



Monday I received notice that Pitchy Gammon had died. Yesterday I was informed that Dick Naill had died. This is shaping up to be a difficult week for Saint Luke's.

I have been to my share of funerals – most have been services I officiated and fewer have been services I've simply attended. Those services have ranged from very good to very bad. It has been the bad ones that have remained in my memory as cautionary tales of how not to conduct a funeral. Because of that I have always worked to balance the needs and desires of families with the rubrics of the BCP.

There are two places I find to be extremely helpful. The first comes from the opening paragraph on page 491: *Whoever has faith in me shall have life, even though he die.* The second comes from the Note about burial services on page 507: *The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy [and it] is characterized by joy. This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian.*

We grieve at the death of our family and friends, but we are also comforted in the knowledge that we are the Lord's possession. It is times like these that our faith and hope in the resurrection offers us both strength and a place surrounded by love.

When it comes to death and dying, there are two things we can do. The first is to know that we all die and we should make as many advanced plans as possible so that those left behind are not overwhelmed by all that needs to be done. The second is to be present for those left behind to grieve with them, support them, and remind them that they are not alone.

I will, of course, let you all know when funeral details have been decided. In the meantime, surround these two families with love and prayers so that they may not be overwhelmed, but have confidence and strength to face the days to come.

*The Lord bless them and keep them, the Lord make his face to shine upon them and be gracious to them, the Lord lift up his countenance upon them and give them peace. Amen.*

Todd+

---