

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Whether making plans in advance for the time of your own death or dealing with the loss and grief of a loved one's passing, St. James by-the-Sea is a community of faithful friends who will walk with you through that "valley of the shadow of death."

Please do not hesitate to call on our church to assist you. Our clergy are compassionate guides who have helped many people through this trying time. Our pastoral care team is prepared to help with grief and loss, and the gift of faithful friends can be the most helpful support of all in dealing with sorrow and loss.



**St. James by-the-Sea
La Jolla, California**



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DEALING WITH DEATH

*The Pastoral &
Sacramental Care of
the Church when
someone dies*

**St. James by-the-Sea
Episcopal Church**

Tel: 858-459-3421

PLANNING IN ADVANCE

Planning ahead is a gift you make for everyone and everything you love

One gift we can make to our loved ones is to make some preparations for our own dying. Our church has a planning package to help you think through the kind of funeral or memorial service you would like to have, and it offers a “checklist” of important details that will help your family. Please call our office for a package to be sent to you.

It is part of our Christian responsibility to be good stewards of what God has given us. Our Episcopal Church encourages every adult member to prepare a will, to prepare an advance directive concerning health care decisions, and to give another person the power of attorney to act on our behalf. It also encourages all who can to leave a bequest of some kind for the good of the church. Workshops are periodically offered by our Diocese on how to prepare a will, and there are advisors who will help answer questions about bequests and planned gifts as a free service to you and the church. One of the clergy can help you get more information about such services.

Prior arrangements for mortuary services and burial can be a great gift to others. Our church offers a Memorial Garden as a sacred place for the burial of cremated remains. More information is available by contacting our parish office.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Sacraments and Pastoral Care in Illness or in preparing for death

Times of serious illness, injury, surgery, or the approach of death for yourself or a loved one are times to call upon the church. *Please do not hesitate to inform our clergy if you or a loved one is in the midst of such a time.*

The sacraments of the church may be appropriate for some people at times when our mortal life is brought into clearer focus. For some the sacrament of **Reconciliation** (confession) is an important chance to let go of resentments or guilt that burden the mind and soul. **Communion** may be brought to a hospital or home, and can be an important reminder of one’s connection with the church and the Spirit of Christ in a time that can be lonely and fearsome. Holy Communion is the Church’s primary healing sacrament. **Anointing** is a sacrament of healing, and it connects us with the healing power of God’s spirit in this life and with the perfected healing promised in the resurrection. You are welcome to ask for any of the church’s sacraments, and the clergy would be glad to discuss them further with you if that would be helpful.

When a death occurs the clergy of our church should be among the first people contacted. Not only will they want to know about a death on your behalf, but the whole church is prepared to rally to a person or family when a loved one dies. The clergy will want to help alert the members of the church that our loving and caring ministries are needed.

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Things you should know about how the Episcopal Church deals with Death

If you would like the clergy to join you shortly after death occurs, they will typically offer a short service of prayer for the departed soul and for those who remain in this life. This is a moving service that immediately offers the soul of the dead into the care of God, and it can include anointing or marking the body with the sign of the cross.

The services for the Burial of the Dead are primarily services to worship God and to proclaim the resurrection. As important as the individual who has died is to us, the chief message of the service is not the quality of their life but the quality of God’s love and grace shown to us in Jesus Christ. Our clergy will gladly plan the service with you, but it may be helpful to know in advance that some currently popular practices –like extensive eulogies and songs of love– are more appropriate in the reception or a family gathering.

The burial offices are suitable for a memorial alone, but they favor having the body or cremated remains present. As a way to provide equal care and respect for all people, the Episcopal Church does not allow open caskets, nor does it allow flower sprays on the coffin. A coffin or an urn will be covered with an elegant cloth called a pall, provided by the church. Thus all people, rich or poor, may be buried from the church with equal respect, reverence, and elegance. When a body or an urn are present, the clergy are typically available to attend the burial or the placement of the ashes in the final resting place.