



ARRANGING A FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ST PAUL'S KNIGHTSBRIDGE

St Paul's Knightsbridge has an unequalled reputation as a place for holding Memorial Services and Services of Thanksgiving – and has great resources to support you through a time of loss and as the place to hold a funeral service.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the service you are planning is a memorable celebration of the life of the person who has died – and the good news is that we have not inconsiderable resources at our disposal to ensure that it is so.

First Meeting

The very first step is to make an appointment to sit down with the Vicar or Associate Vicar to discuss the possibility of holding a service at St Paul's. Please ring 020 7201 9999 to make an appointment.

The building

St Paul's is a very beautiful church, built in 1843 and decorated and extended in 1893. It seats up to 850 people, but is constructed in such a way that much smaller than capacity congregations don't feel drowned or lost! A small congregation of 80-100 in the centre of the nave feels comfortably full, although in fact we can seat 430 downstairs. The galleries upstairs can be opened up if required. Even smaller congregations of up to 45 can be accommodated in the Chancel (the area close to the High Altar, beyond the screen).

Flowers

The building is highly ornate, but those organising services often want to include floral arrangements. These can be arranged by the family themselves, or by professional florists. We will be able to put you in touch with a range of people who have the skills to make the church look wonderful – and at a budget to suit you.

Music

St Paul's has a fine 4-manual Willis Company organ. Our Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music will be glad to meet with you – or to liaise by phone – to make suggestions about how music (congregational, choral and instrumental) can add a whole dimension to a Memorial Service. We have a retained professional choir of eight, and for larger events add singers to increase the impact of the choir. We like to be as creative as feels appropriate for Memorial Services and are always keen to work with you to ensure that the style of music chosen reflects the interests and

loves of the person being celebrated. We are pretty good at knowing what will, and what won't work.

The Order of Service

We will meet with you at every stage as we plan together the service. Please don't worry that you are not experienced at arranging memorial services, we are! We will be glad to make suggestions of hymns, readings (Scriptural and non-Scriptural), prayers and music – and are skilled at knowing what overall shape will provide the right length and balance of service. When we reach that point we can either print 'in house' at St Paul's or work with your printer to make sure that there is an appropriate printed service paper.

Prayers

Appropriate prayers will be said in the course of the service – and it will be very helpful if you can guide the clergy involved to particular areas for prayer in the life of the deceased. The choice of prayers is at the clergy's discretion, but they are glad to be guided.

Protocol

There are traditions about who arrives when and who sits where. The clergy will be pleased to guide you in the niceties of church protocol.

What to call it

If it is not a funeral, is it a Memorial Service, or a Service of Thanksgiving, or a Thanksgiving for the life of...? Part of the answer will depend on how recently and in what circumstances the departed person died. The clergy will be glad to discuss the styling of the service, and will help you to ensure that you strike the right balance between a tone of respectful mourning and glad celebration; getting this right is less a science than an art, but our long experience has helped us to judge what will feel most appropriate in any case. Having agreed a date, time and name for the service, you may well wish to place a notice in the Court and Social pages of the Times and/or The Telegraph to announce the service.

Seating plans

We recommend that a seating plan – if any – be as simple as possible. Members of the immediate family will be seated in reserved rows at the front of the Nave on the South (right hand) side; any VIPs or other special guests will be seated in the corresponding rows on the North side. If, as sometimes happens, members of the Royal Family are present (or are represented), special arrangements are made with regard to the protocol for their arrival, seating and departure; the Lord Chamberlain's Office will liaise directly with the clergy and office team.

Knowing who was there

Sometimes families wish to have a record of attendance. Pew Cards can be produced and completed by attendees and either left in their places afterwards and gathered up by ushers – or handed in. Alternatively, Books of Remembrance can be placed at the doors of the church, though this sometimes slows down the process of arrivals. If the Court and Social columns of either the Times or Telegraph newspapers wish to record the event, they will send someone to take names on the door.

Rehearsal of readers

The church has a recently-upgraded state-of-the-art digital sound system. It is sometimes helpful for readers – especially those who are anxious about standing up in front of a congregation – to come along for a rehearsal with one of the clergy before the day itself. Please book this with the Parish Office on 020 7201 9999.

On the day

You will need to arrange for members of the family or friends to act as ushers. They will greet members of the congregation at the door, give them service papers and escort them to their seats. They will also help to take any retiring collection and to ensure that after the service all personal belongings and lost property are gathered up.

A retiring collection

It is customary for a retiring collection to be taken and for the proceeds of the collection to be either for the work of St Paul's Knightsbridge or to be divided between St Paul's and a charity of the family's nomination.

Photography, Video Recording & Audio Recording

It is not the custom to have a photographer at a memorial service. If there are reasons why you would like to have one, please discuss this with the Vicar at an early stage. Similarly, video recordings are not the norm, though sometimes pastoral considerations (e.g. a significant family member unable to travel to be present) will make the recording of the service desirable. Occasionally, audio recordings may be made – but again this must be discussed and agreed with the Vicar; because the choir is comprised of professional singers, and under Musicians' Union rules, extra fees are charged when recordings are made.

Fees

The likely charge for a 'standard choir of eight and organist plus a full service in St Paul's Knightsbridge' is in the region of £3,000. Additional musicians are charged for on a pro rata basis. If music which is not in the choir's library or repertoire is requested, the organiser may be asked to bear the cost of acquiring copies. Fees will be significantly impacted by audio or video recording. The office will be able to give you an accurate costing based on what you have agreed with the Director of Music. The Parish Office will invoice you just ahead of the event.

No two memorial services are entirely the same – and part of the pleasure of organising a memorial service with a family is tailoring the possibilities to ensure that the service accurately presents and celebrates the life of the departed. We look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead.

The Reverend Alan Gyle
Vicar