



Holy Spirit Church **STEPHEN MINISTRY PROCEDURES**

MISSION: The Stephen Ministry of Holy Spirit Church provides prayerful and loving assistance to parishioners who mourn the loss of a loved one. We assist families from the moment the parish is notified of the loss through the funeral rites. With the priest, we offer support and guidance during the planning process. We assist at the funeral liturgy, providing hospitality, liturgical assistance, and ensure that the liturgy is carried out with reverence and solemnity.

REQUIREMENTS: We welcome anyone who has a heart of compassion and is willing to joyfully exhibit hope in the Risen Lord.

TIME OBLIGATION: Normally, funeral Masses take place during the weekdays at mid-morning. Volunteers arrive one half-hour before the Mass and depart after all have left the parish premises.

REQUIRED MINISTERS: At minimum, there should be a total of 3 Stephen ministers present: 1 Stephen Ministry Leader and 2 assisting Stephen ministers. However, more are welcome to attend.

DRESS CODE: Professional attire appropriate for funerals with special badge.

DUTIES:

- **INITIAL NOTIFICATION:** All Stephen Ministers are notified via e-mail of an upcoming funeral by the parish office manager. One Ministry Leader who wishes to oversee the funeral should contact the priest immediately and coordinate a time to meet with the family. Meanwhile, the Ministry Leader should set up a team to work the funeral.
- **PLANNING PROCESS:** The presiding priest and the Ministry Leader meet with the family of the deceased. At this meeting, the Funeral Liturgy Planning form is used to plan the ritual. The Ministry Leader uses this form at funeral itself.
- **PRE- MASS:** Ministers arrive ½ hour before the family is scheduled to arrive. All Stephen Ministers report to the sacristy and retrieve their badge and pray together as a team. The Ministry Leader overseeing the Mass coordinates the following:
 - **CHURCH SET-UP:** Reserved pews for family members at the front of church. Kleenex boxes place in pews for family. Receive flower deliveries and place them accordingly. Make sure church is neat and tidy. Check bathroom cleanliness.



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- **LECTOR PRACTICE:** The Ministry Leader makes sure correct readings are at ambo. Readings will be in a binder in the Stephen Ministry Cupboard. Conducts a short rehearsal with lectors chosen to read at least 15 minutes before the liturgy.
- **GREETERS:** Stephen Ministers welcome guests at the front of the Church, opening the door for visitors and inviting them to find a place in the church. Stephen Ministers should be ready to assist the guests with whatever needs may arise.
- **SACRISTAN:** Normally, a sacristan is scheduled for a Mass. However, the Stephen Minister may need to assist him when necessary.
- **MASS**
 - **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:** Actively participate in the celebration of the Mass by singing and clearly vocalizing the responses.
 - **SEATING:** Stephen Ministers refrain from sitting with the mourning family. Instead they keep a respectful distance from the family, but remain nearby so as to anticipate any needs of the family.
 - **GREETERS & USHERS:** One Stephen Minister should remain at the back of the church to welcome any late-comers and assist guests with whatever needs may arise. Also, if there are enough Stephen Ministers present at the funeral Mass, two Stephen Ministers will assist with directing people pew-by-pew at Holy Communion.
 - **HOLY COMMUNION:** A Stephen Minister may be called upon to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.
 - **OBSERVERS OF RECEPTION OF THE SACRED HOST:** During the distribution of Holy Communion, two Stephen Ministers will observe that the Sacred Host is consumed. One minister will stand a few feet away from the Eucharistic Minister and a second minister will stand a few feet away from the Priest to make sure that those who receive the Eucharist actually consume it before they walk away. If you see someone walk away without consuming the Sacred Host, gently stop them and request that they immediately consume it or give it back. If they give it back to you, you may then



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consume the Sacred Host directly OR give it to the priest after the distribution of Holy Communion. If there are enough Stephen Ministers present at the funeral Mass, two Stephen Ministers may act as ushers to assist with directing people pew-by-pew at Holy Communion. But if there are not enough Stephen Ministers, then ensuring the proper reception of the Eucharist is the priority.

- **AFTER MASS**

- **CONDOLENCES:** The Ministry Leader accompanies and remains with the family until they depart the parish premises. Before they depart, the leader offers a word of sympathy to the family and may wish to present a condolence card on behalf of the entire ministry and the parish.
- **DIRECTIONS:** If there is a reception on site immediately following the Mass, direct people to the appropriate venue. Some Stephen Ministers should make sure the venue is open and ready for guests.
- **CLEAN UP:** Assist with clean up of church.

STEPHEN MINISTRY CUPBOARD: A cabinet for the Stephen Ministry is set up in the priest sacristy. There one may find the badges, checklists, readings, and other miscellaneous supplies, such as bottled water, Kleenex, paper, and condolence cards.



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STEPHEN MINISTRY CHECK-LIST

- ❖ Team present
- ❖ Badges
- ❖ Prayer
- ❖ Funeral Mass Planning Form
- ❖ Clean Church
- ❖ Clean bathrooms
- ❖ Lector Practice
- ❖ Correct readings at ambo in binder – See Funeral Mass Planning Form
- ❖ Reserve pews for family
- ❖ Kleenex in pews
- ❖ Arrange flowers
- ❖ Help sacristan
- ❖ Acolytes present
- ❖ Greeters at doors
- ❖ Mass responses
- ❖ Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
- ❖ Observe that Sacred Host is consumed
- ❖ Usher people during Holy Communion
- ❖ Sympathy card
- ❖ Venue for reception