

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church

Funeral and Memorial Service Planning

Beyond the Funeral

We are glad you are considering your funeral planning. As Christians we believe that death is not the end, but a new beginning of life with God for eternity. Therefore, Churches encourage pre-planning, as do lawyers, financial advisors and doctors. We hope you find that serious consideration and decisions about these issues is good for your mental and spiritual health.

Questions beyond the service planning:

Do you have a will?

If so, is it current? Without a will, the state may make these critical decisions for you. Consult your lawyer about what kind of will you need to have.

Do you have a Medical Power of Attorney?

This appoints someone you trust to act on your behalf and see that your desires about the use of artificial life sustaining methods and administration of nutrition and fluids if you're unable to make your desires known due to illness or injury. Your physician also should have a copy of your medical power of attorney.

Are you an organ and tissue donor?

Seriously consider this gift of sharing your life with others after your death. You can designate yourself as an organ donor, and

that fact will be noted on your Maine driver's license. Make sure your physician and your family know of your wishes.

What about cremation?

There is nothing in Christian theology or doctrine that prevents cremation. It's both environmentally and fiscally responsible. (It would allow you to be buried in the St. Bart's Memorial Garden.) It is not necessary to spend \$\$ on a fancy urn or casket - in the Church either would be covered by a pall - we are equal before God.

What about estate planning?

When you consider your estate planning - which organizations would you like to include in bequests/planned giving? Make a plan for these, or at least document your wishes and include that information with the rest of your documents.

From St. Bart's perspective: if you are a pledging member, we would really appreciate your including a note about completing your pledge to the parish in your packet of documents for your loved ones. And of course, as St. Bart's is completely dependent upon those of us who are members for its support, a planned gift, or bequest to St. Bart's endowment fund would be deeply appreciated and significant in the ongoing life of this parish. We have a small group of people who are handling this aspect of support for us: Bill McLeod, Ed Simmons and Abby Diggins. Any of them would be pleased to sit down with you and help you make plans.

Talk to your loved ones!

When considering all these issues, you should talk with your family, including your children or other close relatives so that everyone knows and understands your wishes. At the very least let them know you've been doing your planning, where the documents can be found, and what is included in those. (That list might include service planned down to the music/readings; power of attorney for managing finances; funeral plans with funeral home; will, medical power of attorney...) It's helpful to have that list, as well as TALK with those you love about these things. This provides an opportunity to discuss anything that might cause concern among your survivors. It is much easier on your family if you have already made some of these necessary decisions before your death. Frame it as a gift - not as immediate need, but your care for THEM in these matters.