



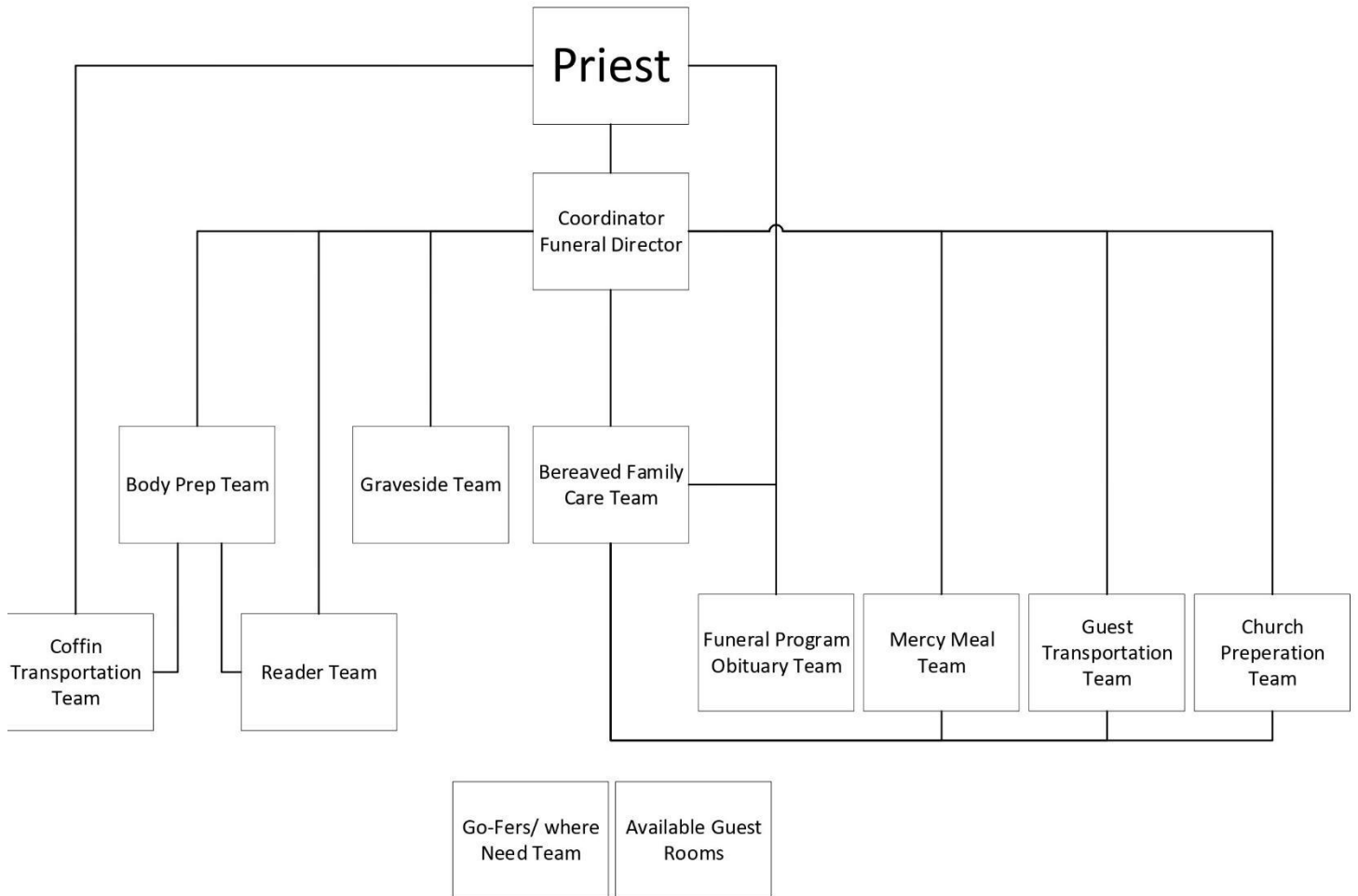
Burial Society Teams and Descriptions

Revised April 29, 2025

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Burial Society Organization Chart



Burial Society Coordinator

The death of a parishioner begins a coordinated effort between many parts of the church to have a successful funeral and burial in our cemetery. The body must be prepared, a coffin purchased, the services set, guests arrangements made, funeral program and obituaries written, a grave opened and closed, a mercy meal planned, and many more tasks done by many different people. The Burial Society Coordinator with the parish priest, organizes the moving pieces and provides the communication between the different groups. He or she must be readily available for this work from the time of the death of a parishioner through the time of the burial.

This role reports to and coordinates with the parish priest so that the priest can focus on pastoring the departed person's family and praying for the soul of the one who died.

The person notifies all team leaders of death or pending death to prepare for body preparation, funeral service, and burial.

He or she may need to contact Body Preparation Team if notified of any changes in the body that may need to be addressed while the body is at the church awaiting burial.

Duties will also include: Ordering coffins, crosses, body preparation supplies, guest books and keeping all job descriptions and instructions up to date.

Additionally, the Coordinator will have all Postmortem Legal Forms available for the family as needed including:

- Death Certificate Worksheet
- Body Transportation Permit
- Burial Permit
- Estate Planning Documents:
 - Healthcare Power of Attorney
 - Advanced Directive for Healthcare
- Funeral Planning Documents
 - Advanced Directive for Funeral Care
 - Burial and Funeral Care Instructions

Body Preparation Team

Reports to Burial Society Coordinator.

Prepare anointing oil when picking up the body preparation kit.

Bring baptismal gowns.

Purpose is to prepare a brother or sister in Christ for a Christian burial at Saint Herman Antiochian Orthodox Church. This will be a difficult time for the family, you will have to wait for the family to be ready for you to start. The family may have members that want to assist in the process, this will be a case-by-case situation. The main thing is to be patient with what the family wants and needs. Be respectful to the family and have reverence with the body, this is their loved one and probably your friend. Talking should be a bare minimum and only for instruction purposes.

Check with family to see if the body will be in baptismal gown or street clothes, do they want anything on the feet? Put any clothing that will be worn away from the body until ready to put on body.

The Psalms will be read during the preparation time.

Notify the coffin team of estimated time to bring coffin.

Assist coffin team with placement of body in coffin.

A Team member will need to follow the body to the church and make any adjustments as may be necessary due to transportation.

Team members will need to check and/or be looking for changes in the body while it lies at church for vigil, viewing and funeral service in case any adjustments are needed, or dry ice needs to be used.

If possible, it would be preferable to always have a medical person, i.e. nurse, etc. on the team as they have specific training on handling a body, safely moving a person and will be more prepared on how to deal with any unforeseen issues that might arise.

Body Preparation Instructions

This will be a difficult time for the family, you will have to wait for the family to be ready for you to start. The family may have members that want to assist in the process, this will be a case-by-case situation.

Check with family to see if the body will be in baptismal gown or street clothes, do they want anything on the feet? Put all clothing that will be worn away from the body until ready to put on body.

Check with family to see if they want time with deceased before they are placed in the coffin and taken to the church.

Place cross, icon and candle/light near body preparation area if not already there.

Before commencing body preparation say the prayers for "Preparation of the dead for burial."

Reader begins reading the Psalms.

Put rubber gloves on if desired.

Remove extra bedding, make sure body remains covered by plain sheet throughout the body preparation process.

Put draw sheets and chucks under body as directed.

Remove clothing, may need to be cut off body.

If it's necessary, massage the abdomen & bladder to release fluids then put diaper on body.

Close eyes.

Close jaw.

Wash the body with soap and wash cloths, usually start with the back but if all the body is washed it doesn't matter what order. Dry body after each part is washed.

Wash and comb/brush hair.

Check nails to see if extra cleaning under nails or clipping of nails is needed.

See if family wants to leave the room before beginning the process of sealing the body orifices.

Seal all orifices: ear canals, sinuses, anus, and vagina.

Put diaper on body.

Check to make sure mouth and lips are closed, may have to use super glue to keep lips closed.

Check with family to see if any jewelry needs to be removed.

Anoint the body with prepared oils.

Dress body in clothes provided by family.

Read closing prayers.

Have coffin transportation team bring coffin into body preparation site.

Help move the body into the coffin.

Ensure that “Authority for Release of Decedent’s Body” form has been signed and given to transportation team.

Position body in coffin, with arms crossed over chest.

A team member needs to follow transportation team to church to make adjustments to body as needed.

Remaining team members need to clean up the preparation site and return all supplies to the body prep kit.

Take the body prep kit and remaining baptismal gowns back to storage area.

Coffin Transportation Team

Reports to Body Prep Team leader or Priest.

When notified that coffin will be needed, make sure coffin is wiped down and clean.

Bring coffin trolley.

Bring coffin from storage area to body preparation site or Funeral Home.

Assist Body Prep team with moving body from preparation site into coffin.

Get signed Authorization for Release of Body from Hospital or family before transport.

Transport coffin from preparation site to church and oversee placing in church.

If additional help needed moving coffin notify Burial Society Activator.

Reader Team

Reports to Body Preparation Team Leader and/or Burial Society Coordinator.

Reads Psalms while the body is being prepared for burial, continuing reading until body leaves the preparation site.

Set-up schedule for all night vigils in coordination with the Priest.

Readers report any changes they may notice in the body to the Burial Society Coordinator.

Grave Preparation Team

Reports to Burial Society Coordinator and priest.

Contact grave digger for time & date grave can be opened.

Prepare graveyard for burial.

See separate hand out for digging grave and necessary supplies needed.

Assist pallbearers as needed, especially lowering coffin into the grave.

Backfill grave.

Mark two graves to be used for the next burials.

Install temporary cross. If necessary, install permanent cross in summer.

Cemetery Burial

The tasks below are intended to be guidelines for the Cemetery Burial Team for a burial in our cemetery from the time someone dies until the cemetery is back in order. As with any project of this magnitude there may be unforeseen circumstances that arise which will have to be handled as they come up.

At time of death:

- 1) Will be notified of the need for a grave, set up time & date of funeral with grave preparers and Priest.

- 2) Have a temporary or permanent Cross ready to be placed when the grave is closed marking where the person's head is.
- 3) Get a digging team ready.
 - a. Line out equipment and operator.
 - b. Get 3 or more people dedicated to getting the grave to finished dimensions.
 - c. Get 3 or more people dedicated to get the grave filled in and cemetery back to how it was.
 - d. Get numerous people committed to removing rocks bigger than 3" from the backfilled grave and from the left-over pile of dirt.
- 4) Mark location for cross.
 - a. The center of new grave is 72" from previous headstone center.
 - b. The headstones or crosses should be in a straight line.
 - c. The grave should be 36" to 40" wide, 86" to 90" long and 72" deep.
- 5) Prepare cemetery for congregation, this may include laying plywood or metal plates for people to stand on (this is dependent on ground conditions).
 - a. Winter time frame is October 1st to April 30th (approximately)
 - i. Snow blow paths and standing area
 - ii. Put gravel down if icy
 - b. Summer
 - i. Mow the lawn
 - ii. Tidy other grave sites as needed.

Digging the grave:

- 1) Have a plan for the dirt while it is out of the ground, cover with a tarp if rain is in the forecast or an insulated tarp if temperatures are below freezing.
- 2) The ground should be spray painted to mark where to dig.
- 3) An excavator or backhoe makes the process much faster but is not necessary and not always possible.
- 4) If equipment is not being used, plan a few hours with shovels, pickaxes, heavy bars, buckets, and rope.
- 5) If equipment is being used, then plan on finishing the hole and squaring the sides by hand.
- 6) Place 3 boards, approximately 2' long on ground in grave for coffin to sit on when placed in grave (this enables the ropes to be pulled out).
- 7) Prepare the boards that go across the grave (for holding the coffin).
- 8) Cover the hole with plywood so nobody or nothing falls in before the funeral.

Supplies necessary for burial:

- 3 Nylon Ropes 5/8" X 20'
- 3 small boards for inside the grave for coffin to sit-on
- 2 4X4 8' long minimum
- Spray paint to mark grave site
- Shovels
- Small digging shovel
- Post Hole digger
- Pickaxe
- Ladder
- 3 green turf rugs, 2 for length of grave and 1 for head of grave for priests to stand
- 2 white buckets for sand on either side of grave

Day of the Funeral:

- 1)Uncover grave and position boards.
- 2)Lay ropes out for coffin lowering; head, middle and foot.
- 3)Rehearse all movements with pallbearers ahead of the funeral service. This would be best done an hour before the visitation, or the Funeral service begins. **The goal is for movement of the coffin to be safe and dignified.**
- 4)Moving the coffin out of the church is best accomplished using the foldable, rolling "coffin trolley" the coffin has been setting on.

- 5) Direct the pallbearers to get the coffin over the grave safely sliding the coffin on the positioned boards.
- 6) Thread ropes through coffin handles so they can be retrieved when coffin is lowered.
- 7) Remove boards when pallbearers are ready to lower coffin.
- 8) Position bucket of dirt for people to pay their last respects.

After funeral service:

- 1) Wait for everyone to leave grave site.
- 2) Put a temporary or permanent cross at the head of the grave buried at least 18 inches deep.
- 3) Fill in the grave, slightly mounded, remove any rocks larger than 3" on surface of the grave.
- 4) Clean as much of the fill dirt as possible from the lawn.
- 5) Return digging tools and tarps, boards, and ropes.
- 6) Mark two graves to be used for the next burials.

Summertime:

- 1) Replace temporary crosses with permanent cross as needed.



Bereaved Family Care Team

This position will work closely with the parish priest, family, and guest transportation team.

Assist family with Death Certificate Worksheet for Valley Funeral Home.

Take death certificate worksheet to Valley Funeral Home. Ask Valley Funeral Home to email the burial permit to sthermanchurch@gmail.com.

Locate and arrange guest accommodation for out-of-town family as may be needed.

Coordinate with Mercy Meal Team Leader for family meals as may be needed and Mercy Meal for after Funeral including sending leftovers home for bereaved family as is necessary and appropriate.

Team Leader should coordinate care with the entire Bereaved Family Care Team to offer practical support and grief support to the family for about 40 days after the death of their loved one to ensure that they do not feel abandoned the day or week after the funeral is completed. Ideas include but are not limited to offering help with the following 2-3 times per week: meals, visits, chores, errands, regular check-ins and phone calls. Mileage for this support will vary based on the circumstances of the death and the needs of the bereaved family.

Funeral Program Team

Reports to Priest or Bereaved Family team leader.

Prepare Funeral Program for funeral service with Priest and Family.

Helps prepare Obituary if family requests or needs assistance.

Mercy Meal Team

Report to Burial Society Coordinator and Priest.

Coordinate Mercy Meal for after funeral service.

Set-up and Clean-up of Parish Hall.

Work with Bereaved Family Care Team to send leftovers home with family as is necessary and appropriate.

Guest Transportation Team

This position works closely with Burial Society Coordinator and Bereaved Family Care Team.

Coordinate out-of-town transportation to and from airport as needed.

Assistance may be needed for in-state transportation.

Transportation may be needed from the lodging location to church for funeral.

Church Preparation Team

Reports to Burial Society Coordinator, Priest and/or Bereaved Family Team Leader.

Prepare Church for Funeral Service: cleaning, set-up as needed, decorating, arranging flowers, cleaning after service as needed.

Check with Bereaved Family Care team to see if family would like a guestbook.

Assign a person to monitor the guestbook for the family as needed.

Estimated Funeral and Burial Expenses

Grave prep and backfilling	\$1,200 - \$1,500
Coffin	\$1,600
Cross for grave marker	\$130
Body Preparation supplies	\$70
Guest Book	<u>\$30</u>
<i>Subtotal for expenses incurred by St. Herman Church</i>	<i>\$3,030 - \$3,330</i>

Death Certificate and copies

Processing (Valley Funeral Home)	\$200.00
1 st copy	\$30.00
Additional copies each	\$25.00

At least five copies are recommended, but the total is up to the family of the departed loved one.

Total with 5 death certificates **\$3,360 - \$3,660**

These estimated costs are as of April 2024 and are subject to change.

Contact List

(as of April 2024)

Valley Funeral Home

(orders death certificates & prints/emails burial permit)

151 E Herning Ave

Wasilla, AK 99654

907-373-3344

www.mat-suvalleyfuneralhome.com

Funeral Director: Todd Grant

todd@legacyalaska.com

Dwayne Shelton – Grave Digger

512 E Dolphin Ave

Palmer, AK 99645

907-982-9067

ProtoDn. George Nelson – Coffins and Cemetery Crosses

6853 N Mission Circle

Wasilla, AK 99654

907-354-5320