

CUSTOMARY FOR FUNERALS

The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

Terms:

Burial Office: The portion of The Burial of the Dead: Rite One, p. 469; The Burial of the Dead: Rite Two, p. 491, concluding with the Prayers and, if desired, the Commendation and/or the Committal.

Requiem Eucharist: Either Rite when it includes the Holy Eucharist.

Committal: The portion of the service that occurs at the place of interment, when the body or remains are laid to rest, whether in the ground, columbarium, or some other designated location.

Funeral services at Transfiguration are customarily Requiem Eucharists. Our hope beyond the grave resides in the mercy of Christ, so it is profoundly important that we offer up thanks for his saving work, and the death and resurrection that creates the pathway to eternal life. Furthermore, the Eucharistic meal transcends our particular place and time, and allows us to mystically share in an act of praise and thanksgiving with those who are already in his nearer presence. Non-Eucharist services are the exception, and permitted when the family has especially compelling pastoral reasons.

Upon notice of the death of a parishioner, a member of the clergy will be assigned to guide the pastoral response and set up a meeting with the family of the deceased. That meeting will occur as soon as possible, to allow time for decision-making and preparations. During the initial meeting with the family, the Funeral Planning Form guides the process to ensure all details are considered. Either the Minister for Congregational Life and Outreach (MCLO) or the Administrative Assistant (AA) also attend this meeting. The MCLO and/or the AA will notify the Altar Guild immediately regarding general details and see that a full copy of the Funeral Planning Form is promptly made available to Altar Guild, so that all arrangements are known in advance.

Working from the Planning Form, the MCLO and/or AA request all liturgical participants, including ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, acolytes, lectors, and sound technicians.

A single Eulogist may be designated by the family. The presiding clergy should work with this person to ensure confidence and appropriateness. Eulogists should be strongly encouraged to write their remarks, so as to decrease anxiety and promote succinctness.

Funerals may be held on any day of the week, with consideration given to the church calendar, the Altar Guild's availability, and the Director of Music's availability. Funerals are not held after 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, unless specifically permitted by the Rector and Altar Guild.

It is proper that the body should be met at the main entrance by the presiding clergy and members of the Altar Guild, so that prayers may be said and the casket/urn may be veiled with the pall. Arrangements should be made with the family and/or Funeral Home so that we anticipate the time of the body's arrival.

Altar and Funeral Guild Preparations

Beginning at least one hour before service time.

1. In the Gathering Space
 - a. Place the stand for the guest register between the Library Door and the Ushers Table. If the family does not have a register, provide register pages from the Sacristy.
 - b. Place service leaflets on the Ushers Table. They are typically stored in the Usher's Closet in a marked drawer.
 - c. If a body or ashes are to be present, place the white paschal candle stand in the center of the Labyrinth, move the Paschal Candle into it.
 - i. Light Paschal Candle when body arrives, or 30 minutes before start of service, whichever comes first.
 - ii. If there are ashes, place the black pedestal in the center of the Labyrinth, where the urn will be placed and veiled.
 - iii. If there is a body, the head is positioned by the Paschal Candle and feet toward the Nave
 - d. If the deceased with receive Military Honors, please ensure the American flag is removed and stored with appropriate dignity for the duration of the service, and available to be placed back atop the casket at the main doors when the pall is removed.
2. The Funeral Guild should prepare the Parlor by placing two pitchers of iced water with cups and a stack of leaflets (approximately the number for the seats being reserved in the Nave).
3. Funeral Guild members should help the Clergy by greeting family members and escorting them to the Parlor.
4. Delivered flowers should be placed on tables in the Tower Cloister or Usher Table.
 - a. Funeral Guild members should place all notes or cards in the envelop provided in the guest book stand.
 - b. Funeral Guild members should ensure these cards are presented to a member of the family.

Altar set-up

1. If the service is a Requiem Eucharist, the Altar should be prepared as for a standard Saturday Mass.
 - a. Altar Candles, Corporal, and Altar Book on the Altar
 - b. Credence Table positioned at south side of Chancel with tray containing vessels appropriate for the anticipated count (see Planning Form for count; typically two chalices, one paten, small cruets with wine and water, large Priest Host, ciborium with proper count of wafers)
2. Gold Paschal Candle Base placed at center of gate on floor
3. If there are ashes, place the small pedestal table in front of the Paschal Candle.
4. Reserve the number of pews required (see Planning Form for count)
5. Light the Altar Candles and "Big Six" Office Candles approximately 20 minutes before the service.
6. Open Altar Rail gate and move cushion to the first step on the north side of the Sanctuary.
7. Hangings are the Coronation set (for Ambo and vesting clergy)
8. Place Funeral Readings binder on Ambo and check that readings are correctly marked.
9. In the Sacristy

- a. If the service is a Requiem Eucharist, set out Coronation chasuble and matching stoles
- b. Include Dalmatic and Tunicle if the Deacon and Emcee will participate.
- c. If the service is not Eucharist, set out Coronation stoles only.
- d. Put eight service leaflets in the Clergy Vestry.

Other notes for preparation before service:

1. Reserve pews for family and special guests.
2. If lector(s) are guests, they should meet with Clergy to rehearse at the Ambo. It is advisable that the Sound Tech be present to test microphone level.
3. All persons who read or speak from Ambo (e.g. lectors, Eulogist, Intercessor) should be coached to approach the Ambo as is our custom, that is, from the north side of the Chancel.
4. Ushers should be notified beforehand regarding whether the front rail only will be used, or if all three sides of the rail will be used. This will affect how they guide the people forward.

Customary for Worship at Requiem Eucharist with Remains Present

1. Altar Party vests 30 minutes before the service.
 - a. Instructions are given to all acolytes, EMs, and any other assisting ministers.
 - b. The acolyte or EM may carry the Paschal Candle. When sufficient ministers are present, there may be a full procession including candle, cross, torches, and Gospel Book.
2. 10 minutes before service time, the Presider convenes the family in the Parlor and leads them to the Gathering Space to gather around the remains.
 - a. Acolyte or EM who will carry the cross lifts out of base and stands at head of body/remains (far side from Nave). Other ministers stand behind in order of processional entry.
 - b. Family gathers around the body, and joins in the prayers for the Reception of the Body (BCP, 466-467).
 - c. The Presider may then escort the family to their seats, or if they prefer to be included in the procession, they may take place behind the Paschal Candle and Altar party.

3. Procession with Optional roles in parentheses.

Paschal Candle
Body (casket or urn)

*Pallbearers

*Family

EM EM

*Assisting Clergy

*Emcee

*Deacon

Celebrant

*(*if participating and processing)*

4. The Sacring Bell is chimed to begin the service.
5. Procession enters slowly as Presider reads the Anthems or as a Hymn is sung.
6. The Altar Party enters Sanctuary and stands, facing Altar, while Anthems are recited. When final Anthem is spoken, Presider gestures and all bow, then move to their places (Sunday custom).
7. Presider prays opening Collect(s).
8. Presider leads the Psalm if it is spoken.
9. The Gospel is typically read from the Ambo.
10. The Presider may choose to introduce the Eulogist, or may simply motion him/her forward.
11. The Prayers may be led at the Ambo by the Presider, Deacon, or a designated person from congregation.
12. Then the Presider initiates the Peace and shares it with members of the family.
13. Presider should welcome everyone to Transfiguration and offer simple instructions regarding communion, including:
 - a. Mystical nature of meal that allows us to share with those who are already part of the heavenly host
 - b. All persons are invited forward, and all baptized Christians are invited to receive.
 - c. Instructions on how to receive (present hands; guide chalice; intinction)
 - d. Instructions on how to receive a blessing

- e. Invitation to committal site and/or reception following in Tower Cloister/Roper Hall
 - f. If the family has designated a recipient of memorial gifts, it is appropriate to notify the congregation at this time
14. During the Offertory, the Altar is prepared per standard custom.
 15. The Eucharist is celebrated as usual. Before beginning the Eucharistic Prayer, the Presider may announce the starting page number in *The Book of Common Prayer*.
 16. Communicating the People
 - a. When the congregation is fewer than 100, we only use the front Altar Rail
 - b. When the congregation exceeds 100, communion may be administered on three sides, but arrangements should have been made to have four EMs to administer the chalice at four stations.
 17. The Post-Communion Prayer is typically said from the Altar
 18. The Presider and an assisting minister (acolyte or EM), or if they are present, the Presider, Deacon, and Emcee, take place at the body. The Presider leads the Commendation.
 19. At conclusion of Commendation, an acolyte removes Paschal Candle from base and takes place at front of body.
 20. All ministers gather in line at foot of Chancel and reverence.
 21. The Paschal Candle leads the Procession, which is ordered (parentheses indicate optional participants):

Paschal Candle
 Body (casket or urn)
 EM EM
 *Assisting Clergy
 *Emcee
 *Deacon
 *Pallbearers
 Family
 Celebrant
 (* if participating and processing)

22. When there is a body or ashes are to be interred elsewhere immediately after the service,
 - a. the Procession, including the family, continues to the Hearse, which should be parked in Carport
 - b. Altar Guild should remove the Pall in Reception lobby, before body carried outside and placed in Hearse
 - c. It is appropriate that, if they have not been recited already, the Presider say the concluding Anthems.
23. When there are ashes and they will be committed in the Transfiguration Columbarium
 - a. the Procession continues, followed by the congregation to the Meditation Garden.
 - b. Presider stands behind stone Altar, and should wait until People are assembled in garden before continuing
 - c. Acolyte should stand with Paschal Candle to side of stone Altar
 - d. Remains placed on stone Altar until moved to niche
24. When there are ashes and they will not be interred immediately following the service
 - a. Urn may remain in the Nave, veiled with Pall, until family member ready to retrieve and remove

Customary for Burial Office *without* Eucharist

1. Altar Party vests 30 minutes before the service.
 - a. Instructions are given to all acolytes, EMs, and any other assisting ministers.
 - b. The acolyte or EM may carry the Paschal Candle. When sufficient ministers are present, there may be a full procession including candle, cross, torches, and Gospel Book.
2. 10 minutes before service time, the Presider convenes the family in the Parlor and leads them to the Gathering Space to gather around the remains.
 - a. Acolyte or EM who will carry the cross lifts out of base and stands at head of body/remains (far side from Nave). Other ministers stand behind in order of processional entry.
 - b. Family gathers around the body, and joins in the prayers for the Reception of the Body (BCP, 466-467).
 - c. The Presider may then escort the family to their seats, or if they prefer to be included in the procession, they may take place behind the Paschal Candle and Altar party.
3. Procession with Optional roles in parentheses.

Paschal Candle
Body (casket or urn)

*Pallbearers

*Family

EM EM

*Assisting Clergy

*Emcee

*Deacon

Presider

(*if participating and processing)

4. The Sacring Bell is chimed to begin the service.
5. Procession enters slowly as Presider reads the Anthems or as a Hymn is sung.
6. The Altar Party enters Sanctuary and stands, facing Altar, while Anthems are recited. When final Anthem is spoken, Presider gestures and all bow, then move to their places (Sunday custom).
7. Presider prays opening Collect(s).
8. Presider leads the Psalm if it is spoken.
9. The Presider may choose to introduce the Eulogist, or may simply motion him/her forward.
10. The Prayers may be led at the Ambo by the Presider, Deacon, or a designated person from congregation.
11. The Lord's Prayer follows the Prayers. Presider might introduce it by saying, "As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray..."
12. The Presider and an assisting minister (acolyte or EM), or if they are present, the Presider, Deacon, and Emcee, take place at the body. The Presider leads the Commendation.
13. At conclusion of Commendation, an acolyte removes Paschal Candle from base and takes place at front of body.
14. All ministers gather in line at foot of Chancel and reverence.
15. The Paschal Candle leads the Procession, which is ordered:

Paschal Candle
Body (casket or urn)
EMs
Emcee
Deacon
Family
Presider

16. When there is a body or ashes are to be interred elsewhere immediately after the service,
 - a. the Procession, including the family, continues to the Hearse, which should be parked in Carport
 - b. Altar Guild should remove the Pall in Reception lobby, before body carried outside and placed in Hearse
 - c. It is appropriate that, if they have not been recited already, the Presider say the concluding Anthems.
17. When there are ashes and they will be committed in the Transfiguration Columbarium
 - a. the Procession continues, followed by the congregation to the Meditation Garden.
 - b. Presider stands behind stone Altar, and should wait until People are assembled in garden before continuing
 - c. Acolyte should stand with Paschal Candle to side of stone Altar
 - d. Remains placed on stone Altar until moved to niche
18. When there are ashes and they will not be interred immediately following the service
 - a. Urn may remain in the Nave, veiled with Pall, until retrieved by a member of the family

Instructions for Ushers

1. Please arrive at least 30 minutes before the service.
2. If leaflets are not on the Ushers' table they may be found in the Ushers' Closet.
3. Members of the deceased family are to be encouraged to join the family in the Parlor. Politely notify them that the Presiding Priest will join them there 10-15 minutes before the service.
4. If the Guest Register is not in place, please ask a member of the Funeral or Altar Guilds.
5. If the service is a Requiem Eucharist, check in with the Presider to receive instructions on communion (where people will receive).
6. At conclusion of the service, if the body is present, it will be taken at the end of the service by the clergy, family, and the rest of the congregation. Help encourage people to move to the main entrance where the hearse will be waiting.
7. If ashes will be interred in the Columbarium, the congregation follows the clergy and family to the Garden.
 - a. Encourage people to follow the procession to the Meditation Garden.
 - b. Politely discourage people stopping to visit at the Gathering Place.
 - c. One usher should go ahead of that procession and see that the doors to the Garden are open and then stand by the steps to assist anyone needed help to get in to the Garden. Also encourage the first out to move on to the far side of the Garden.
 - d. If the congregation is above 150, after about half have gone on down the corridor to the Garden, then direct people into the Garden through the Library.
8. Please take a count of the congregation, and leave it in the Clergy Sacristy after the service.
9. Pick up any leaflets left in the Nave and straighten hymnals and prayer books as needed.

Additional Note: Many if not most guests will be strangers to Transfiguration and will need more guidance in seating than is usual. Please see that people know:

- They are encouraged to seat themselves as far forward as possible.
- They may be seated on either side of the Nave.
- At services where 250 or more are expected, Ushers should be stationed in the Gathering Space, Narthex, and Nave to assist people with finding a seat. Only those pews marked "Reserved" are unavailable, and people should be helpfully directed to transept seating when the Nave is full.