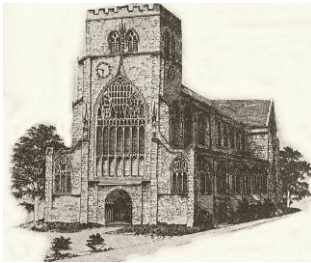


Holy Cross Shrewsbury
Shrewsbury Abbey &
St. Peter's Monkmoor

A Guide to Funerals

In the Parish of the Holy Cross, Shrewsbury



This guide is intended to help with the arrangements and practicalities for any funeral which takes place in the 'Abbey' Parish or for any funeral which takes place where a member of staff at the Abbey is officiating at the service.

This guide is not intended to be a bereavement booklet. At the time when someone dies it is usual to seek help and support from friends and family. If you do wish to talk 'in confidence' to the Vicar or a member of the Abbey team please contact the Vicar at the phone number on the next page of this guide.

First Steps

When someone dies there are so many emotions, so many things to do and it can be very difficult to focus on how to do things in the right way. Some things have to happen within a fairly tight time scale and the Funeral Director will be best equipped to help you through all the legalities.

In a Parish which has many thousand inhabitants it is very often the case that the first time a Vicar will know of the death of someone is when told by the Funeral Director. It is usually at this point the Vicar will be given some preliminary information which will need to be developed in the ensuing days so the Funeral service is just right both for family and friends.

Several basic questions need to be addressed;-

- How do I contact the Vicar?
- Where will the funeral take place?
- When will it take place?
- Who will conduct the service?
- What will the service contain?

We shall look at these in turn.

How do I contact the Vicar?

Normally the Funeral Director will give the Vicar a contact name, address and phone number. It is the practice at the Abbey to try to make contact as soon as possible, but sometimes people are out, decide to go and stay with a friend or for various reasons contact cannot easily be made.

The Vicar may be contacted on **01743 232723** (Abbey Office) or **vicar@shrewsburyabbey.com** –

If you have not heard within 48 hours please contact him. Once contact is made it is the practice of the Vicar to make an appointment to come and see you if this is at all possible. Please feel free to ask anyone else to come to this meeting.

- The Vicar tries to take **Friday** as a regular day off.

Where will the funeral take place?

This depends on your wishes. The immediate possibilities:

- at the Abbey or St. Peter's,
- at Emstrey Crematorium or -
- at Longden Road Cemetery Chapel (Old Cemetery).

It is possible to have a full service at either church followed by a short committal at the Crematorium or Interment at the Cemetery. In the case of a full Church service followed by cremation some families decide not to go to the Crematorium.

Another way, less common in urban areas, is to have a 'family' cremation followed by an 'open invitation' memorial service in the Church. The benefit of this is friends and family can meet up with their guests at any refreshments immediately after the main service. In all instances the Funeral Director will agree times and places with the Vicar and with the family.

When will the funeral take place?

This can be quite difficult to arrange although in most cases it is not a complex matter. First of all no funeral can take place before all the relevant legalities are completed. Please follow the guidance of the Funeral Directors in this. Different Funeral Directors have different ways of arranging the times, but for the most part they will agree a time mutually convenient to the family, themselves and the Vicar.

Choosing a time at the Crematorium can sometimes be frustrating because there are only so many time-slots. If you really want a particular time it might be easier to have a service in the Church where there is less constraint on timing.

Who will conduct the service?

Normally all services will be conducted by the Vicar. He is very open to sharing the leadership of the service with other people particularly where there is a 'family' connection. No service can be conducted in either Church or Churchyard without the express permission of the Vicar or the Churchwardens.

Unfortunately there are occasions when a family have very special reasons for choosing a particular time and day only to find the Vicar already has a prior appointment or is away. Where this is the case the Funeral Director and Vicar together will seek a minister to conduct the service for you. This minister will then deal with all the practical arrangements relating to the service.

What will the service contain?

Put simply, every single Funeral Service is different. Normally the Vicar will work on a standard framework which can then be adjusted to make the service personal.

A service can contain some or all of the following:-

- Music, Prayer, Silence, Tributes, Poetry and Bible Readings. This list is not exhaustive. If in doubt, the Golden Rule is - keep it simple and dignified.

We shall have a look at some of these constituents:

Music: This can include something whilst going in at the beginning, something whilst leaving at the end, one or more hymns and possibly a reflective or personal piece of music during the service. Do be careful though of not making a service too long, especially at the Crematorium where there is a time factor. When it comes to hymns the best policy is to choose one or two (or at most three) which are well known and sing-able. If you choose to use a pre recorded item please talk to the Funeral Director or Vicar about this as early as possible. The Crematorium has its own 'piped' music system.

Prayer: For some it will be right to have no more than one or two short prayers. There will always be a short time of quiet for people to say their own prayers, or simply reflect in silence. Normally prayers will end with the Lord's Prayer using the traditional words. The Vicar is more than happy to share the leadership of this part of the service or to read out special prayers on behalf of the family.

Silence: It is always good to have a short time of quiet; if you would prefer a longer time of quiet reflection please talk to the Vicar.

Spoken Tributes: Please discuss this with the Vicar. It is quite common (but not an obligation) for someone, a friend, family or colleague, to say a few words at a Funeral Service. If someone would like to do this please liaise with the Vicar who can help you think through issues such as content and length. If you would really like to say something but feel you couldn't stand up and say it yourself, please consider writing something for the Vicar to say. Sadly, in most urban parishes, the Vicar will not know the deceased, either well or possibly at all. It can be very meaningful if someone who does know the deceased can help him with this part of the service. We recommend any 'Tributes' are written out in full – a good suggestion is no more than 1 side of A4 paper typed size 12 – then double-space it for ease of reading.

Readings: It is part of a Church of England service for there to be at least one reading from the Bible. If you have any ideas on this please discuss it with the Vicar. If you are not too sure about this the Vicar will be happy to choose and read a passage for you. In addition to this please feel free to ask the Vicar to include any other items of prose or poetry. Again, please remember how this will affect the overall length of the service.

All the above will be woven into the service to make it unique and personal.

Again, if in doubt, the Golden Rule is - keep it simple and dignified.

Service Sheets: These are becoming more popular, especially if you choose hymns from more than one book. They can also be a keepsake in your own 'family archives'. They are not obligatory. The Vicar can arrange for these for a very small additional fee, or else talk to the Funeral Director.

Refreshments: It is a very common practice for the family to put on a 'bit of a spread' afterwards. If this is to be an open invitation to any mourner, please tell the Vicar who will be pleased to announce this at the service.

Collections: It is also a very common practice to take a collection in memory of the deceased to be donated to a charitable concern. Collections at the Crematorium or Cemeteries will be accounted to you by the Funeral Directors. Please remember however that **any collection taken in either Church 'technically' belongs to the Church** and you should discuss beforehand with the Vicar any wish for all or part of such a collection to be disbursed to a third party. If the recipient of the collection is to be the church or another registered charity it is well worth considering 'Gift Aid'. Again, talk to the Vicar about this.

Fees: Unless agreement is made to the contrary the Statutory and Local Fees due to the Church will be paid to the Church by the Funeral Director who will invoice you accordingly. If you request another minister – for family or personal reasons – to lead the service, all Statutory Fees due to the Vicar and to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) will still need to be settled.

Numbers of Mourners: This can be very difficult to judge. It is useful however if you can advise the Vicar if you think the numbers will be a handful or a very large number as he will adjust the style and feel of the service accordingly. If you are expecting a large number, say 150 plus, please remember the Abbey Church has many more seats than either the Crematorium or the Cemetery Chapels. If you are unsure about numbers for the purpose of service sheets remember it is good to have one for each person, so please talk to the Funeral Director with your best estimate of numbers.

Children at Services: People of **all** ages are welcome. The Vicar works on the basis that a child old enough to say 'nana' is well old enough to come, but any decision on this rests with the parents. Please note both Churches do have toilets on site although at St. Peter's these are available in the Church Hall.

Flowers: These are a very common part of the tribute. Sometimes people ask for 'Family Flowers only', other times it is right and proper to allow anyone to bring flowers. Please do think about what you might do with the flowers at the end of the service. Some people simply leave all the floral tributes at the Crematorium, others like to distribute them between family graves, hospitals, residential homes or ask for them to be displayed in the church. Flowers don't last though, please talk to the Vicar if you would prefer a more permanent 'memorial'.

Burial of Ashes at a later date: This will be by arrangement between you, the Funeral Director and the Vicar.

Stone Memorials: These are subject to incredibly strict guidelines. If you require a Stone Memorial Tablet at the Crematorium or at the Cemetery, please discuss this with the Funeral Director in the first instance.

Other tributes: In addition to the donations mentioned above some people like to think of something more permanent than flowers. At both Churches it is possible to donate towards things such as Pew Bibles which would be suitably inscribed and there are other things, both in the church and in the wider community, which might be considered as a much more lasting memorial than flowers - Again, talk to the Vicar about this

A Funeral will not be an easy time, but it should be a fitting tribute and quite properly a celebration of a life.

Please feel free to discuss any matter about a Funeral Service with the Funeral Director or with me.

I hope this guide and the following prayers and readings have been of help.

©Paul Firmin 2011

Prayers at this time -

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of
friend and stranger.

Amen.

*Support us, O Lord,
all the day long
of this troublous life,
until the shades lengthen,
and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.*

*Then, Lord, in your mercy
grant us safe lodging,
a holy rest and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

Living God,
you have lit the day
with the sun's light
and the midnight
with shining stars.

Lighten our hearts
with the bright beams
of the Sun of Righteousness
risen with healing in his wings,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

And so preserve us
in the doing of your will,
that at the last we may shine
as the stars for ever;
through the same
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Almighty God, in your great love
you crafted us by your hand and
breathed life into us by your Spirit.*

*Although we became
a rebellious people, you did not
abandon us to our sin.*

*In your tender mercy
you sent your Son
to restore in us your image.*

*In obedience to your will
he gave up his life for us,
bearing in his body our sins
on the cross.*

*By your mighty power
you raised him from the grave
and exalted him to the
throne of glory.*

*Rejoicing in his victory
and trusting in your promise
to make alive*

*all who turn to Christ,
we commend N to your mercy
and we join with all*

*your faithful people
and the whole company of heaven
in the one unending
song of praise:
glory and wisdom and honour
be to our God for ever and ever.*

Amen.

God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at my end,
and at my departing.

*Almighty God,
you love everything
you have made
and judge us with infinite
mercy and justice.*

*We rejoice in your promises of
pardon, joy and peace
to all those who love you.*

*In your mercy turn the darkness of
death into the dawn of new life,
and the sorrow of parting into the joy
of heaven;
through our Saviour
Jesus Christ,
who died, rose again,
and lives for evermore.*

Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you comforted your disciples when
you were going to die:
now set our troubled
hearts at rest
and banish our fears.

You are the way to the Father:
help us to follow you.

You are the truth:
bring us to know you.

You are the life:
give us that life,
to live with you now and for ever.

Amen.

A selection of short readings

*Lord, there have been moments
haven't there been days
when it seems I'm lost forever
on a single note of praise*

*As the hopes and fears around me
are somehow left behind
and I soar into your presence
beyond the realms of time*

*Lord, I've felt the emptiness
where precious life as flown
when no heart on earth could reach
me to help me carry on*

*Through tears and aching silence
I feel your spirit's rain
as your gentle arms of comfort
surround me once again ->*

*I touch eternity, a taste of heaven
breath-taking wonder,
of a love so freely given.*

*I touch eternity,
bright morning star
and you let me see it's all
worth waiting for*

*And here I am, oh Father
a life at peace and war
between the thunder
of my heartbeat
and the whisper of the stars*

*While from your
power and majesty
the glory of I AM
you walk my daily footsteps
my name is on your palm.*

Adrian Snell – Beautiful or what?

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be
no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,*

*But such a tide as moving
seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out
the boundless deep
Turns again home.*

*Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may be there
no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;*

*For tho' from out our bourne
of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
'When I have crossed the bar.*

LORD TENNYSON

*Death is nothing at all,
I have slipped away
into the next room.*

I am I, and you are you.

*Whatever we were to each other
That, we still are.*

*Call me by my old familiar name,
Speak to 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.*

*Pray, smile, think of me,
give thanks for me,
Let my name be ever
the household word
that it always was. ->*

*Let it be spoken without effect,
Without the trace
of a shadow in it.*

*Life means all that it ever meant,
It is the same as it ever was,
There is 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'.*

*Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)
Canon of St Paul's Cathedral*

I asked for strength
that I might achieve.
He gave me weakness
that I might learn obedience.

I asked for health
that I might do great things.
He gave me sickness
that I might do better things.

I asked for wealth
that I might be happy.
He gave me poverty
that I might be wise.

I asked for power
that I might have glory.
He gave me weakness
that I might depend on God.

I asked for all things
that I might enjoy life.
He gave me life
that I might enjoy things.

I received nothing I asked for,
But all I hoped for.
I am rich; I am happy.
My prayer is answered.
Amongst all people
I am blessed.

Author Unknown

*The term is over,
the holidays have begun.
The dream is ended,
this is the morning.
All their life in this world
had only been the cover
and the title page.
Now at last they were
beginning Chapter One
of the Great Story
which no one on earth has read,
which goes on forever.*

C.S. Lewis

And I said to the man who stood at
the gate of the year.

'Give me a light that I may tread
safely into the unknown'.

And he replied,

'Go out into the darkness and put
your hand into the hand of God. That
shall be to you better than light and
safer than a known way'.

M. Louise Haskins

*One night a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along
the beach with the LORD.*

*Across the sky flashed scenes from his
life. For each scene he noticed two
sets of footprints in the sand: one
belonging to him,
and the other to the LORD.*

*When the last scene of his life flashed
before him, he looked back at the
footprints in the sand.*

*He noticed that many times along the
path of his life there was only one set
of footprints.*

*He also noticed that it happened at
the very lowest and saddest times in
his life. This really bothered him and
he questioned the LORD about it:*

*"LORD, you said that once I decided
to follow you, you'd walk with me all
the way. But I have noticed that*

*during the most troublesome times in
my life, there is only one set of
footprints. I don't understand why
when I needed you most
you would leave me."*

The LORD replied:

*"My son, my precious child,
I love you
and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and
suffering, when you see only
one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."*

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus
Christ, the love of God, and the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with
you now and for ever more.

Amen

*Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

*Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.*

*Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.*

*No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renown'd be thy grave!*

Cymbeline Act 1V, Scene 2
William Shakespeare

It was beautiful,
As long as it lasted
The journey of my life.

I have no regrets
Whatsoever save
The pain I'll leave behind
Those dear hearts
Who love and care
And the strings pulling
At the heart and soul. Continues

by Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali poet and
Nobel Laureate for Literature 1913

*Farewell to Thee! But not farewell
To all my fondest thoughts of Thee;
Within my heart they still shall dwell*

*And they shall cheer and comfort me.
Life seems more sweet
that Thou didst live
And men more true Thou wert one;
Nothing is lost that Thou didst give,
Nothing destroyed
that Thou hast done.*

Anne Bronte 1820-1849

If I should go before the rest of you
Break not a flower
Nor inscribe a stone
Nor when I am 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

Joyce Grenfell 1910-1979

Since you'll never be forgotten
I pledge to you today;
A hallowed place within my heart
Is where you'll always stay.

If tears could build a stairway
And heartache make a lane;
I'd walk the path to heaven
And bring you back again.

Our family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same;
But as God calls us one by one,
The chain will link again.

Lyrics by Robert Plant & Jimmy Page
(Led Zeppelin)