

# FUNERAL CUSTOMARY

## Christ The King Episcopal Church

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*The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all 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 life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor 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 nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.*

*(from The Book of Common Prayer, 507)*

The death of a loved one can be a traumatic time in the lives of those left behind. Yet, while still grieving, families and loved ones will be called upon to make difficult decisions about funeral and burial arrangements. At Christ The King, we stand ready to assist you in making these decisions for a beautiful and meaningful funeral and burial. Family members and others responsible for making funeral arrangements should contact the Church as soon as possible to make arrangements in consultation with the priest and with the Church's ministers.

This **CUSTOMARY** is designed to facilitate planning and execution of the services and rites by establishing guidelines and policies.

### **TIME & PLACE**

Choosing a time for the service is based on the needs of the family and the availability of the Church. No date or time should be announced or confirmed without first consulting the priest.

The funeral rites, especially for baptized Christians, are properly conducted from the Church, and remains are properly laid to rest in an appropriately consecrated place (cemetery, memorial garden, or columbarium). With need and reason, other suitable locations can be used with permission.

### **VISITATION**

A visitation (i.e. wake or viewing) can be held either the evening before or the day of the funeral. It is best held at a funeral home or in another suitable location (other than the church). If the Church is requested for visitation, it must be the day of the funeral.

### **PARTICIPATING CLERGY**

Parish clergy are the most appropriate to officiate/preside at the burial rite. According to the canons (rules) of The Episcopal Church, other Episcopal clergy can assist at the invitation of the local priest (Title III, Canon 21, Section 5a). Such invitations are normally made with pleasure; so, please notify the priest if you want other clergy to assist.

Clergy from other denominations may be invited from time to time to read from scripture and to lead prayers, and to preach or assist with Eucharist when allowed.

### **COMMITTAL & DISPOSITION of REMAINS**

The expectation of Christian tradition is for the remains of the deceased to be committed (interred) in a permanent resting place (cemetery, memorial garden, columbarium, etc.). It is preferable for a

committal be held immediately or as soon as possible following the funeral. Normally, a committal service would be open to all who mourn, but the service can be limited if the family so desires.

If a casket is used for burial, arrangements must be made with a funeral home for transportation and proper burial – the church cannot assist with this. A casket remains closed after the funeral service has begun.

Cremation is an acceptable practice within The Episcopal Church. If the deceased is cremated, it is most desirable that the cremains be present at the funeral service. Cremains should be laid to rest or scattered in a respectful place. Coordinate the delivery of an urn or container with the church. Following the service, ashes are either interred immediately or returned to the family for a later committal. Cremains cannot be left at the church.

### **MEMORIAL GARDEN**

Christ The King Episcopal Church has a Memorial Garden in which cremains can be interred directly into the ground. No permanent urns are permitted. If you would like to use the Memorial Garden, please speak with the priest and consult the Memorial Garden Customary. *A one-time fee is requested for maintenance and upkeep of the Memorial Garden (see below).*

### **MILITARY HONORS & EXTRA-LITURGICAL CEREMONIES**

Any extra-liturgical ceremonies, including military or first-responder honors and those conducted by community organizations, may be held after the Commendation or during the Committal. Arrangements must be made by the family and coordinated with the priest.

### **SEATING**

Seating can be reserved for as many family and friends as is desired. Members of the family can either be seated prior to the beginning of service or can walk in together immediately before the procession.

### **SERVICE BULLETINS**

Service bulletins will be prepared by the church.

### **GUEST BOOK**

The family or funeral home would normally provide a guest book for attendees to sign; however, if needed, the church can provide one.

## **THE ORDER OF SERVICE**

We use the order provided in *The Book of Common Prayer* for all services. There are two rites (standard forms) – Rite One (*BCP*, 469-489) uses more traditional language and Rite Two (*BCP*, 491-505) is more contemporary. Either is acceptable.

### **Prayers & Blessings**

Multiple options for the various prayers and blessings are offered for the service. Unless there is a strong desire on the part of the family, the priest will choose. You may consult *The Book of Common Prayer* for the options.

### **Readings from Scripture**

During the service, up to four lessons from the Bible are read. Up to three lessons from the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the New Testament may be selected (only one from each category). A reading from the Gospels is required. A deacon, priest, or bishop reads the Gospel. Family members or friends can be invited to read the other lessons, but lectors (readers) are available from the church if needed. *See page 4 of the “Funeral Planning Guide” for a list of appropriate lessons.*

### **Sermon and Eulogy**

The officiating priest or someone appointed will preach a sermon. A eulogy may be offered by family and/or friends before the sermon. Please keep in mind the emotional state of the speaker. Prepared remarks are best.

### **Holy Eucharist**

Holy Eucharist is the norm for funerals in The Episcopal Church. All baptized Christians will be invited to share in Holy Communion.

## **MUSIC**

There is a wealth of beautiful sacred music from a variety of Episcopal hymnals suitable for use in the context of the funeral rites. Between two and six hymns are possible – three or four is recommended. Suitable times for music include: as people gather (Prelude); during the procession (Processional); before reading the Gospel (Sequence); at the preparation of the altar (Offertory); during the distribution of Holy Eucharist (Communion); and, at the end of the service (Recessional). *See page 5 of the “Funeral Planning Guide” for a list of appropriate hymns.*

## **FLOWERS**

The Church is happy to arrange appropriate altar flowers for the funeral. We ask that flowers be kept in the Sanctuary for Sunday morning service.

Other arrangements or floral sprays and decorations sent by family and friends will not be displayed in the Sanctuary. They can be displayed in the parish hall or in the entryway. Any arrangements that are not removed by the end of the day of the funeral will be discarded.

### **MINISTERS for the LITURGY**

The church will provide ministers as needed for the liturgy, including Altar Guild, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors (readers), Ushers, and Acolytes (if available). The role of reader can be fulfilled by family members if desired.

### **RECEPTION in the PARISH HALL**

A simple reception can follow in the Fellowship Hall and/or on the Patio. The church will provide drinks and small snacks. If the family would like a larger reception, arrangements need to be made.

### **MEMORIAL GIFTS**

Memorial Gifts may be made by individuals or by the family in the name of the deceased. Unless otherwise designated, all gifts are placed into a restricted fund for the upkeep of the Church's gardens (including the Memorial Garden).

### **FEES & DONATIONS**

There are no fees for the rites of Christian burial from Christ The King.

If burial of cremains is requested in the Memorial Garden, a one-time fee of \$250 is requested for maintenance and upkeep of the Memorial Garden.

Any donations to the church are greatly appreciated. Suggested donations include:

- \$100-\$200 – for the Clergy's Honorarium – placed in the priest's discretionary account for the assistance of those in need.
- \$200-\$300 – for the Church – placed in the general fund to offset the costs associated with the funeral (flowers, bulletins, reception, etc.)

If you are in need of financial assistance, please contact the church office.