

Funeral Services at Saint Christopher Catholic Church

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

The time of laying our loved ones to rest is a moment of grief – and hope, that through faith in Jesus Christ the deceased will be set free from death and offered the gift of eternal life in Heaven. One of our most sacred duties at Saint Christopher Catholic Church is to offer guidance and accompaniment as you make arrangements for a Christian funeral in our parish.

The purpose of this document is to address many common questions we receive regarding funerals at our parish, including the involvement of ministers, “costs,” and donations. Please know that the staff and I are available to discuss any of these items in further detail.

“Fees” and Donations

There is no official fee to be buried from the Church. Likewise, there is never a fee for the involvement of the parish priest, deacon, cantors or altar servers. If the family has the means and wishes to make donations, considering the parish staff and facilities resources consumed, this generosity is most appreciated and welcome. The amount of donation varies from person to person, and parish to parish, so please contact the parish office for detailed information.

Scheduling the Mass

Due to the shrinking number of priests and increased responsibilities, priests may not be available to celebrate a Funeral Mass on the date the family desires. Therefore, please be prepared to offer two possible dates for the funeral Mass to occur.

Liturgy participants

In order to save the family from the burden of further decision-making, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors (Readers) and Altar Servers will be provided by Saint Christopher Parish. If the family has a trained relative or friend who would like to serve in one of these capacities, please contact the parish office to make arrangements.

On the occasion when a family friend or relative is a member of the clergy and would like to serve according to his role, he may do so. The individual must have written confirmation that he is validly ordained and in good standing with the Archdiocese of Detroit or his own diocese or religious order. Please contact the parish office to make arrangements.

Readings

The funeral liturgy, like any Sunday Mass, typically includes two Scripture readings as well as a selection from the Gospel. These readings have been preselected, in order to eliminate further decision-making by the family during this difficult time. However, if the family has a specific reading in mind, we will do our best to accommodate your request. Please contact the parish office for more information.

Music

In order to make it easier for grieving families to plan the music for the funeral, our Music Director has provided a list of hymns, psalms, and antiphons from which music can be selected. Every effort is made to accommodate special requests provided that the music is approved for

use for Mass by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The family may also exercise the option to request that the Music Director choose the music for the funeral Mass.

Our parish contracts separately for musicians. If the family desires music to be played at a funeral Mass, then we ask that the family cover the cost of the musician to attend. The suggested stipend for musicians to serve a funeral Mass is \$125. The family may always exercise the option to not have music for the funeral Mass, as it is not required.

If the family wishes to have multiple musicians, they should advise the Music Director so any additional musicians can be coordinated, and additional fees can be agreed upon. If so desired, families may invite other family members, relatives, or friends to cantor (sing) or provide music for the Mass, as long as they are trained and able.

Eulogies

The celebration of a funeral Mass focuses on the promise of eternal life and the hope of eventual reunion with the deceased. As such, most priests are honored to deliver homilies based on the readings, while also highlighting how your loved one gave witness during his or her life to our shared Christian belief and values. If the family desires the priest homilist to include any highlights of the loved one in the homily, then please email that information to him at frjames@stchrismi.org.

Many families also wish to arrange for a eulogy or eulogies, often featuring amusing anecdotes, biographical information and celebrations of various lifetime accomplishments. These recollections are certainly of value and can provide much-needed comfort during this time. Families are welcome to arrange for such speeches to be given at the Vigil Scripture Service at the Funeral Home on the evening before the Funeral Mass. This occasion allows for anyone wishing to speak to freely share memories of their loved one in an appropriate setting.

Cremation

In the event your loved one is to be cremated, we recommend that cremated remains be interred the same day of the funeral Mass, or on a date in the very near future, to be set at the time of the funeral planning.

Luncheon

We do our best to offer a luncheon in the parish social hall, based on the availability of the room and volunteers. Please contact the parish office for further details and to provide an estimated number of people you believe will attend.

Laying our loved ones to rest is one of the most important services we can do for them. We have provided the above information with the hope that it will ease the difficult impact of funeral plans and will assist all through the grief process, allowing for a true celebration of eternal life. As we come together with your family during this time, we hope and look forward to our own future resurrection when we shall all see, recognize and be with our loved ones again.

If you have need of further information or have any questions whatsoever, please contact our parish office at 810-364-4100. Our business office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Fraternally yours in Jesus Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Rev. James F. Arwady, Pastor