

Bereavement can be an emotional time. This leaflet gives some ways in which we may be able to help you as you grieve.

Christians believe that death is not the end – that Jesus offers us the promise of eternity with God in heaven beyond death. This hope, along with God's presence and peace, can bring us some comfort. The prayer below tries to express some of our feelings and our longings as we face the death of someone we have loved.

O God, who brought us to birth and in whose arms we die: in our shock and grief comfort and contain us, embrace us with your love, give us hope in our confusion and grace to let go into new life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; crying and mourning and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4

Other leaflets in this series:

- Welcome to St. Mary's
- Children Welcome!
- Your Child's Baptism
- Getting Married
- Healing Ministry at St. Mary's
- Teach us to Pray

Death and bereavement



Planning a Funeral

The clergy of St Mary's church are always ready to arrange a Christian funeral, whether or not you, or your loved one, have worshipped regularly in church.

If you need to arrange a funeral, it is best to approach your chosen funeral directors first. They will liaise with the clergy initially, and one of the clergy team will then contact you to arrange a visit.

Whether you wish to choose a burial in the cemetery or a cremation, we would be pleased to hold a funeral service in the church beforehand. We will also be very happy to take services in the cemetery chapel or at the crematorium.

Alternatively, after the funeral you may wish us to hold a separate service of thanksgiving for their life in church.

A funeral service can be very simple, or more elaborate, as you wish. The clergy will be happy to help you plan it. It always includes prayers, a Bible reading and a short address. Hymns, music, other readings and a tribute to your loved one can also be included.

The Committal

At the end of the funeral service is the committal of the person's earthly body, either to be buried or to be cremated.

If burial takes place in a cemetery, this prayer of committal takes place at the graveside.

Where there is a cremation, this prayer of committal may take place either at the crematorium or at the end of the service in church. Many people choose to have the committal as part of the church service, while the whole congregation is present.

St Mary's Churchyard is no longer able to accommodate burials, but there is a small Garden of Remembrance in a quiet area of the churchyard where cremated remains may be buried. The clergy will be happy to discuss this with you.

Further helpful information about the funeral service can be found on:

www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/funerals

and about St Mary's Church on:

www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org

Remembering

Grieving seldom ends with the funeral. It is natural to feel the emptiness for a considerable time afterwards. St Mary's Church may be able to offer you some comfort at this time.

The church is open every day. The Chapel of Remembrance (to the front of the church, on the right-hand side) provides a focus for quiet prayer and reflection at any time.

Some people find it helpful to write a prayer or light a candle. Flowers may also be placed here after a funeral service, or at any time of special remembrance.

There is a book of Remembrance in the Chapel, in which the name of your loved one may be entered under whatever date in the year you feel appropriate. Application forms are available in the church, or from your funeral directors.

Every autumn (on the Sunday nearest to All Souls' Day, either at the end of October or the beginning of November) we hold a service of remembrance to give thanks for all those whom we have loved.

The clergy will also be happy to talk to you. Please contact the Rectory or the Parish Office and we will arrange for one of our team to meet you.