

## FUNERAL POLICIES AT S. STEPHEN'S

These guidelines are designed to clarify the funeral policies at S. Stephen's Church in Providence. If you are reading this for the first time during a time of loss, please be assured of our sympathy and prayers, and our desire to be of assistance to you.

### Nature of a Church Funeral

A church funeral testifies to the Christian hope that as Christ rose from the dead, so too shall we be raised and brought into his heavenly kingdom. Our funeral liturgies speak of the great mysteries of death and life proclaimed by our Savior, and offer prayers that the departed may be brought "into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of the saints." Over two thousand years, this knowledge has brought comfort to the bereaved and strengthened our faith that death is not the end, but the entrance into new life in Him.

### Form of the Service

The preferred form of service is the **Requiem Mass**, which includes the Holy Eucharist, especially when the departed was a regular communicant of the Church. The service may also take the form of the **Burial of the Dead** (also known as "the Burial Office"), without the Eucharist, as found in the *Book of Common Prayer, 1979*. The Church's authorized texts and rubrics for these liturgies are fixed and cannot be changed or adapted.

### Location of the Service

S. Stephen's funerals and Requiems are conducted in S. Stephen's Church. If another venue is desired, such a church close to the home of the deceased, the clergy of that parish or congregation should be contacted and asked to officiate at the service. The clergy of S. Stephen's Church do not normally conduct funeral services in funeral homes, but are available to offer vigil prayers at a wake or viewing in the days before the funeral. While parking near S. Stephen's can be difficult on weekdays, for a fee we can reserve several blocks on George Street for funeral parking on the day of the service.

### Presence of the Body or Urn

A Requiem or funeral in the Anglican tradition is conducted in the presence of the mortal remains of the departed. The liturgy commends the soul of the departed into the care of Almighty God. It also blesses the mortal remains before interment in their final resting place. It is optimal for the body to be present in the church for the Requiem or funeral, and then taken immediately to the cemetery for the Committal. It is similarly preferable for cremation to take place after the Requiem or funeral service at which the body has been present. However, it is also an option to conduct the Requiem or funeral in the presence of the urn containing the ashes. "Memorial services" (at which the mortal remains are not present) are also possible, for example, when the body has been donated to science, lost at sea, or for some other compelling reason.

## Eulogies and Homilies

The focus of funeral services in the Anglican tradition is the Christian hope of the Resurrection of the dead. Eulogies – which focus on the past life, virtues, and achievements of the departed – are not part of the rite. However, one or more eulogies may be offered in the church when the congregation has gathered before the liturgy formally begins. In all cases, the officiating clergy will offer a homily or sermon at the appointed place in the liturgy.

## Music

The Organist and Choirmaster of S. Stephen's Church is in charge of the music at funerals, and all requests for musical selections are subject to his approval. Participation by guest soloists and musical performers is at his invitation. Only hymns from the Episcopal Church's authorized hymnals are permitted. Musical selections for choral or solo performance must be of a suitably sacred character. (Hymns are not normally recommended unless a choir is present to lead the singing.)

## Participants in the Liturgy

Participation in the service by visiting clergy, readers, eulogists, servers, ushers, etc., is at the invitation of the parish clergy. Those arranging the funeral should discuss their wishes with the parish clergy as far in advance as possible. Please do not spring requests for last-minute changes or additions on the day of the service. The officiating clergy have the responsibility of determining the suitability of proposed participants, inviting them to participate, and assigning their duties.

## Role of the Parish Clergy

The parish clergy are responsible for offering comfort and support to the bereaved. They do this, in the first instance, by guiding the bereaved through the Church's rites where the Gospel can be heard with clarity and healing power. The clergy will assist those arranging the funeral in understanding the available options in the Church's liturgies. As custodians of the traditions and customs of Christian burial, the parish clergy have the final decision on all questions regarding the form, ritual, and ceremonial of the liturgy.

*“O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray thee to set thy passion, cross, and death between thy judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living, pardon and rest to the dead, to thy holy Church peace and concord, and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, one God, now and for ever. Amen.”*

S. Stephen's Church in Providence

REQUEST FOR FUNERAL SERVICE

FULL NAME OF DECEASED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF DEATH: \_\_\_\_\_

LAST ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF SERVICE REQUESTED (PLEASE CHECK ONE):

\_\_\_\_ REQUIEM MASS (WITH EUCHARIST)

\_\_\_\_ BURIAL OFFICE (WITHOUT EUCHARIST)

PROPOSED DATE AND TIME OF SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_

BURIAL / CREMATION ARRANGEMENTS (PLEASE CHECK ONE)

\_\_\_\_ SERVICE WITH BODY PRESENT IN CHURCH, FOLLOWED BY BURIAL /  
CREMATION

\_\_\_\_ SERVICE FOLLOWING CREMATION, WITH URN PRESENT IN CHURCH

\_\_\_\_ "MEMORIAL SERVICE" WITHOUT BODY OR URN PRESENT (PLEASE BE  
PREPARED TO DISCUSS CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING THIS NECESSARY)

PERSON IN CHARGE OF FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO DECEASED: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT INFORMATION (ADDRESS, PHONE, EMAIL):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I CERTIFY THAT I AM AUTHORIZED TO REPRESENT THE FAMILY AND ESTATE OF THE DECEASED IN ARRANGING THE FUNERAL. I HAVE RECEIVED THE DOCUMENT "FEES AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH A FUNERAL AT S. STEPHEN'S." I HAVE READ THE DOCUMENT "FUNERAL POLICIES AT S. STEPHEN'S," AND AGREE TO THE STANDARDS SET FORTH THEREIN.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## FEES AND COSTS

### ASSOCIATED WITH FUNERALS AT S. STEPHEN'S

1. Donation to the Church – The parish does not charge fees for its funeral services. A voluntary donation to the church is welcome, depending on the means of the family / survivors of the deceased. An appropriate amount is \$500.
2. Honorariums for clergy – The clergy do not charge fees for performing the services of the Church. Voluntary gifts are welcome, depending on the means of the family / survivors. An appropriate amount is \$250 - \$300.
3. Organist / Choirmaster – The Organist / Choirmaster receives a fee of \$250 for playing at a funeral.
4. Musicians / Singers – If extra musicians and / or singers are engaged to participate in the funeral liturgy, their fees will be communicated by the Organist / Choirmaster to those arranging the funeral.
5. Reserved Parking – the City of Providence charges a fee of \$80 to reserve parking on George Street on the day of the funeral. This is payable to the parish.
6. Great Hall – use of the Great Hall for a reception following the Funeral is free to parishioners, although a donation is welcome. For non-parishioners, the room rental fee is \$200 (This does not include catering. Upon request the parish office can recommend reliable caterers in the area.)
7. Flowers – two vases of flowers are permitted at the High Altar for a funeral in the main church. Flowers are ordered from the parish florist by the parish office. The cost is \$160 for two vases, payable to the parish.
8. In case of financial difficulty, please discuss your situation confidentially with the parish clergy. Financial assistance may be available for some of the costs listed on this page.