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Funeral Policies

We are honored to walk with you in times of grief, as families seek to honor and remember loved ones with a funeral or memorial service. Our Pastoral staff will provide spiritual care and support to you and your family. We will work with you and a funeral home to plan and provide a traditional service with a casket, a cremation service, or a memorial service (sometimes called "Celebration of Life" in which neither a body nor cremains are present) or graveside service. Our pastor can also be asked to lead a service at another site, such as at a funeral home, a care center, or other gathering place.

Our pastor and staff are not responsible or trained for the specialties a funeral home provides. Funeral home staff know where to begin, whom to call and how to assist you best. Thus, if you do not work with a funeral home and our pastor, neither a funeral nor memorial service can happen at our churches. (There may be exceptions, such as an extremely small service [under 15 people], or a simple graveside service.)

Thus, the following policies presume the services of a funeral home are involved:

INITIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The death of a member of the church should be reported as soon as possible to the pastor, who will assist in arrangements for the funeral. Local funeral home staff contact us as soon as they learn of connections to our churches. No plans for the funeral should be made apart from consultation with the pastor.

PASTOR

Our pastor will conduct funeral and memorial services as part of her/his call and responsibility. There are many traditions and customs around funeral and burial practices; our pastor will help discern and decide what is appropriate for services held at our church and cemetery. Should a family desire another pastor to participate, that person must be an ordained pastor of a recognized Christian denomination whose teachings are consistent with our Lutheran understanding of God's grace and forgiveness, death and resurrection. Our pastor will be the presiding minister.

HOLY COMMUNION

If the family chooses to have communion, in keeping with our ELCA theology, our communion table is “open.” All those who recognize Christ’s presence will be invited to participate.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Family members/friends will be encouraged to serve as readers of scripture and/or to read the obituary. The pastor or congregational members can also fill these roles.

REFLECTIONS/ EULOGIES

We will not include an “open mic” sharing time within the worship service. Family members or friends may share prepared remarks in the worship (limit to 5-10 minutes). Reflections must be given to the pastor ahead of time. This allows time to review content and anticipate length. Additionally, the pastor can use the written document to complete the presentation, should the speaker be overcome with emotion,

THE BURIAL/COMMITTAL

Cemeteries have coordinators (sextons) for burial arrangements for either a casket or cremains. We will put your family in touch with our cemetery sexton or assist you with other contacts if the burial is off-site. Costs of preparing the site, placing markers, and recording the placement are determined by the sexton in coordination with the funeral home. Every cemetery has different policies.

SOCIAL AND FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

The church understands the funeral to be a service of Christian worship. We do not include social or fraternal societies rites or ceremonies within the worship. Military and fraternal tributes and rites will be kept separate from the funeral and committal services. We work with our local Legion to determine the best way to honor individuals; usually, the giving of a flag, “taps,” and salutes take place during graveside services. Freestanding decorative symbols of social and fraternal organizations should not be displayed in the church.

FUNERAL MUSIC

Music selections for funerals and memorial services should reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust, and hope in the resurrection. Our musicians can assist in song selection. The pastor has final approval of all music for appropriateness and should be made aware of all music to be performed. Should the family choose to have a friend or family member perform, please coordinate with our musician to allow adequate accompaniment and rehearsal time.

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Floral arrangements and plants may be placed in the sanctuary, narthex, and fellowship hall. Often, a family chooses to leave flowers for the church as a gift and to use at the next worship service in remembrance of the deceased. All other flowers must be removed from the church following worship.

DECORATIONS

Displays, pictures, or memorabilia must be appropriate to a worship setting. Displays of photos or personal effects are the responsibility of the family to put up and take down; the funeral home may assist. Please do not use tacks, tape, or nails on the walls.

FUNERAL FEES

If the deceased or a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, siblings) is an active member of our church, there is no fee for the use of the facilities. For all other individuals, additional fees will be assessed. *For the purposes of this policy, "active" members are defined as those who presently regularly attend our church and contribute support. Most active members' annual contributions meet or exceed the fees we'd collect from non-members for use of our facilities (\$300-\$500).*

The funeral home arranges and fulfills the fees and honorariums as part of their service to the family. If that is not arranged, personal checks will be expected prior to the service.

	Member	Non-Member
Use of Sanctuary	No fee	\$275
Use of Fellowship Hall.....	No fee.....	\$125

Pastor.....Honorarium, Typically \$150-\$300

Pianist/Soloist(s).....Honorarium, Typically \$100-\$150

Custodian.....Honorarium, Typically \$100-\$200

Serving Group gift–Typically \$200-\$300, depending on food served (full meal or refreshments)

- Even for a small gathering, 2-3 church representatives from our serving committees must be present (and compensated with an honorarium) to oversee kitchen use to assist with equipment and to answer questions.
- All food must be catered provided by the family.
- Members of our congregation's service committees will be pleased to provide cupcakes for dessert if the family would like.
- Our church will provide and serve beverages of coffee, lemonade, and water.

Sound System/Videographer* Operators.....\$50 \$50

**Videographer: We can film and post the funeral for members or those closely connected to our community on our church's Facebook or YouTube page, but we require advance notice (at least 3 days). Please note: music licensure prohibits us from broadcasting most recorded music.*

Approved 3/10/2026