

## **ST. EDWARD CHURCH FUNERAL PLANNER MINISTRY**

Funeral planners extend the love of Jesus Christ to members of the parish during times of great sorrow by helping the grieving family through the planning process of the liturgies of the funeral vigil and funeral, and, if needed, the referral for the planning of the funeral dinner. Funeral planners are present to support the family at the liturgies and meal, offering non-judgmental and discreet fellowship, encouragement, empathy, and practical assistance as needed. Maintaining confidentiality about family information and or behavior is essential.

When the priest is notified of a death he arranges for contact of a funeral planner to assist the family and provides the name of the deceased and next of kin to be contacted.

The funeral planner calls the next of kin immediately with the heartfelt condolences of the church family, explains his/her ministry and makes an appointment to meet with the family to plan the liturgies and (if required) referral for the funeral dinner. Since most funerals are held within 4 days of the death, contact and meeting with the family should not be delayed. Meetings may be held at the rectory, funeral home or family home.

At the meeting with the family the funeral planner completes the information on the Funeral Planning Minister worksheet. This worksheet provides complete directions for the planning process for Vigil and funeral and funeral dinner if catered at St Edward. The funeral planner provides the family with the selection of potential readings and songs from which they select their choices. Each funeral planner has his or her own binder of funeral readings. The planner is always careful not to influence the family in their selection of readings and songs. If readings are selected outside of those offered, the planner should check with the priest if there are concerns about the selections. If songs are selected outside of those offered, the planner should notify the Music Coordinator.

The planner enters the data from the planning session onto the template for the funeral handout using the Mac computer in St Mark room. A volunteer helps with data input, if necessary. Sufficient copies of the handout are made by the planner for use at the funeral.

The planner attends the vigil to maintain a discreet non-judgmental and supportive relationship with the family and handle any concerns or questions from the family or funeral home in relation to the Vigil and funeral. The planner arrives at the church at least 60 minutes before the and handles any concerns or questions from the family or funeral home in relation to the funeral and to assure the presence of the sacristan, altar servers and lector materials for the funeral.

Dated: January 2009