



THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

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Funeral or Memorial Service Information for Altar Guild

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Thank you for your service to Transfiguration and to bereaved families. These guidelines are intended to assist you in your work, and your feedback will be gratefully received.

Call to Service

As part of the funeral or memorial service planning process, the Officiant will call upon the Altar Guild to assign one or more members for service. A copy of the service planning sheet will be provided to the Altar Guild. The Altar Guild member should call the family as soon as possible to offer assistance with selecting a florist, answer the family's questions, and arrange to meet the family and/or florist before the service begins.

Arrival

Please plan to arrive at least 45 minutes before the service begins, unless you've made other arrangements with the family or florist. Even if the church already is set up, the clergy and ushers often need assistance directing the family and guests to waiting areas and rest rooms, receiving last-minute and unexpected deliveries of floral displays, and answering questions from the funeral director.

Flowers and Displays

Flowers may be used at any funeral or memorial service, even in Lent or Advent. The family is responsible for purchasing flowers for the funeral, and the assigned member of the Transfiguration Altar Guild should assist the family or florist with placement and arrangement. Flowers may only be placed at the altar in the same manner as for Sunday worship, and never on the table itself. Large standing displays, photographs, and posters are not used in the church, including the baptistry, and may be placed in the narthex of the church and in Leach Hall. The flowers at the altar customarily are left as a gift to the church, to be used on the following Sunday at the discretion of the Altar Guild. Please make arrangements with the family to have them retrieve floral and photo displays after the service. Unclaimed floral displays will be disposed of.

Altar Setup

The liturgical color always is white for a funeral or memorial service. Please use the white pall for the table, but do not worry about changing banners or the backing behind the wall cross. In Lent, the cross covering on the altar cross is removed. Setup for Eucharist is the same as on Sunday morning, except that the bread and wine should be placed on the credence table, and not on the table in the baptistry. The silver chalice and cruet are used, even in Lent. A single collection plate should be placed on a table in the narthex or baptistry along with a stack of memorial gift envelopes. Families or funeral directors often have a book for guests to sign.

Reserved Seating

Please use white ropes from the acolyte vesting closet to reserve pews for the family on the lectern side. Two to three rows normally are sufficient, but you can help by gauging the size of the gathered family before the service begins, and reserving one pew for every eight family members.

Ashes

If ashes are present, please move the table that normally lies near the lectern to the top (altar) brick level inside the altar rail, off-center to the lectern side. The exact placement is not important, and should take into account the placement of flowers. The urn or box of ashes is placed on the table, and a white Eucharistic veil covers it. No photographs or other mementos are placed with the ashes.

The Casket

If a casket is present, the priest will meet the body immediately as it is brought into the building. The pall is placed over the casket at the door, and the priest offers prayers. The casket remains covered the entire time it is in the building, and the pall is removed at the door as the casket is removed. In the case of United States military veterans, an American flag can replace the white pall. The casket is placed in the center aisle, all the way forward of the slate tile, but not on the carpet surrounding the altar rail. The feet are oriented toward the altar.

The Paschal Candle

If ashes or a casket are present, the paschal candle is moved behind or beside the ashes as convenient, or at the feet (altar end) of the casket. Please make sure the candle is filled with liquid wax.

Asperges

Please fill a clean glass bowl with water, and place it with the aspergillum (the silver wand used for flinging holy water) on the credence table behind the altar.