

# ALLEN TEMPLE

## African Methodist Episcopal Church

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## FUNERAL POLICY GUIDE

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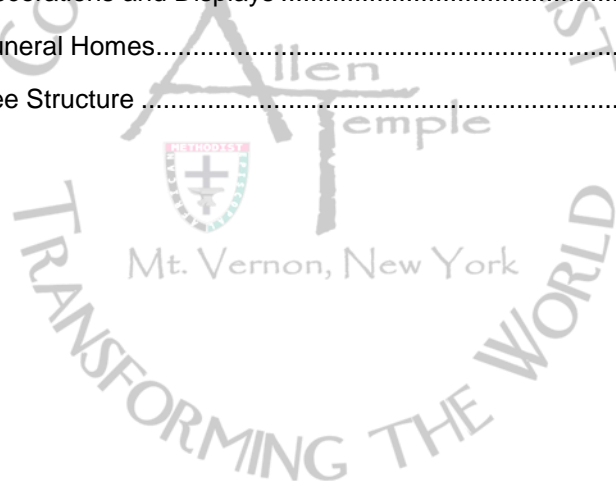
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*The Allen Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church and its leadership reserve the right to make any changes or modifications to this policy in accordance with efforts that allow the Church to maintain its adherence and compliance to The Doctrine and Discipline of The African Methodist Episcopal Church and The Holy Scriptures as the final authority.*

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## **Section 1. When A Loss Occurs**

### **1.1 Dealing with The Loss of a Loved One**

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a difficult experience. We grieve the loss of one who has been close, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregation in their time of need. It is through the Word of God that we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (Romans 15: 4). This funeral guide is provided to families to facilitate planning of the home going service for their loved one.

Although funeral services may be held in funeral homes, the best place for conducting a funeral service upon the death of a Christian is in the sanctuary of the church to which he or she belonged. By having the service at the church, all who attend will be reminded of our hope and assurance in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of Allen Temple are encouraged to use the church facilities for funeral services. On a case-by-case basis, the sanctuary may be made available for persons whose membership is in another church. Funeral services for non-members are solely at the discretion of the pastor.

There can be alternative methods for the conducting of services at the time of death. These could include a private graveside service for family members as soon after death as possible and/or a public service of worship (a memorial service) conducted at the church later. However, funeral worship services will only be conducted in the sanctuary of the church. The pastor or his designee is available to meet with the family to plan funeral arrangements.

### **1.2 What to Do When Your Loved One Dies**

The pastor should be notified immediately when a church member dies. The church office telephone number is (914) 699 - 3932. No funeral arrangements are to be made without consulting the pastor and the church office.

When making arrangements, please be mindful that no services are scheduled on the following days: Sundays, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

- Contact other family members and close friends of the deceased
- Contact the deceased family member's church, if they belonged to one
- Notify the employer of the deceased and your own employer
- If children are in school, notify the school
- Choose a Funeral Home

### **1.3 Date and Time of The Funeral**

Most funeral services are conducted three to five days after a death occurs. While services are typically conducted late-morning or early evening, dates and times for funeral services at Allen Temple are to be arranged in consultation with the pastor based on availability of the church and the preferences of the deceased's family. Weekdays are flexible with the exception of Friday;

however, if Friday is the preferred day of the family, the pastor will make every effort to accommodate their request. If the pastor is not available to perform the funeral, a member of Allen Temple's ministerial staff will be assigned. Because of the heavy demand upon facilities, Sunday church funerals are not encouraged.

All funeral arrangements must be approved by the pastor prior to them being finalized with the funeral home. Please keep in mind that all funeral services will need to be planned around already scheduled events such as weddings, conferences, workshops, etc. The church will not cancel any major planned events to accommodate funeral services.

### **Viewing**

As the church schedule permits, the sanctuary will be available for wakes and visitation the day before the service. Moreover, the church will be available at least two (2) hours prior to the service for viewing. If the family chooses, they may view the descendant during the processional at the beginning of service. Once the casket is closed after the processional, THE CASKET WILL REMAIN CLOSED.

### **1.4 Who Will Officiate**

The pastor or his/her designee will conduct all funeral services held at Allen Temple, unless by agreement with another pastor, he/she is invited to share in the funeral or act on behalf of the pastor of Allen Temple. Any requests for another pastor or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by the pastor prior to the service.

### **1.5 Funeral for Non-Members and Inactive Members**

Conducting funerals for people who have no connection with the church is at the discretion of the pastor. The family of inactive or non-members of Allen Temple must contact the church's executive Minister to schedule an appointment to meet with the pastor should they desire to use Allen Temple's facilities for the funeral services of a loved one.

### **1.6 Masonic and Fraternal Services**

Many individuals are active in various civic, professional, Masonic and fraternal organizations. Any Masonic and fraternal rites and services are limited to the wake or the family hour, and not during the funeral service. Organizations may, however, submit a letter of condolence or resolution which can be incorporated in the funeral service.

## Section 2. Order of Worship

### 2.1 Funeral Bulletin

The church office staff will ordinarily produce the funeral bulletin (or printed order of worship) for members of Allen Temple. A fee is charged for inactive or non-members of Allen Temple. In some cases, the funeral home may be contracted by the family to print the funeral bulletin. However, the order of worship must be approved by the pastor prior to printing the order of worship.

When planning your loved one's funeral, please keep in mind that a Christian's funeral should be a testimony to Our Lord Jesus Christ, which may bring comfort to the family and draw non-Christians to Christ through God's grace. A Christian funeral can be a great climax to an earthly life that has been lived in trust and service to Jesus Christ.

The order of service should thus reflect and affirm the deceased person's faith and hope in Christ, and their belief in Christ's victory over death. Such affirmation can be enacted through the rituals of prayer, scripture reading, class leader witness, family proclamations, and music selected.

The Word of God is central, and everything that takes place must be consistent with biblical principles of worship (Matthew 4:4; Romans 15:4; John 6:63). Prayer in funerals normally includes thanksgiving for the memory of the dead, one's triumph in the resurrection of Christ, and intercession for the family and friends who remain. Worshipers are participants in the service; therefore, the singing of hymns, confession of faith, prayer, and hearing God's word are appropriate means of worship (John 4:23-24).

### 2.2 Structure of The Service

A funeral service held in the church is a service of worship, celebrating the deceased's life and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Consequently, all parts of the service are to be consistent with the present worship practices of the church. Generally, the outline for the funeral and burial service will be structured from traditional Methodist liturgy. The family may suggest other items to be included in the order of service, contingent upon the approval of the pastor.

### 2.3 Sample Order of Service

The following Order of Worship represents the basic elements contained in liturgy consistent with African Methodism. Not all elements has to be included, but the final order must be approved by the pastor.

Milestone/Deliverable	Principal
The Prelude	Musician/Audio Team
The Processional	Ministers & Family
The Hymn of Celebration	Congregation
The Prayer of Comfort	(Name)

Milestone/Deliverable	Principal
The Choral Response	Music Ministry
The Scripture Lessons	
Old Testament	(Insert)
New Testament	(insert)
The Musical Selection (optional)	
The Acknowledgements (optional)	(Name)
Tributes	(Name)
The Obituary	(Name)
The Ministry of Music	(Name)
The Eulogy	(Name)
Closing Prayer & Hymn	(Name)
The Recessional	Congregation
The Committal and Internment	(Name & Location)

## 2.4 Music for Funeral Service

Musicians from Allen Temple’s music staff will provide music for all funeral services held at Allen Temple; however, the fee for musicians is the responsibility of the family. Upon request, and for a paid fee, professional vocalists can be arranged to provide music for funeral services. In cases where an outside organist/pianist is desired, permission must be secured from the pastor.

As with regular Sunday morning worship services, a funeral is a service of Christian worship. Therefore, sacred or Christian music should be selected for services. Song tracks or taped instrumental music must be approved by the pastor and arranged with the media ministry at least 48 hours prior to the funeral service.

## 2.5 Audio/Visual/Video Recording & Live Streaming

If a video or PowerPoint presentation is to be used during the service, it must be submitted to the church office at least 48 hours (2 days) prior to the funeral service for review. All presentations should be five minutes or less in length.

While Allen Temple has audio equipment to record worship services, staff who normally record services are not available to record services during the week. Upon request, the church can recommend a videographer to video record the service; however, payment must be paid directly to the videographer.

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## Section 3. Decorations and Displays

Families may wish to display the deceased's remains, as well as certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:

- Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.
- No nails, tacks, staples or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews.
- All decorations must be removed at the conclusion of the service.
- No furniture shall be removed from the church building.

### Flowers

Flowers will be placed at the altar by the pallbearers or members of the funeral home staff.

### Closed Casket

All caskets remain open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only, if desired); however, the casket will be closed during the worship and burial services. When closed, the flower blanket, flag or coverlet covers the casket. The funeral director in concert with the pastor will have direction over such matters as timing, closed caskets, music, flowers, etc. As part of our polity as African Methodists, once the casket is closed it is not to be re-opened. This is done in an effort to help with bringing closure and acceptance to the bereaved.

### Parking

Parking assistance is generally provided by the funeral home. The church does not have any resources to assist in traffic control. In rare circumstances, such as the funeral of a high profile member of the church or community, traffic assistance may be provided by the Mount Vernon Police Department.

### Family Meal

The church will do everything reasonably possible to accommodate a member's request for a family meal before or after a funeral service. The meal is prepared under the direction of the church's culinary team. While meal accommodations may be provided to active members\* by clubs or ministries affiliated with Allen Temple, inactive or non-members may, upon approval of the pastor, be allowed use of the church's facilities for the purpose of a catered meal. Although Allen Temple can provide the family with a list of caterers to contact for meal accommodations, the cost of the meal and fees for use of the Church's facilities are solely the responsibility of the family of the deceased.

Please note that while clubs or ministries may volunteer to assist the family of the deceased with organizing a meal after the funeral, such meals are good faith gestures to the family, and not an obligation or responsibility of Allen Temple AME Church or any of its clubs or ministries.

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## Section 4. Funeral Homes

### Role of Funeral Directors

The funeral director meets with the family to discuss the burial options available to them, but leaves the actual funeral/memorial service for the pastor to organize along with the family. Please note: it is very important for the funeral director and pastor to work closely together to deliver the most professional service possible to the grieving family so please remember to include the pastor in the planning of the service.

### Before Going to The Funeral Home

It will save you considerable time and phone calls if you have the following information available about the deceased:

- Full name of deceased (include nickname or other names the person may have used).
- Date and Place of Birth of the deceased.
- Father's Name & Mother's Maiden Name of the deceased.
- List of relatives and relationship to the deceased.
- List of church, professional organizations, clubs and other organizations in which membership was held.
- If you wish, indicate memorial to be designated in obituary in memory of the deceased.
- Compile a list of individuals who might be available to serve as pallbearers.
- If a memorial or funeral service is announced in the newspapers, take extra precaution for security at the home of the deceased during the indicated time of the service.
- Name and location of facility where funeral or memorial service will be held.
- Day/time you prefer to have the wake, funeral or memorial service.

### Can memorial gifts be made to the church?

Memorial gifts can be made to the church in honor of the deceased. Checks should be made payable to Allen Temple AME Church and given to the pastor who will forward the same to the finance committee. A letter of acknowledgement will be mailed to the donor once the contribution has cleared the bank.

### Memorials

In certain circumstances, the family might request that contributions be made to the church or a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. Please note that the church will not receive, distribute or manage funds designated for an outside institution.

### What do I say when friends come or call?

Usually people don't know just what to say to someone who has lost a loved one. The best thing to do is to receive their words of encouragement gracefully and thank them for calling. Don't be afraid to talk with friends and family about your deceased family member's life including favorite or funny memories you hold dear. The more you are able to share about your deceased family member's life, the more at ease you will make visitors and friends.



What passages of Scripture will help me as I go through the grieving process? The word of God is the only source of true comfort and strength to you, especially the Psalms. Psalm 1; Psalm 23; Psalm 24; Psalm 27 (particularly in the death of a parent); Psalm 34; John 14:1-6; Romans 8:35-39; II Corinthians 5; I Peter 1; Revelation 22.

**Where to find help with your grief**

Allen Temple provides ministerial support through The Master's Touch Ministry to those who have lost a loved one. The Master's Touch Ministry is the pastoral arm of the Class Leader Ministry, so please contact the deceased family member's class leader should you desire visitation, communion, encouragement or support before or after the funeral service. The Rev. Neftalie Danier is the minister to the Bereaved and can be reached via email at [neftaliedanier@allentempleamec.com](mailto:neftaliedanier@allentempleamec.com) or the church at [admin@allentempleamec.com](mailto:admin@allentempleamec.com).

You may also contact the church at 914.699.3932 to leave a message and your call will be returned with the strictest urgency.



## Section 5. Fee Structure

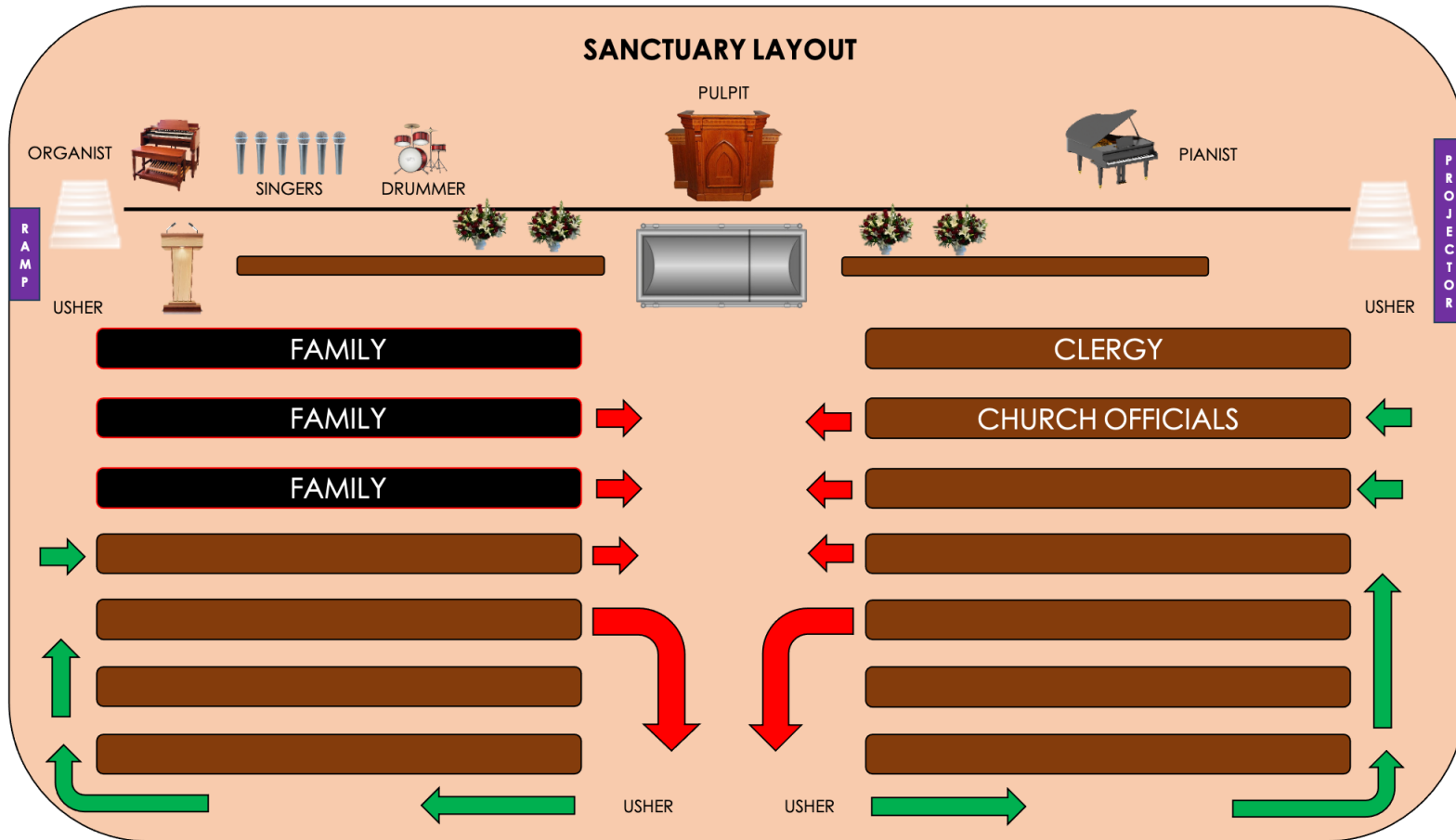
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### Funeral Service Checklist

AUXILIARY SERVICE CHECKLIST	Relative Cost	To Be Provided By The Church	To Be Provided By Funeral Home	To Be Provided By Family	To Be Provided By Vendor
Sanctuary Rental *	\$500				
Fellowship Hall Rental *	\$75/hr.				
Food Catering & Servers* (150 person maximum)	\$15/person				
Sexton	\$150				
Organ Musician *	\$250				
Keyboard Musician	\$200				
Drummer *	\$150				
Choir/Singers * (4 person maximum)	\$50/each				
Soloist (2hrs / 4 songs maximum)	\$150				
Audio/Visual Technician *	\$100				
Programs and Bulletin* - 5½ x 8½ Booklet (8½ x 11 Folded) - Two pages, double-sided color print - First 50 copies \$100. \$2/page thereafter	\$100				
Live Streaming (YouTube & Facebook) *	\$200				
Photography					

Items on checklist that are indicated with an asterisk (\*) represent services that are provided at no cost for active members of The Allen Temple AME Church. The funeral service at Allen Temple is a privilege of every church member (in good and regular standing), and while there are no charges, families may consider making a donation to the church in memory of their loved one.



**LEGEND**

**Sanctuary** – Seating capacity is 188 persons maximum. **Green Arrows** show flow of guests entering the Sanctuary, **Red Arrows** show flow of guests exiting the Sanctuary.

**Ramp Access** – The ramp can be used for other abled persons, and for the casket's entry into the Sanctuary. It is highly recommended that there be at least **6 pall bearers** to assist with the casket while using the ramp access. The Sanctuary can be made available for casket delivery the evening prior to the service.

**Fellowship Hall** – Stairwell is used for access to the Fellowship Hall from the Sanctuary. The Fellowship Hall is equipped with two restroom facilities, one male and one female.