

Funeral Receptions at Saint Mark's Cathedral

Saint Mark's Cathedral is honored to support families in the tender time following the death of a loved one. Our faith tradition holds fast to the time-honored practice of having a funeral service (also known as memorial service, celebration of life, burial service, requiem mass, funeral mass). We are guided by the liturgy provided in the Book of Common Prayer. There is much grace and comfort to be found there.

It is customary (but not required) to hold a reception following a funeral or memorial service. This gathering offers friends and family the opportunity to meet in a more informal environment. The reception typically follows the funeral service, giving mourners the chance to support each other, share stories and memories, and continue to celebrate the life of the one who has died. Families can choose the location of the reception, taking into account places that were special to the deceased.

Funeral Receptions for Saint Mark's members

Saint Mark's is a vibrant, active parish community, and one of our chief pastoral acts in community is to bury those members who have died. The cathedral clergy, staff and lay ministry leaders work with the family to plan the service and the reception. Once a date and time for the service and reception have been confirmed, the cathedral's funeral reception coordinator (funeralreceptions@saintmarks.org) will contact next of kin to consider details of the reception, which is usually held in Bloedel Hall (smaller receptions may be in Leffler House Living Room). Please do not announce any date or time or location for the funeral service or reception until this has been confirmed by the priest or cathedral sacristan.

In most cases, the cathedral community will "host" the reception in honor of the cathedral parishioner who has died. This is a joyful way of giving thanks for the life of one we love but see no longer. Guided by the funeral reception coordinator, a team of parishioners will provide light hors d'oeuvres, finger sandwiches, and desserts so family members can devote their attention to those in attendance. Receptions are scheduled to last no more than 90 minutes, after which cathedral staff will attend to breakdown and clean-up of the space.

Funeral Receptions for non-members

Saint Mark's Cathedral can host a reception for non-members following the funeral held at Saint Mark's, provided that Bloedel Hall (or Leffler Living Room) is available. There is a rental fee. The funeral reception coordinator will consult with the family on details and provide a list of approved caterers for the reception. Once contracted by the family, the

caterer must contact the cathedral's facilities staff (facilities@saintmarks.org or 206.323.0300 ext ____) to arrange for load-in time, early drop-off of supplies, use of kitchen, etc. The cathedral will provide tables for serving food and for guests to be seated; the caterer should provide all other reception-related supplies (table cloths, drinkware, plates, flatware, etc.) The caterer must also provide sufficient staff to set up, manage and clean up after the reception. Receptions are scheduled to last no more than 90 minutes, so that cathedral staff are able to put away tables and clean the space before the next event.

Alcohol at funeral receptions

It is not expected or necessary to serve alcohol at funeral receptions. The cathedral will provide coffee, tea and ice water. Before deciding to serve alcohol, the family must read and adhere to the Cathedral's [alcohol policy](#), including staffing with bartender and provision of appealing non-alcoholic alternatives. Please consult with the funeral reception coordinator if alcohol is planned.

Memorabilia and Audiovisuals at funeral receptions

Families are encouraged to bring memorabilia of the loved one and place these on the front of the stage in Bloedel Hall. If the family wants to create a slide show for the reception, the Communications Director can assist in connecting to the AV system in Bloedel Hall. The file must be either PowerPoint or pdf format, and this must be arranged in advance. If the family wishes to have a microphone for folks to share stories at the reception, this can be provided. Again, advance notice of this request is required.

Flowers at funeral receptions

It is not necessary, or expected, to include flower arrangements on serving tables or round tables where people may choose to sit. The funeral reception coordinator is glad to discuss options and provide the name of a local florist, if desired. (Separately, the priest planning the funeral service will discuss flower options for the space used for the funeral service.)

WISE PLANNING TIP

One of the most important things you can remember when it comes to organizing a post-funeral reception is that you may be the one who is grieving. Planning an event can be overwhelming under the best of circumstances. When you add the fact that you are mourning it can become very challenging. The very best thing you can do is ASK FOR HELP. Turn to friends and family members who have offered to help.

FUNERAL RECEPTION PLANNING DO'S AND DON'TS

- DO ask for help.
- DO choose a location that works for you or is special to the deceased.
- DO feel free to keep it simple.
- DO make the reception personal by using photos and memorabilia.
- DON'T feel obligated to serve alcohol.
- DON'T feel obligated to create a full course meal.
- DON'T turn down help from friends and family.
- DON'T forget non-traditional locations when looking for a venue.
- DON'T forget to personalize the event.

How can you personalize the funeral reception?

As we have mentioned, the purpose of the funeral reception is to give those attending a chance to share memories and further reflect on the life of the deceased. You can help foster interaction and make the reception more personal by including touches that bring to mind your loved one. There are many popular and easy ways to do this. Creating a photo or memory display as mentioned above is very common. If the deceased was a collector, displaying some special items from his or her personal collection is also a good alternative. Other ways you can personalize the funeral reception include:

- Serving food that was a favorite of the deceased.
- Playing background music that had significance to your loved one.
- Place note cards and pens on the tables. Invite those in attendance to write a memory or story about the deceased on a note card.
- Offering an open microphone so that guests can share a story or memory.
- Creating a tribute video to display during the reception.
- Providing a keepsake for visitors to take with them.

Points of Contact

Saint Mark's Cathedral office 206.323.0300

Funeral Reception Coordinator, funeralreceptions@saintmarks.org

Cathedral Sacristan (for funeral service details), Michael Seewer,
mseewer@saintmarks.org, 206.323.0300 ext ____

Facilities staff, facilities@saintmarks.org, 206.323.0300 ext. ____