

### Some readings (continued)

When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me;  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree:  
Be the green grass above me  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And if thou wilt, remember,  
And if thou wilt, forget.  
I shall not see the shadows,

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.

*Lawrence Binyon*

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening  
into the house and gate of heaven,  
to enter that gate and dwell in that house,  
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one  
equal light;  
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;  
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;  
no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity;  
in the habitations of your glory and dominion, world  
without end.

*John Donne*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And  
lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen

May the souls of the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise in glory. Amen

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## **St. Peter & St. Paul, Old Brampton St.Lawrence, Great Barlow Loundsley Green Church**



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### **A Funeral in the Church of England**



The funeral service is an opportunity to gather before God to express grief, to give thanks in celebration of a life, and to commend the soul of the departed into God's keeping. The service may be short and quiet with only a few family members, or it may be an occasion of great solemnity with music and hymns. There may be a short speech by one of the mourners, some favourite readings, and a full church. It can be an occasion of great joy in honour of a life lived to the full. Another option is for the body of the departed to be received in church the day before the funeral, and for a Requiem Mass to be held as part of the ceremonies.

#### **Choices for you and your family**

Everyone in England has the right to a funeral in the local parish church, even if they have not been church-goers. Our Churches are the spiritual 'homes' of everyone who lives within the parishes – visit the website <http://www.achurchnearyou.com> to view our parish boundaries

Taking funerals is important part of the work for parish clergy. They give time to visiting families, comforting those who are facing loss, and helping them to arrange the service. If the priest did not know the deceased person, it helps if relatives provide some details.

The funeral director plays an important part in coordinating arrangements and will want to know what you are planning. They will advise you on the fees for a funeral service in church, at a cemetery, or at a crematorium.

For a service at our churches, the options are:

- A said service
- A service with music and hymns of your choice, with an organist
- A service with music but no hymns, with an organist
- A service with some recorded music, but you need to discuss this with the priest, and provide the player.

The first part of the service (readings, address, prayers) takes place in church, and then we go either to the graveside or crematorium for the committal service. Some families prefer the whole service to take place in church, with just the minister accompanying the coffin to the crematorium. Although this is rare nowadays, the service can be conducted entirely at the graveside.



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## The Funeral Service

The service can include hymns, psalm (often *The Lord is my shepherd*), reading(s) from Holy Scripture, and a brief address. Early in the service, there's the opportunity for a family member or friend to give a brief eulogy, but it's difficult to do this well when you are in a delicate emotional state, so don't feel pressured to do this if you don't feel up to it. Discuss it with the Rector. The prayers that follow recall the promise of resurrection, entrust the dead person to the love and mercy of God and ask for comfort and strength for those who mourn. Then comes the commendation of the soul of the departed to the mercy and protection of God. This is a moment of great power and beauty as the coffin is censed.

*If the family wish it, a Mass can be part of these ceremonies.*

The committal that follows is a solemn moment. It takes place either at the graveside, in the crematorium chapel, or in church before the hearse leaves. In the churchyard, the family gather round the grave into which the coffin is lowered and they hear the words: *'We therefore commit his/her body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.'* Handfuls of earth are scattered on the coffin. In a crematorium, the words of committal may be accompanied by the closing of a curtain. Actions so often speak louder than words, and the whole service with its rituals can begin the process of healing the grief of loss.

## A View of Death

At a funeral, feelings of grief, gratitude, joy, guilt and sadness often intermingle. Sometimes, there is an overwhelming sense of tragedy, as when a young person has died, and sometimes of thanksgiving for a long life lived well. There are times when the death of a faithful Christian marks the triumphant end of earthly life.

What happens after we die is a mystery. Some Anglicans believe in Christ's continuing power beyond death to cleanse us of our sins and bring us into the closer presence of God. That is why those of the Catholic tradition pray for those who are dead. Holy Scripture affirms that in God's kingdom we shall delight in the presence of God and of the whole company of heaven. Whatever is wonderful about life here on earth is only a glimpse of the glory of the life that is to come.

In the days before and after the funeral there may not be much of an opportunity to reflect on these things, but parish clergy and others involved in the service will be glad to offer longer-term help in supporting you over the days and months following, maybe even years—grief can last a long time.

## Annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance

Usually sometime in November, we hold a service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for the Departed at which names are read out of those we love but see no longer. This is an opportunity for you to reflect, be thankful, and offer prayers for yourself and those who have lost a friend. You will be most welcome.

## Prayers for those who mourn

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, surround us with thy love. May they not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in thy goodness, to know that *N* is safe and *his/her* life complete with thee. Bring them, and all who mourn to the light of thy love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

Merciful Father, hear our prayers and comfort us; renew our trust in your Son, whom you raised from the dead; strengthen our faith that [*N and M*] all who have died in the love of Christ will share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, know and for ever. Amen

Heavenly Father, you have not made us for darkness and death, but for eternal life. Without you we have nothing to hope for; with you we have nothing to fear. Speak to us now your words of eternal life. Lift us from anxiety and guilt to the light and peace of your presence, and set the glory of your love before us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## God's Acre

'God's Acre' is the old description of the English parish churchyard and evocative of much that we feel and value for those places set apart for the resting place of the departed. In Old Brampton and Barlow churchyards you will find

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gravestones going back many centuries.

A parish churchyard is not a public park or playing field, nor does it aim to resemble a nicely mowed lawn or perfectly trimmed garden. Our folk work hard to keep the churchyards looking good. Please respect this.

In order to help parish churches keep their churchyards well maintained and in good order, the Diocese of Derby provides directions and guidelines **which we are obliged to follow**. A copy of these **Rules and Directions** may be found on display in the church porch. Briefly, they state that:

- Application to erect or place anything whatsoever, or do any works in the churchyard, must be made in writing to the Rector.
- Nothing must be placed or erected in the churchyard until such proposals have received the consent of the Rector in writing.
- This applies to any monuments, stones, crosses and inscriptions, **and also includes the planting of trees, shrubs etc.**
- The surface of the churchyard should be kept level and free from mounds and gravel to permit mowing. *Kerbs and railings are not permitted.*

The Rules allow for **stone** flower containers, wreaths, cut flowers and greenery to be lain on graves. However, please remove and take away withered flowers. The Rector and Churchwardens will remove any flowers, wreaths etc that have passed their best.

**Please note that artificial flowers, greenery and other decorations are not encouraged. The Regulations do not permit containers of any kind, nor freestanding vases.**

## Church Burial Records

Records of burials within the churchyard have been kept for several hundred years and these can be helpful in tracing family histories. Recent records are kept in church, otherwise the records have been deposited in the County Archives Office in Matlock. There is a statutory charge for searches in the church registers.

## Some readings

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. *John 14:1-14*

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full. Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. *Psalms 23*

One night I had a dream. I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonged to me, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of life, there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. This really bothered me and I questioned the Lord about it: "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would 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 in times when I needed you most, you would leave me." The Lord replied: my precious, 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." *Anonymous*

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