# St. John’s Episcopal Church Customary for Funerals and Memorial Services

### Planning

### St John’s has a funeral planning sheet that can be used to guide discussions with the family. A copy is appended to this document.

### Setup

The Altar Guild has prepared a detailed customary for funeral and memorial service setup which is appended to this document.

Unless otherwise indicated by the Priest or the funeral director, the tapers should be placed outside the communion rail so that they will be at the head and foot of the casket or bracketing the table on which the ashes are placed.

### Service Order

The service order generally follows the Book of Common Prayer. Details, however, will vary greatly depending on whether or not family members will speak or if any other funeral traditions are included. (For example, St. John’s has been the site for Masonic Funerals in the past.)

In general, we do not take up an alms collection at a funeral. If the funeral includes Holy Communion, the “offertory” consists only of bringing up the bread and wine from the rear of the nave. Check with the Celebrant as, under some circumstances, an alms collection may occur during a funeral.

If interment will take place at a local cemetery, the Verger or a vested lay server should accompany the Priest to the cemetery to serve as crucifer and to otherwise assist the Priest as needed. If the funeral director has not already arranged transportation for the Priest and altar party, the Verger or lay server should drive.

Note that the staff for the processional cross disassembles into two pieces at the brass sleeve approximately three feet below the cross. This greatly simplifies transport of the cross.

**PRE- FUNERAL PLANNNING GUIDE FOR**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**DATE COMPLETED: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER IS WHO AWARE OF THIS PRE- PLANNING: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE**

**St John's Episcopal Church**

11201 Parkfield Drive

Austin, TX 78758

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred name or nickname to be used during service: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Death:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (for church records)

Was the person baptized: (it doesn't matter, this is only for records): Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_\_

Was the person confirmed: (it doesn't matter, this is only for records): Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_\_

Did the person receive communion, ever: (it doesn't matter, this is only for records): Y\_\_ N\_\_\_

Full Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Names of Children: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Family Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Home \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OTHER

Name of Funeral Home to be used if known: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish Open Casket viewing during visitation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_

Cremation or casket service: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Graveside service following: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Graveside service at a later date: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Location of burial plot or interment of cremains: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reception following service: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish Memorials to be given in your honor: \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

Memorials to be given to Church (circle below) \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

The General Fund, The Maintenance Fund, The Youth Fund, The Rector's Discretionary Fund, the Flower Fund, the Altar Guild, Daughters of the King, Refugee Ministry, Community Garden, Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Other Memorial Requests:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Music: (If musician available) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Holy Communion: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of people expected \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How many immediate family members for reserve section \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to order flowers for the service? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish a table prepared in the narthex for pictures or other items?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish the BCP Vigil the night before? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Liturgy: Check one**

The Church is happy to make all the decisions. If you have a preference, please indicate below:

If there are pall bearers, whom will they be: (Or, no pall bearers \_\_\_\_ )

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Do you wish to process in with the remains? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If no, how would you like to be seated prior to the service (we will reserve pews)

As soon as you arrive in the reserved pews \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Given an area for privacy prior to the service \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Given an opportunity to greet people as they arrive\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose clergy? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, please their name (s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose an acolyte? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special requests like soloists or special instruments?

If so, who or what? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other NON Biblical Readings such as poems or quotes you would like read?

If so, please list AND FURNISH by attaching to this document. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rite II (Contemporary English) \_\_\_\_\_

Rite I (Old English) \_\_\_\_\_

Other?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(\* means mandatory in a service, the others are optional)**

Prelude: \_\_\_\_Let the Organist Choose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is my preference

Opening Hymn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose a reader for the Old Testament? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Psalm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or please choose for me\_\_\_\_**OR**

Hymn/Canticle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Epistle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose a reader for the Epistle? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Psalm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or please choose for me\_\_\_\_ **OR**

Sequence Hymn or Canticle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or please choose for me\_\_\_\_

\*Gospel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to have up to two speakers other than the priest's homily? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose a homilist? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose the person to read the intercessory prayers? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Offertory Music \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Would you like to choose oblation bearer's (offering, bread/wine) Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, who?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you choose RITE I and have communion do you wish Eucharistic Prayer I or II? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you choose RITE II and have communion do you wish Eucharistic Prayer A, B, C, or D? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Communion Music \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Recessional Hymn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or Please choose for me\_\_\_\_

Postlude: \_\_\_\_Let the Organist Choose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is my preference

**SELECTIONS:**

There are several choices of prayers that you will find in the BCP. Usually the clergy selects these. If you have a strong preference, please include them under the note section and include the page numbers.

**NOTES and SPECIAL REQUESTS THAT YOU HAVE Use separate sheet if needed:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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***PLEASE ATTACH YOUR OBITUARY (OR LIFE’S SKETCH) AND ANY STORIES, MEMORIES, SPECIAL WORDS,***

***THAT MAY HELP THE HOMOLIST PREPARE THE SERMON.***

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Altar Guild Funeral & Memorial Service Customary**

**Altar Guild attire**—It is appropriate and respectful for those of us preparing for or working at a funeral to wear unobtrusive black, black and white, or other dark clothing. Dress-up clothing is not necessary.

**Liturgical color**—white

1. Use white hangings and chasuble.

2. Leave banners in liturgical color of the season, unless instructed

other wise.

**Paschal candle**—sits on a tripod wooden stand, inside the rail, to the left of the ambo (lectern), on lower level.

1. Fill with oil.

2. Remove any black smudges from the Paschal candle (try a little of the

oil; if stain is stubborn, use wax remover).

3. Dust wooden stand.

**If casket will be present**—it will be on rolling stand provided by funeral home.

1. Casket will remain on this stand in crossing during service, head at the

first step. **Priest is always present when casket is delivered.**

2. If already present, dust casket and cover with the large white pall; if not,

lay pall across railing near crossing.

3. If casket has a flower spray on top, remove spray, wipe casket (to

remove leaves, dust, water droplets) before covering with pall. Lay

flower spray at base of Paschal candle, unless asked to place it

elsewhere.

**If ashes will be present**—they may already be in the sacristy in a box, bag, or urn; they may instead be brought by the family on the day of the service; **the priest always handles the ashes.**

1. Place a small table in the center of the crossing; cover it with a sere

cloth and a white cloth.

2. Set the church’s **ash box** (also called an **ossuary**) on the table with

the cross facing up; this wooden box is stored on the top shelf of the

**tabernacle.**

3. Lay the **small white pall** beside it or on the shelf underneath. Our small

white pall is about the same size as the veil that covers the chalice;

difference is in the design—**pall has a cross formed by two strips of**

**brocade** (veil has a single strip).

**Memorial service only**—no casket or ashes.

1. Place a small table in the center of the crossing; cover it with a sere

cloth and a white cloth.

2. Set the church’s **ash box** (also called an **ossuary**) on the table with

the cross facing up; this wooden box is stored on the top shelf of the

**tabernacle.** It will remain empty during the service.

**Eucharist**—If the service is to include a Eucharist, the priest or church office will notify Altar Guild and will estimate the number of people to be served. If no number is forthcoming, set for 50.

**Pew ropes**—Family of the deceased will need a reserved section of pews in front. Church office or priest will estimate number of rows needed.

**Preparation of Narthex**

1. **Un-clutter the room**--Remove name tag racks, all displays, extra

tables and chairs, and any smaller clutter.

2. **Memory table**--Place the long table at an angle in the center of the left

side of the open area. Cover with a clean white cloth. Family will bring

pictures and perhaps other memorabilia to display here.

3. **Stand for bereavement book**--Remove paraphernalia from angle-

topped writing stand and place stand, with several pens, at an angle in

the middle of the right side of the open area.

4. **Family Gathering Area**—In the Narthex place a grouping of chairs with the small glass table. Set on it a pitcher of water, disposable cups, and a box of Kleenex on the table.

**Flowers**—Ordinarily, Episcopal funerals don’t have many flowers and many priests will not allow extra flowers beyond the Narthex. At our church, the family will have been invited to provide flowers for the regular flower vase. If the family does not, salvage the still-fresh parts of the previous Sunday’s bouquet and arrange appropriately.

1. **If a large arrangement or an arrangement on a stand arrives**, the

officiating priest should be asked if he/she will allow this to be

placed on the Epistle side of the sanctuary, opposite the Paschal

candle. If a table is needed for it, place the container of ivy

on the lower shelf of the credence table and borrow that tall table.

2**. Any other flowers or plants should be placed in the Narthex**—

beside the bereavement book stand or on various tables. Some may

need a saucer or sere cloth to protect the furniture.

**Memorial garden**—If, after the service, ashes of the deceased are to be spread in the garden, priest may wish to use the silver bowl for scattering them. If so, polish the bowl and leave it on sacristy counter. To clean up afterward: rinse any clinging ash from the bowl and pour rinse water down the pesina drain.

**Cemetery---**If burial will take place in a local cemetery, remind the family after the service that all flowers (except the altar vase) belong to them and can be taken to the cemetery to place at the grave or taken home.