



## Christian Burial at Saint Stephen's

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If one of your loved ones has died recently, Saint Stephen's Church extends our deepest sympathy to you, and we hope that this Christian fellowship may offer you comfort and support during this time.

**Why be buried by the Church?** The Church alone declares the ultimate hope of humanity first offered by Saint Paul, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, 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" (Romans 8:38-39).

**How do begin preparations for the burial of a loved one at Saint Stephen's?** First contact the Director of Pastoral Care, Dr. Carrie Watson at [carrie@steve.org](mailto:carrie@steve.org). You may also call her on the Saint Stephen's Pastoral Care Line (512)627-6623. Note that the church must work with the next-of-kin in most burial preparation matters.

**Must one be a member at Saint Stephen's to have a burial service here?** No, yet keep in mind that the Episcopal liturgy for burial is thoroughly Christian.

**May we design the worship?** No, the rite for the Burial of the Dead is found on pages 469-505 in the *Book of Common Prayer*. [The *Book of Common Prayer* is available online at [www.bcponline.org](http://www.bcponline.org).]

**Are eulogies offered at the worship?** No, but a *Thanksgiving from the Family* is welcomed immediately after the Peace is exchanged at the celebration.

**Can the parish provide music?** Yes, our Assistant Music Director will both play the piano and lead the music. Generally, we sing selections from the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982*, which offers a wide range of the best sacred music. We do not allow secular music to be played at burials.

**How is the Episcopal burial celebration characterized?** The liturgy is characterized by joy because it finds its meaning in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and claims the promise that we shall be raised to new life with him. In that way, burial is always an Easter celebration. That does not mean that the liturgy leaves no room for sorrow and grief. We believe our Lord attends to us in our darkest times through the gathered fellowship and communion of believers.

**May we have an open casket at the celebration?** No, once the body crossed the threshold of the church, the casket cannot be reopened.

**Are cremains allowed?** Yes, the Episcopal Church makes no distinction between cremation and full body burial.

**Who can be buried in the Saint Stephen's Cemetery?** Members of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church may be buried in our beautiful Hill Country cemetery. For more information on the cemetery, contact these members of the cemetery board: Francis Savage, [fisavjr@earthlink.net](mailto:fisavjr@earthlink.net); Dave Boyd, [davemarcyboyd@anvilcom.com](mailto:davemarcyboyd@anvilcom.com); or Judy Holmes, [judyh60@yahoo.com](mailto:judyh60@yahoo.com). If for some reason you cannot contact one of these persons, phone the church office at (512)847-9956. Note that these burial sites and columbarium niches must be purchased along with the expense of opening the grave.

**Where can the worship be held?** You may desire a simple graveside celebration or a celebration in our Chapel or Church. Congregations of 100 or less will be celebrated in the Chapel. Congregations of 100 or more will be celebrated in the Church.

**What about flowers?** We ask the family to provide the flower arrangements behind the altar - one large arrangement in the Church or two small arrangements in the Chapel. Other flower arrangements may be placed in the narthex (the entryway) or the gravesite.

**May we have a reception before or after the worship in the Parish Hall?** Yes, we have a Burial Reception Guild that will work with the family to plan and provide a nice reception for family and friends.

**What are the costs?** Members of the fellowship already support the operations of the parish through their regular giving; therefore, we do not charge a fee to be buried from the church. A gift of \$150 to the Pianist/Organist and another \$100 gift to the Sexton (Groundskeeper) are expected. Gifts to the clergy are completely optional. If you or your deceased loved one is not a supporting member of the fellowship, you should consider making a gift to support the ministry of the parish. Note that Saint

Stephen's costs are separate from those expenses connected with the funeral home, florist, and monument company.

**May I make my burial plans in advance?** By all means. Call Dr. Carrie Watson to set up an appointment to plan your entire service for the service of a loved one. Dr. Watson or a member of the Community of Hope pastoral care group will assist you in choosing Bible lessons, music, and participants for the worship.