pastoral language of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer through the Burial Office (pages 466-507). This liturgy, with your caring and prayerful reflection, can be conformed through choices of language, prayers, selection of Holy Scripture and music (hymns, canticles, service music, as well as other musical requests) to offer a service that is complete, unique and a faithful picture of your own life and faith. You are encouraged to consult with St. John's clergy if you have any questions or would like help making decisions about your service.

Which form of the Burial Office do you desire? Rite I (p.469, ff) Rite II (p. 491, ff)

Do you want the Eucharist celebrated? Yes No

A number of readings from Holy Scripture are offered in the Book of Common Prayer for your selection. They are found on pages 470, 475 and 480 of the Prayer Book. These readings are *suggestions only*. You may have another favorite reading from Holy Scripture that speaks to you, and thus, about you! In addition, the choices you make in regard to hymns and music speak to your life and faith as well. Please list those readings and music/hymns that you desire for your service:

Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament): _____ Psalm(s): _____

Epistle/New Testament Reading: _____

The Gospel: _____

Hymns I would like at my Celebration (please include number and first line from the Hymnal 1982, or similar citation from other hymnals and we will do our best to conform to your wishes).

Do you have other musical requests? _____

Would you like the bell tolled once for each year of your life at your service? Yes No

Do you have any *requests* for service participants such as clergy, preacher, people to offer words of remembrance, readers, ushers, etc? Consider who will best serve those who will attend your service.

A Celebration of Life/Burial service is ultimately for those who mourn your death. Are there parts of this service you would prefer to have loved ones plan or which may be adjusted to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of your family and friends?

Know that the clergy and staff of St. John's Episcopal Church desire to make this liturgy the most effective and pastoral experience for you and your family. Our hope is that you found this exercise in planning to be both a consolation and a joyful affirmation of the life we share in Christ Jesus. If there is any way that the Church staff can be of service to you as you address the issues around end of life decisions, be assured that we stand ready to assist you.

If there are any areas of consideration that we have not covered in this form, or any other suggestions/requests that you would like to see respected in your Celebration of Life, then please include them in the space provided below, or feel free to attach any notes to this form for our reference:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for taking the time to give your gift of a celebration of eternal life to your family, friends and to your parish family.

“Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, 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.”
