

## Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church Indianapolis, Indiana Funeral Customary

Most of us would rather not think about death ahead of time, with the result that many families are left to hurriedly arrange funerals for loved ones, wondering if they have done the “right thing” for their deceased loved one. We prepare carefully for our marriages, for the birth of our children, for baptism, yet may push away thoughts of our funeral, that important liturgy marking our passage into eternal life. Death is a fact of life. Talking about death, knowing what to expect, can lessen our fear of it, help us to accept its reality and die in peace with dignity when it is time. This FUNERAL CUSTOMARY addresses some of the ways you can prepare for death as well as plan your own funeral service. It also explains what St. Timothy's offers to the family when a death has occurred.

### Planning Ahead

There are a number of documents you can prepare at any time during your life. These will represent your wishes and remove the burden from your family of having to guess at what you want done during and after the end-of-life process all of us experience. An important part of our Christian commitment is to make appropriate preparations for our death. The following documents should be completed in consultation with St. Timothy's rector, your attorney and your accountant. It is important that family members or friends be aware that you have written out your wishes and where the documents may be found when the need arises. Finally, all of these documents should be reviewed every five to seven years to be sure that they continue to represent your latest wishes.

- You should prepare documents recognized by the State of Indiana as legal directives to family, friends and health care providers when you are no longer able to speak for yourself. These include **Appointment of Health Care Representative**, **General Durable Power of Attorney**, and **Living Will Declaration**. Copies should be given to your physician and family.
- You should have a will which directs the disposition of your estate in the manner you see fit. You and your attorney should keep copies of the will in a safe place. The will should name your personal representative (executor or executrix) who will be responsible for administering the estate. If you do not, the court will appoint an administrator. Should you die without a will, the settlement of your estate will fall to the court which has no knowledge of or concern about any wishes you may have had. Please remember to include St. Timothy's in your will.
- Your funeral arrangements plan should be prepared in consultation with your priest, family and attorney and kept on file in the parish office. It is important that family members or friends be aware that you have written out your wishes. St. Timothy's **FUNERAL SERVICE PLANNING FORM** may be helpful. Once it is prepared it is helpful if a copy of this form be given and filed at the church office, so it is readily available when needed.

### At a Life Threatening Illness

Because it is important and comforting to be in a right relationship with God at the end of one's life, the dying person should, if possible, arrange to make a final Reconciliation of the Penitent (BCP p.447) and receive Holy Communion. For the same reason, where the final illness permits it, Anointing of the Sick should be received at least once during a serious illness. The *Book of Common Prayer* provides several rites of **Ministration to the Sick** (BCP p. 453) which should be led by the priest, with the family and friends present. They may also be conducted by a deacon or layperson.

### At the Time of Death

St. Timothy's **rector** should be called on her cell phone and spoken to at once when a death has occurred, no matter what time of day or night. When a death has occurred, please do not notify her using text or email. **The Rev. Rebecca Nickel's cell phone number is: (317) 650-9728.** If the death has occurred at home or where it is feasible, the family and friends should take time to pray over the deceased **before the funeral home is called.** In cases where arrangements have not been made in advance, the priest will also help the family decide the form of the Funeral or Memorial service.

### **Disposition of the Body**

There are three basic options for the disposition of the body; all are fully acceptable in the tradition of the Episcopal Church. The option you choose should be designated in your funeral planning.

- Donation of the body to science and or parts of the body for transplant. This must be arranged prior to your death. Your physician may help you make these plans. The priest may be asked for help with the decision of how to care for the remains.
- Burial or entombment of the body which can be arranged through your funeral home staff. Costs vary and should be considered when planning your funeral. If they are not prepaid or in cases where there is not life insurance to cover the costs, they are the first expenses to be paid out of your estate.
- Cremation with disposition of the ashes by burial, placement in a columbarium or by scattering. Although many people choose to have the body embalmed and treated with cosmetics before burial, it is important to know that other choices exist. The state of Indiana does not require the body to be embalmed, though viewing (a visitation or Vigil with the body present) would not be permitted. Cosmetic treatment of the body is also not required. In the case of cremation, the purchase of a casket is not required; instead a cremation container may be used.

### **Reception of the Body**

Many people choose to hold "calling hours" or a "visitation" to receive mourners at the funeral home. In the Episcopal tradition, this is to keep Vigil. A Vigil may also be kept in the church, either in the Nave/Sanctuary or in Craine Hall. This is appropriate, for the *Book of Common Prayer* states in the introduction to the burial service, *Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church.* (BCP p.490) If the survivors choose this option, or the deceased has made this choice ahead of time, the body is brought to the church after it is prepared for burial. If the deceased is to be cremated, the body may still be present in a simple coffin at the church with cremation after the funeral or in an urn or other suitable container, if cremation precedes the burial service. The rector meets the coffin or urn at the door of the church and says a prayer. The closed coffin is then covered with a pall, or, in the case of a veteran, a flag<sup>1</sup> and is brought into the Nave/Sanctuary or Craine Hall.

The pall covers the coffin as a reminder that we are all equal in the eyes of God. The Gospel book may be placed on the altar, open to the Gospel lesson to be read at the funeral and the Paschal candle, a reminder of the resurrection and eternal life, burns at the head of the coffin or the urn. If the body has been cremated, the reception of the body is held at the south door of the church, as above, and the container of ashes covered by a pall is placed on a table where the coffin usually stands. The Paschal candle is placed beside the table.

### **The Vigil (visitation)**

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<sup>1</sup> If a flag is chosen for the Vigil, when the Vigil is held at the church, the flag will be replaced by the pall once the Vigil is over.

Whether the Vigil (visitation) is held at the funeral home or in the church<sup>2</sup>, Christian prayer should be at the center. The rector will offer prayers with the family at the first viewing of the body, as well as at the closing of the coffin. (BCP p. 465) The casket may be opened if the Vigil is held in Craine Hall. The casket shall not be opened if the Vigil takes place in the Nave/Sanctuary. A Vigil may take place either in Craine Hall or in the Nave/Sanctuary, one hour prior to the start of the Funeral service. If the Vigil takes place the night before the funeral, Evening Prayer or Compline is an appropriate form of worship at the beginning or end of the Vigil. If the body is not present for the Vigil or Funeral then the Episcopal Church holds a Memorial service. Masonic and/or other fraternal organization rites may be conducted at the Vigil. Military rites are typically conducted at the Committal.

## The Funeral Service

*The Liturgy of the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all its meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we, too, shall be raised.*

*The liturgy therefore is characterized by joy, in the certainty that “neither death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, no things to come, nor powers, no height, no depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn. (BCP p. 507)*

1. St. Timothy’s rector will normally officiate at funeral and memorial services. If the rector is unavailable arrangements for the funeral and a supply priest will be made through St. Timothy’s Rector’s Warden. Other clergy, either of the Episcopal Church or of a different domination, who have a special relationship with the family, may be invited by the rector to assist in the service. The rector should be consulted first, before the family members communicate with the other clergy with regards to the funeral service. After consulting with the family, the rector will contact the other clergy with the family’s invitation and details of the funeral or memorial service.

2. The funeral service may be a simple Burial Rite I or Rite II without Communion. However, the Holy Eucharist is the Church’s principal offering of sacrifice, prayer and praise and is the preferred form of worship in either Burial Rite I or Rite II. The Holy Eucharist is a service of thanksgiving to God for God’s redemption of an earthly life that has come to an end. The *Book of Common Prayer* suggests that every effort made be made to schedule the service at a time when the congregation has the opportunity to be present. (BCP p. 490) The service may take place at the church on any day except Sunday and certain other days such as Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Easter. Laypersons, including family and friends if they desire, should take part in the service by reading lessons and the psalm. If the deceased has not chosen the readings, the priest will assist the family in choosing **FUNERAL SCRIPTURE READINGS** that are suggested in the *Book of Common Prayer* and may be found at the end of this customary. Other readings or poems of spiritual value to the family may also be approved by the priest. No eulogy is given during the Burial service. A reception or gathering after the funeral service is an appropriate time for remembrances by family and friends.

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<sup>2</sup> Please do not schedule a Vigil at St. Timothy’s until you have confirmed with the priest that the Nave or Craine Hall is available.

**No funeral or memorial service shall be scheduled or announced<sup>3</sup> prior to meeting with St. Timothy's rector about the availability of the church and clergy to conduct the funeral or memorial service.**

### **Service Bulletins or Programs**

The *Book of Common Prayer* will be used as a guild for the liturgy at a funeral or memorial service. St. Timothy's does not provide a bulletin or program for funerals or memorial services. If the family chooses to print a bulletin or program, it must be approved by the rector prior to its printing and use.

### **Flowers**

The traditional color for funerals is white. While two flower arrangements are customary they are not a requirement. Two flower arrangements may be permitted in the sanctuary on the wall behind the altar. These are the only flowers allowed in the Nave/Sanctuary. The two flower arrangements will be ordered by the Alter Guild Director – in consultation with the family. The two flower arrangements are an offering from the family to the church. Any other floral arrangements are to be placed in the Narthex or Craine Hall. Any floral arrangement for the coffin must not be placed on top of the pall. Once the pall has been removed, a floral arrangement may be used to cover the coffin as it leaves the church.

### **Photography**

Photographs of the deceased may be displayed in the Narthex and/or in Craine Hall. No photography or photographs are permitted in the sanctuary.

### **Veterans**

When the deceased has been a veteran, the funeral director may present the family the flag of the United States which may be used to cover the coffin from the church building to the grave site. Here, appropriate military honors may be conducted. The folded flag is presented to the family after taps is played, prior to the committal service.

### **Music**

If there is time for music arrangements to be made, please understand that St. Timothy's does not have a full time organist on staff. Our church organist is a part-time Sunday employee and may not be readily available for a funeral or memorial service. St. Timothy's will endeavor to make arrangements for our church organist to serve at the funeral or memorial service. If our organist is unavailable because of their work schedule, and if there is time, we will attempt to make arrangements for a substitute organist. However, these arrangements are dependent on the organist availability. Music may be offered, either by the organist alone, or by the organist and/or choir, soloists or other musicians and the congregation. All music must be approved by the organist prior to the funeral. Hymns may be chosen to express both the joy and the certainty of the Christian hope of resurrection. There is a list of appropriate [HYMNS FOR FUNERAL SERVICE](#) the end of this customary. Other music may also be chosen with the approval of the organist.

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<sup>3</sup> No private or public announcement of the funeral day or time is to be made by the family including social media: Facebook, Blog, Website, Twitter, etc. or local or national newspapers, prior to meeting with the priest.

## Seating

Seating for the immediate and extended family is reserved in the front east riser pews in front of the altar. It is appropriate, when a coffin is present; to have six to eight pallbearers (men and women) escort the coffin from the hearse to the church and following the service from the church to the hearse to its final resting place. The chosen pallbearers (as well as honorary pallbearers who will not assist in lifting the coffin) will have reserved seating in the west riser pews across the center isle from the family. There may also be honorary pallbearers for the urn. Two ushers should be chosen to assist in seating of the guests.

## The Committal

The committal is a short and solemn moment of the funeral service. It takes place either at the grave site or St. Timothy's Memorial Garden. It may follow the church service or occur at a later date. The committal can be an emotional moment. Many who are suffering grief find, even in their sadness, the words of prayer and trust that the deceased now is in God's hands begins the process of healing the loss. People who have lost someone close to them are often so busy with practical details and arrangements between the death and the funeral that they do not experience the full sense of this loss until later. Grieving is a natural and important part of coming to terms with and healing this loss. Grief may continue for several months or longer. The priest and lay people in the parish are available to comfort and support those who mourn.

## Childcare

The Quiet room is available for young children of the family and guests (infant to 6 years of age) for the funeral and reception. The family may wish to offer this service to their guests. The family is responsible for arranging and paying for the nursery care attendants. The two unrelated attendants must be *Safeguarding God's Children* trained in order for the Quiet room to be open and available.

## Reception

A reception for the family and guests may be held in Craine Hall at no additional fee. However, there is a fee of **\$50.00** for custodial care for the reception in Craine Hall. Friends of the family, family members or a caterer may be used to provide food and beverage for the reception. Wine may be served if desired, as long as there is non-alcoholic beverages also provided.

## Money

No one will be excluded from the ministry of the church for financial reasons. These charges serve as a guideline. All fees, contributions and honorariums should be paid prior to the funeral and given to the rector. One inclusive check should be made out to ***St. Timothy's Episcopal Church***. The parish co-treasurers will distribute the funds. For contributing and active members of the parish there is no fee for the clergy or the use of the church or Craine Hall. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and an honorarium to the Rector Discretionary Fund and/or The Deacon's Discretionary Fund (for Outreach use) are appreciated. Donations to the Memorial Fund, the Building Fund, or other designated funds are always appreciated. Please review St. Timothy's **DONATION & ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS POLICY** at the end of this customary. If other musicians are to assist with the service, their participation and their compensation is to be approved by the organist. If the family wishes to suggest memorial donations to a charity suggested by the deceased, the funeral home staff will be of assistance.

<b>Fees</b>	<b>Parish Member</b>	<b>Non-Member</b>
Use of Church	contribution	\$100.00
Use of Craine Hall	contribution	\$100.00
Rector	contribution to discretionary fund	\$200.00
Deacon	contribution to discretionary fund	\$100.00
Organist	\$200.00	\$200.00
Sexton for Church	\$50.00	\$50.00
Sexton for Craine Hall	\$50.00	\$50.00
Flowers Arrangements	\$25.00	\$25.00
Altar Guild	\$0.00	\$50.00
Crucifer	\$0.00	\$0.00
Children's Acolyte	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chalice Administrator	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ushers	\$0.00	\$0.00
Altar Guild	\$0.00	\$0.00
Office Administrator	\$0.00	\$0.00

### **End Notes**

**Any exceptions to these customary guidelines are at the discretion of the rector.**

### **Additional Documents**

**FUNERAL SERVICE PLANNING FORM**

**FUNERAL SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**HYMNS FOR FUNERAL SERVICE**

**DONATION & ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS POLICY**