

Life Giving Conversations About Death and Dying

The Rev. Paige Fisher





Why the heck don't people prepare for death when it is the only guarantee in life?

1. Plenty of Time
2. Awkward
3. Painful
4. Fearful
5. It is just about estate planning.

The Bible on Death



1. In Death There Is Hope.

I don't want you to grieve like the rest of humanity who has no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

2. Death is Difficult.

Jesus wept. Gospel of John 11:35

3. We Don't Suffer Alone.

Jesus himself came near and went with them... *Luke 14: 13-35*

4. Death is Not the Last Word.

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more..."

Book of Common Prayer and Death



The Book of Common Prayer Burial Rites are considered an "Easter liturgy" because they celebrate Christ's victory over death and the resurrection, rather than focusing solely on mourning. The service is characterized by joyful hope in eternal life, emphasizing baptismal identity and communion with Christ.



Themes of Hope in Our Burial Rites

1. The Easter Tone
2. Baptismal Imagery
3. Joyful Structure
4. Eucharistic Focus
5. Paschal Candle

Hope and Support in our Grief



*Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: deal graciously with those who mourn. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Book of Common Prayer



Talking About Death Can Be AMAZING!

1. Can Eliminate Fear and Anxiousness.
2. Can Offer Comfort.
3. Can Connect You Deeper in Relationship.
4. Can Be Humorous.

Humor is
helpful in
almost all
situations.

**Just before I die, I
am going to
swallow a bag of
popcorn
kernnels.**

**My cremation is
going to be epic!**

after my funeral i want one
of my friends to take
my phone and text everyone
“thanks for coming”

Humor can serve as a powerful tool for processing grief. It doesn't diminish the pain, but rather provides a sense of relief, offering small moments of connection and healing when everything else feels overwhelming.

- Dina Gachman
So Sorry for Your Loss



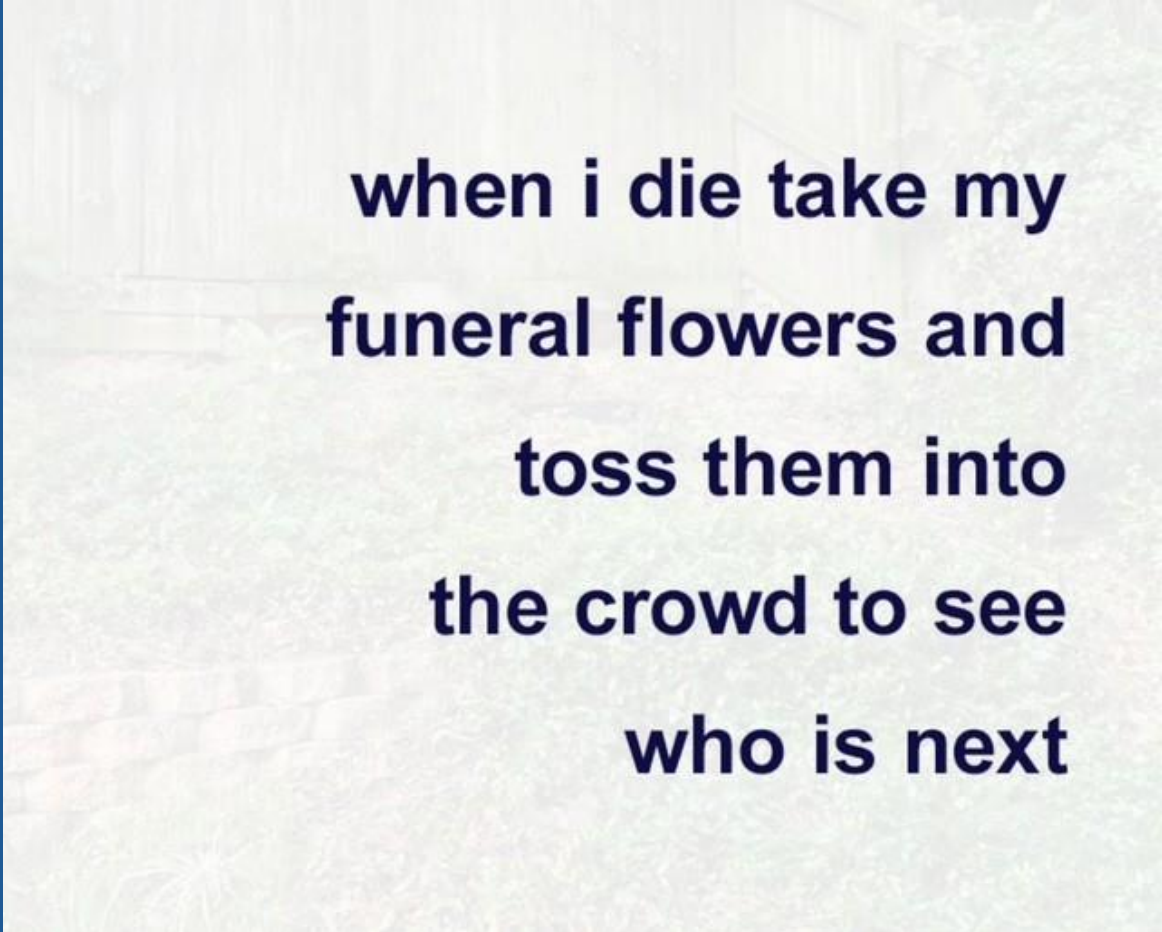
Six Questions to Consider

1. What method of body disposition feels right for me?
2. What kind of goodbye would feel meaningful for me and for the people who love me?
3. Who should be notified if I die tomorrow?
4. Who do I trust to make medical decisions if I can't?
5. Is there anything I've left unsaid? Who do I need to say it to?
6. Who will help make decisions if I can't?

5 Things to Make Your Death Easier for Your Loved Ones

1. Set up emergency contact and legacy information for your phone and email.
2. Set up password manager and leave main passwords in safe place.
3. Arrange for custody for your pets and children.
4. Arrange for Checking Account to have “Paid at Death” or Shared access.
5. Write down what matters.
6. Write your obituary or make notes.

Funerals and
other parties
you will miss



**when i die take my
funeral flowers and
toss them into
the crowd to see
who is next**

What is the role of a funeral?

1. Book-ending our Baptisms
2. Community; comfort;
connection
3. Ritual in face of uncertainty
4. Gratitude to God

Our Theology of death

1. Q. What, then, is our assurance as Christians?

A. Our assurance as Christians is that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

2. Resurrection faith and Easter attitude

3. "Life is changed, not ended."

4. Via media: "Grief is not unchristian."

Planning
ahead even if
you don't want
to

1. A pastoral gift to your friends and family
2. Reduces decision making at a hard moment
3. It's about you!
4. But it's also really not...

It's about
you;

HOW TO HOST

—the Perfect Funeral

These are the personal touches for my future funeral. Yes, you can put the “fun” in funeral! Like I always say in class, create a space where it feels like the person you are celebrating is there with you!

- 01 *Midori Margarita Fountain+ catered by my favorite Mexican restaurant*
- 02 *Gift Bags (with rose oil+ fun candy+ temporary tattoos of my face)*
- 03 *A cardboard cut out of me for selfies/ deathies*
- 04 *Group dance darty to the song Safety Dance (with biodegradable confetti)*
- 05 *Red Lipstick for all!*



But it's really
not.





Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant N. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

Why we do what we do in church

1. Is not a roast nor toast to the one who has died
2. Is about the ways that a person has loved and shared love throughout their lives, and an opportunity for gratitude
3. Is centered on worship of God, not only remembrance;
4. Acknowledges that when a loved one dies, we, too, are reminded of our own mortality



Decisions helpful to have made in advance:

Burial or cremation: if burial, where? If cremation, decisions about where the urn or remains are placed

Eucharist or not—many reasons either way

Who will be the person to connect with the church/ clergy and take point on the service

Rite I or Rite II; details for an obituary; scripture readings you love; hymns you love

**AT MY FUNERAL I'D LIKE
THERE TO BE A PIÑATA SO
THAT PEOPLE CAN BE HAPPY**



**BUT FILLED WITH BEES SO
THEY'RE NOT TOO HAPPY**

Decisions which are not yours to make ultimately...

- All of the scripture readings; all of the hymns—leave some for the living to choose in light of what offers them comfort
- Officiating clergy
- Remembrances/ Eulogies
- Every single detail—choose one or two elements which are dear to you, and leave the rest
- It's not about being unique or special or precious—what offers comfort is being in the places where you prayed and were in community; what is known, rather than what is content-craving

The Service Structure in the BCP

Readings from scripture and occasionally from non-scripture

Remembrances/ Eulogies

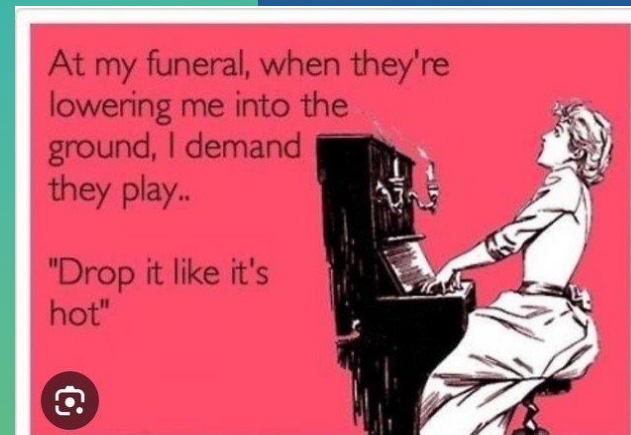
Sermon

Commendation

Prayers

Music

Committal (at the graveside or final resting place)



Music & Readings & Etc

1. If you love a piece of scripture—that somehow reflects your faith!
2. If you love a particular hymn—that somehow reflects your faith!
3. Music supports the liturgy and is not the focal point
4. We write things down; no pop up remembrances.
5. Secular elements are kept outside the liturgical framework