

*When the services of a priest cannot be obtained, a deacon or lay reader may preside at the service. - BCP 468, 490*

MINISTRATION AT THE TIME OF DEATH – BCP 462-466

Whenever possible, these prayers and Litany are offered by a priest in connection with Last Rites. However, the prayers are not exclusive to those who are ordained, and may be offered by a Lay Reader, excluding the “Reception of the Body” on pages 466-467. Neither shall a Lay Reader hear confession, offer Communion, or anoint the body, unless directed by the Bishop to do so. In that case, the deacon or lay person must use the “Declaration of Forgiveness” found on page 448, 452 of BCP. If the dying person is not a Christian, the Lay Reader should be familiar with the rubrics for Emergency Baptism found on BCP 313-314.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD: RITE ONE – BCP 469-489

- Note: the chief differences between Rite One and Rite Two are the traditional language, the list of Psalms, and the Prayers of the People [BCP 480].
- The King James Version of Psalm 23 is on pg. 476.
- Rite One offers more “additional prayers” on 487-489

BURIAL OF THE DEAD: RITE TWO – BCP 490-505

- Rite Two has an optional opening anthem [BCP 492]

OUTLINE & NOTES - BURIAL OF THE DEAD: RITE TWO (without the Eucharist)

**Meeting with the Family**

- Meet with the family as soon as convenient for them.
- Confirm date of funeral (and date of graveside, if separate), times of services, and confirm that the church or chapel is available.
- Ask for the name of the Funeral home and contact name and call them to confirm the date, time and location. Do this even if you think you know already!
- Have a BCP, hymnal and Bible, or copies of the lessons ready before they arrive.
- If possible, have a service template available to write down notes.
- Ask for a brief biography of the deceased (and names of immediate family members), with full name, birthdate, and date of death.
- Invite them to choose the lessons, and to have friends or family read lessons, psalm and Prayers of People.
- Discuss who will offer the eulogy, and encourage them to have it written out. If they are having two or three people eulogizing, stress that they keep each to 5 minutes (this usually doubles in delivery). Encourage them to have back-up readers in case the eulogists are overwhelmed with grief. Seriously: Ask if there is someone that they know should be kept away from the microphone, and discuss how to minimize that scenario. Offer to read the eulogy that they prepare, if that makes it easier for them.
- Let them know that secular music cannot be played/sung during the Liturgy.
- Ask if they want an organist, or other professional musician. Note that they will be

responsible for the musician's stipend.

- Discuss arrangements for reception, flowers, announcements, and memorials.
- If the family asks for something that you do not have an answer for, inform them that you do not know and you will call them back with more information.
- Get their phone numbers and e-mails, so that you can clarify ongoing arrangements and questions. Make sure they have your contact information, also.
- Pray with them before and after the meeting, and ask how the church might be of help to them.
- If preparing a booklet, give the family an opportunity to review the final copy before printing.

### **Anthem & Collects**

1. The casket must be closed before the Liturgy begins. See notes “Concerning the Service” [BCP 468/490].
2. When the Eucharist is not to be celebrated, the appropriate candles to be lit for the Burial Office are the six Office Lights behind the altar and the Paschal Candle (see below). Eucharistic Candles should not be lit.
3. Prayers for the “Reception of the Body” [BCP 466-467] may be said “privately” (with pallbearers and family members) as the body is brought into the Narthex, before the public service begins.
4. If the body is present, the casket or urn is covered with a white pall and may be placed between the congregation and the altar prior to the service, or by procession, led by the Crucifer and officiant. (Covering the casket with a white pall equalizes all Christians, whether rich or poor.) The body is traditionally processed feet toward the altar; that is, the body is facing *Liturgical East* - in hope of the Resurrection. (Note: different cultures have different traditions about whether the coffin enters/exits the church head first or feet first.) Family members may follow the coffin in procession.
5. Vestments and paraments are white (for Easter).
6. Regardless of the season, the Paschal Candle is placed next to the body and lit. The Paschal candle may be used in place of the cross for the procession. Incense (representing the prayers of the saints) is very appropriate, but rarely desired.
7. Opening Anthem (or Hymn) [BCP 491-492] The anthems are said slowly and with deliberation when spoken, pausing between paragraphs and timed to end as the procession arrives at the foot of the altar. – *standing and processing*.
8. Music: From the beginning of the Liturgy to the close of the Liturgy, secular music is not allowed. If the family insists on secular music, it must come before the opening Anthem or after the dismissal.
9. Salutation. Note the rubric at bottom of pg. 492. This is an appropriate moment to welcome people to the church/chapel on behalf of the family; to *briefly* introduce yourself and the Church; to direct people to the bulletin, BCP or Hymnal; and to remind people that the Burial service is framed in Easter language because Christians believe in the Resurrection. This may also be the best time to invite people to a reception, or graveside service.
10. “At the Burial of ...” Collects [BCP 493-494]. Choose one. “N.” refers to the Christian (first) name, not the first and last name. - *standing*.
11. Second Collect [BCP 494] is optional, but desirable. “NN.” Refers to multiple names, such as “the families of...”, or “the family and friends of...” - *standing*.

### **The Liturgy of the Word**

12. Lessons: the family is given the choices of lessons from the BCP, but may choose other

Bible passages if they desire. They may have three lessons: OT, NT and Gospel; or two lessons, choosing either an OT or NT and a Gospel lesson. Between the lessons there should be a psalm, hymn or canticle. Without the Eucharist, the Gospel is read from the lectern, as the other lessons. Family/friends of the deceased should be offered the opportunity to read. - *seated*.

13. Homily: If you are not licensed to preach, you must have your homily approved in advance by your parish priest, or the bishop. Likewise, guests and visitors may not preach unless approved by the parish priest or bishop. - *seated*.
14. Eulogy: Family/friends should be encouraged well in advance to keep the number and length of eulogies to a minimum. Encourage them to have them written out in advance and to identify those who will eulogize – hopefully, no more than three. - *seated*.
15. The Creed is optional – *standing*.
16. The Lord's Prayer [see rubric, p. 496] Additional prayers may be added from either Rite One or Rite Two. – *standing or kneeling*.
17. The Prayers of the People [see rubric, p. 496]. Prayers may be offered from the Vigil, Rite One or Rite Two. The vertical lines indicate portions that may be omitted. (It will be important to know whether or not the person was baptized, and a communicant.) – *standing or kneeling*.
18. Concluding Prayer. Choose one (or more) from BCP 498, or from the Additional Prayers 487-489, 503-505. – *standing or kneeling*.
19. If there is no body present, and the service is not continuing with the Committal (a graveside service), then the liturgy can be ended here with a dismissal and hymn. - *Standing*. However . . .

### **The Commendation**

20. Even when the body is not present, the Commendation anthem and dismissal (BCP 499 – top of 500) provide a satisfactory conclusion to the Burial Office, especially when there is no Eucharist. However, the anthems on pg. 500 are not suitable when the body is not present. - *Standing*.
21. When the body is present, the officiant and Crucifer will take their place at the end of the coffin facing the exit, and offer the Commendation and collect [BCP 499] facing the body with the casket between officiant and the altar. - *Standing*.
22. Dismissal. [top of pg. 500] (While it is awkward at this point and to be avoided, it may be necessary to provide directions before offering the dismissal, regarding the location of the Committal/reception, if it has not yet been announced.) The officiant turns and offers the dismissal and begins the procession slowly reciting the anthems [BCP 500] as the body is borne from the church to the hearse or columbarium. - *Standing*
23. Anthems, Canticle or Hymn [BCP 500]. The anthems mentioned above may be replaced or augmented by other anthems, canticles, or hymns. - *Standing and processing*.

### **The Committal**

24. The Committal is the graveside service. It is very brief and will only take about 10 minutes once everyone is gathered. It need not be augmented, unless it is the ONLY portion of the Liturgy being offered for the deceased. (See notes on “graveside only”, below.) The funeral director will gather the people together and let you know when it is appropriate to begin. While you are waiting, ask the funeral director where clean earth is to be used for the coffin.
25. If the body is borne from the hearse to the grave, the officiant leads the coffin in somber procession.
26. If the people gathered, have just come from the church, no announcements are

necessary.

27. Opening anthems [BCP 501]. These may be said (or sung) as the coffin is borne to the grave, but the people will be seated around the grave and not be able to hear the officiant. So, it is best to wait until the coffin is placed over the grave by the pallbearers. Other anthems may be substituted [491-492].
28. Before beginning the committal sentences, reach down and take up a handful of “clean” dry earth. You will offer the committal sentences at the head of the coffin, facing east.
29. Committal sentences. “In sure and certain hope...” It is helpful to have a sticky note with the name of the deceased in your prayer book. No matter how well you know the name, it is easy to forget if you get nervous. Note the rubrics closely, so that the committal sentences agree with the gender of the deceased and the location of the resting-place. At “The Lord bless...” making the sign of the cross over the head of the coffin loosening earth from your hand.
30. The Lord's Prayer. Invite people to join in offering the Lord's Prayer. This is prayed again, even though it was prayed previously in the church. Note: people are not directed/asked to stand or kneel during the graveside service.
31. Additional prayers may be added.
32. Final anthems “Rest eternal...” are offered. Do not wait for the people to respond, unless they have the liturgy printed in a leaflet. Otherwise, the officiant should just offer the responses alone.
33. The dismissal at the bottom of pg. 502, and/or the prayer at the top of pg. 503 concludes the service.
34. If there is a military honor guard, doves to be released, or some other secular/cultural observance. Indicate, or step aside for that at this time. Generally, the funeral director will take over at this point. If there is a Masonic observance offered at this point, clearly distance yourself from it, because you represent the Church. (Masonism is Deist at best, and pagan at worst – your bishop does not allow you to condone or participate in these observances.)
35. The funeral director will make closing comments and announcements.

### **Graveside Only**

- If there is only going to be a graveside service, the officiant can be a bit creative. The object is to combine a portion of the Burial Rite with the Committal, so that you have at least one scripture and one psalm, a very brief homily and eulogy, followed by the Committal. Invite family/friends to read lessons, and offer Prayers of the People. This must be organized BEFORE the service. (See “meeting with family,” above)
- Here is a reasonable outline:
  1. Anthems [491]
  2. Collects [493-494]
  3. Lesson
  4. Psalm
  5. Gospel
  6. Brief homily
  7. Eulogy
  8. Prayers of the People [497]
  9. Collect [498]
  10. Commendation collect [bottom p. 499] could be added, but may be too much\*
  11. Committal [501-503]

\*Without music and comfortable seating (most people will be standing), it is advisable to keep the graveside service brief – 30-40 minutes – 45 minutes at the most.

Note: more and more families are having the graveside first, in order to have the church service conclude where the reception can follow without interruption. While it greatly disturbs the order of the liturgy, it is more important to bless the families, than to be a liturgical purist. At your initial meeting, describe the traditional flow of the liturgy, but graciously allow them to choose the order of the services they want. Graciousness and kindness while a family is grieving, demonstrates the Love of Christ, and may provide an opportunity to share Jesus with those who do not know Him.

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