

Covenant Church has Bible Cremation Liturgy December 2013



There was a service for disposing of heavily used, worn and tattered Bibles at the Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church, 6429 Merriman Rd, in Roanoke. Intended for the Second Sunday in Advent, which in the Anglican Church is known as “Bible Sunday,” a “Bible Cremation Liturgy” was performed by the Reverend Richard Workowski and the congregation outside the church.

Because the Bible is considered Holy Scripture, it is not thought wise or prudent to dispose of worn Bible copies in the trash, where the Word of God would be mingled with garbage and trash. In

some societies, the worn Bibles are buried in the ground. But in many Christian churches, Bible Cremation is the preferred way. As in all Creation, at the end, we return to our elements: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

As the fragrance of burning incense, symbolic of Christian prayers, rises heavenward, so would these old and tattered copies of Holy Scriptures which have guided our lives and those of our loved ones over the years. Once again these books will join the primal elements of God’s Holy Creation.

In addition to the Bibles, a few worn and weather-beaten American flags were also cremated in the same fire. Because the Reformed Episcopal Church uses the traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer, some of these older prayer books were also cremated in the fire.



The Bible copies cremated today included copies from the early 20th century, used by three generations in Christian homes. Other copies were of sixty year old New Testaments with covers made of olive wood from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Some of these Bibles had loose pages or torn covers or worn bindings. Other copies that were cremated were study Bibles opened and read for many years by members of the congregation, and which were coming apart from overuse. Along with the broken and torn Bibles, Testaments, prayers books and hymnals, frankincense and myrrh were also added as holy incense.

The Covenant Reformed Episcopal Church (<http://reformedepiscopal.org/CovenantREC.dsp>) is a traditional Episcopal Church that uses the traditional Book of Common Prayer and hymnal.