



Funerals and Burial of Ashes

St Mary's Church, Thorpe

Loss - Facing bereavement and change

Sadly, the inevitable truth about life is that we will die and we will lose people whom we love along life's journey. At such times you may experience all sorts of emotions and feelings at the loss of someone important. Grief is a normal response to loss and can be experienced as pain, both physical and emotional. You may also feel shock, anger, guilt, regret, numbness or loneliness.

You may have unanswered questions, or in some cases, your grief may be felt as relief.

Many people are affected physically by their bereavement. You may feel unwell and generally very tired. You may feel you need to retreat from the world and be quiet, or the reverse, you may not wish to be alone and find you can't sit still or even become hyperactive. Indeed, there are many other ways that grief can affect you and each bereavement is different. The important thing is to recognise that the emotional shock can produce a physical reaction. (If you do have a recurring physical problem don't hesitate to contact your doctor who may be able to help.)

You may be blessed with family or close friends to help and support you at the time of loss. At St Mary's we are always willing to be your extended family of support and walk with you through your journey of loss. Your family may like to help you with the details and decisions about a funeral and there may be notes attached to the will of your deceased loved one with ideas of plans they had made in advance of their passing. You may also have previous experiences to draw upon or this could be the first time you need to prepare a Funeral Service.

Coping with Emotions

The passing of a loved one and their funeral is usually a very emotional time, so don't be afraid to cry or show your feelings publicly. We do encourage you to involve everyone in the family to take part in a funeral service (even when there has been a family disagreement) and we especially encourage children to be involved as this will help them later in life, when they will inevitably have to experience a funeral as an adult. (It is a good idea for a parent/guardian to talk with the head teacher of any children attending a funeral so they are prepared at school for inevitable and yet often very helpful questions.)

Crying is important because it can help us to relieve emotional stress and there is nothing to be ashamed of in demonstrating the feelings you have for the person that has died. Sharing grief as a community also helps and we do encourage you to allow our wonderful and welcoming community of Thorpe to embrace you in your time of need and surround you with our prayers.

Allow time to grieve and remember

Please try and allow yourself time to grieve and adjust to your new situation and always take time before making major decisions following the loss of someone important to you. You may be surprised at the way the world keeps on going when you wish everything would just stop.

It can be especially difficult as Christmas approaches. To help during that time we hold an annual Memorial Service on the feast day of Christ the King (end of November) and we will invite each bereaved family to come to St Mary's Church to join in our celebration of life. At the Memorial Service guests are invited to write the name of their deceased loved one upon a leaf and hang it on our tree of life. The tree is replaced by the Christmas Tree later in December. We also offer the opportunity to light candles in remembrance and thanksgiving.

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Burial of Ashes & Memorial Services

St Mary's is available for Memorial Services and for the burial of ashes, and while you wait to hold a service of celebration, we can store the ashes for you. A popular choice is to hold a Memorial Service in celebration of life, followed by the burial of ashes.

It is a lovely thing to place the ashes of a loved one somewhere you know you can visit. At St Mary's we have designated areas of the churchyard for the burial of cremated remains. In line with churchyard legal regulations, these are unmarked plots in the grass, although your loved one's name can then be entered into the Book of Remembrance which is kept on display in St Mary's Chancel. Their name would also then be read out and prayed for every year on their anniversary of death.

Those who live within Thorpe Parish, or who are members of St Mary's Church Electoral Roll, along with those who have regularly worshipped at St Mary's in years gone by (or can demonstrate another connection) are entitled to have their ashes interred in the designated areas of the churchyard.

Legal restrictions (known as Churchyard Regulations) prohibit any form of marking of the location, (no name stones or markers, flower vases or markings/name signs, even temporary) and ashes can't be buried in a casket.

However, we have a long tradition of planting spring bulbs such as daffodils and snowdrops with the ashes so that in spring the signs of new life can be seen throughout our beautiful churchyard. There are also locations where rose trees can be planted, with prior agreement.

Book of Remembrance at St Mary's

A lovely way to remember your loved one is to have their name added to St Mary's Book of Remembrance, which is on permanent display in the Chancel. Pages are turned regularly so names from the Book of Remembrance are displayed on anniversaries each year. In addition, the names for Remembrance are added to our weekly newsletter each week at their anniversary and included in Sunday prayers of Intercession.

To have your loved one added to The Book of Remembrance, you need to complete and return an Application Form. (Being added to the Book of Remembrance is not automatic).

The suggested donation for entries into the Book of Remembrance is £10.

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Funeral Charges and Fees

These are set by the Church of England, revised in November and published every year, and we apply these as set. In addition we ask for a contribution towards extra heating (September – May) raising the temperature inside the church to around 18°C which will ensure the church remains warm during the service.. (Ordinarily our heating stays at 13°C to help keep the fabric of the church dry and frost free.)

There are also charges for the provision of an organist and the Verger. To find out more about the charges for a funeral or burial of ashes contact the parish office.

Preparation for your own death and funeral

It is not always easy to think about things to do with death and funerals but it is a really good idea to share with family and close friends your own wishes, so that they can prepare a funeral that they know you would want. To help you with this, view or download the Planning Your Funeral Service Form.

Complete it to the best of your ability and place it with your Last Will and Testament. You may like to give a copy to several family members and we are always happy to keep a copy here on file at St Mary's. Don't see this as awkward – of course nobody likes to think about dying - rather see it as helpful for those who will make plans to celebrate your life after you are no longer living. It is often seen as a real gift to the surviving family to have a clear path to follow in preparation for a funeral.

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