



ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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MUSKOGEE, OK 74401

STPAULMUSKOGEE.COM

FUNERAL POLICY

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THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN FUNERAL SERVICE

The gathering of family and friends, who form a community of hope for a funeral service, is a rich opportunity to recall the promises of God through Christ. Because of His suffering, death, and resurrection to new life, each time we gather to worship upon the death of a loved one, we do so in the context of God's promise. Every funeral at St. Paul United Methodist Church includes praising God in Christ who is our hope and our salvation, even as we remember the deceased and give thanks to God for the time shared with that person.

United Methodist Christians believe in Jesus Christ whose bodily death and resurrection made possible life everlasting. Christians view death as another step in our life as children of God. Yet, Christians also experience death as a time of loss when sorrow, grief, and bereavement are both natural and appropriate. These two truths inform the Christian funeral service and guide the church in its ministry to those who have lost a loved one to death, affirming with both joy and tears the promise and hope of the Good News of Jesus.

A funeral service should be comforting to those who mourn as well as bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. The concern of gathered friends does minister to our grief but, above all else, a funeral is a service of worship to God. There, in God's presence together, we witness to our faith in the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. In doing so, the assurance of God's love and salvation in Christ become a ministry, especially to the bereaved. Since a funeral is a service of worship, all that takes place should be consistent with this principle.

PASTORAL STAFF

Upon the death of one of our members, please contact the pastor as soon as possible. Upon receiving your call, arrangements will begin to be made for the service. Funerals at St. Paul need to be coordinated with the Pastor's schedule and the church's availability. Every effort will be made to accommodate the family's needs in scheduling a funeral, but there are times when the pastor may not be available or there is already an event scheduled at the church that cannot be rescheduled. The date and time of a funeral should be scheduled with the church office before it is announced by the funeral home.

Because the funeral service is first and foremost a worship service, the pastor of St. Paul UMC presides in preparing and officiating the funeral service. Other pastors may assist in the service only with the Pastor's approval.

TYPES OF SERVICES

All services conducted by the pastor of the church are services of worship for the community of faith. In United Methodism, we use the term "A Service of Death and Resurrection" to capture all types of services. However, the typical variations of a service are:

Memorial Service—The Memorial Service is a service in which the body is not present. Internment of the remains in a Service of Committal has either preceded the Memorial Service or will take place at a later time.

Funeral Service—The Funeral Service is a service in which the body is present in either a casket or an urn.

Graveside Service—The Graveside Service is a service that takes place at the burial site. It may stand alone or follow a service at the church.

LOCATION OF SERVICE

The most appropriate place for a funeral of a Christian to take place is the sanctuary of their home church. In this way we join this service to the community's continuing life and witness to the Resurrection.

St. Paul is where we worship every Sunday, baptize our children, celebrate marriage, gather at the Lord's Table, and remember the love and grace of God. Here we are surrounded by the symbols of our Christian faith. In this place we have tangible reminders of the "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds us and the community of faith that supports us with compassion and love.

If the family wishes to have the service elsewhere this should be discussed with the pastor.

VISITATION

A visitation may be held either at the church or at the funeral home, though the funeral home is more common. It is typically held the evening before the service. If you desire for the visitation to be at the church, the parlor is available for use. Visitations are typically around two to four hours in length.

THE SERVICE

Funeral Services are acts of worship among the Christian community. The purposes of such service of worship are to glorify God, to affirm our belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and to comfort the bereaved. Additionally, gratitude and honor are to be expressed to God for the life and witness of the deceased. The pastor will collaborate with the family to design a service that both honors your loved one and glorifies God. The pastor designs the service in consultation with the family. It will typically include scripture, music, liturgy, and other acts of worship. The pastor will discuss specifics with the family.

MUSIC

All music chosen should affirm the goodness and grace of God and give comfort and support to those who grieve. The pastor will guide the selection of appropriate songs and hymns. Additional instrumentalists or vocalists may also be employed but must be approved by the pastor. It is appropriate for the family to give honorariums to any musicians involved in the service. Please see the fee schedule for guidance.

NURSERY

The church does not generally provide a nursery for funeral services. If a nursery is needed, the family may request it. If requested, we will do our best to secure nursery attendants for the service, though there may not be any available. The nursery is for children four and under only. Only St. Paul screened and approved nursery attendants may work in the nursery. If attendants are available, the family is responsible for honorariums for nursery attendants. The honorarium should be \$50 per attendant, given directly to the nursery attendant or to the church office. There is a maximum of five children per nursery attendant. The family should request the number of attendants needed and pay all attendants requested, regardless of whether there are children present or not.

CLOSED CASKET

If a casket is present, it must remain closed while in the sanctuary or chapel. If deemed necessary, the casket may be open prior to the funeral service, in the narthex, up to 10 minutes before the start of the service. If the casket is open prior to the service, 10 minutes before the service is scheduled to start the casket will be closed, and remain closed thereafter. The casket remains closed after the service.

FLOWERS

The church does not furnish flowers for the service. The church staff is present to receive flowers for an upcoming service from 8am until 4pm, Monday through Friday.

OTHER FRATERNAL, CIVIC, OR MILITARY RITES

The service shall be complete in itself; however, fraternal, civic, or military rites may be included at the discretion of the pastor. This should be discussed with the pastor during the initial planning discussions before any groups are scheduled.

MEMORIALS

The family might wish that donations are made to the church in lieu of flowers. Undesignated donations may be made to the Memorial Fund or General Endowment of St. Paul in the deceased's name. When a memorial gift is made the family of the deceased will be notified. Those wishing to make a gift for a new project should discuss this with the pastor first. Gifts designated for projects not already established may be returned by St. Paul.

SCHEDULING

Except for in extenuating circumstances, and only with prior pastoral approval, funerals will not be held on the following days: Saturdays and Sundays, secular holidays, and the following days of the Christian calendar: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and All Saints' Day.

Funerals should also always be scheduled no later than 3pm, unless an exception is made by the pastor.

Members

For active members and their immediate family, the church is available for services as available, except holidays. Every effort will be made to work around prior scheduled events. Please do not assume the church or pastor is available until you have contacted the church.

Non-Members

The church is honored to host funerals of non-members Monday through Friday, during normal working hours as our schedule allows. Please do not assume the church or pastor is available until you have contacted the church.

VIDEOS

Memorial videos made by the funeral home or family may be shown during the viewing or in the narthex before the service. The music selected for these videos need not be explicitly Christian but should maintain the reverence of the worship space. If in doubt, the pastor should be consulted before music is selected.

MEALS

Often, families desire a meal before or after the service for a time of fellowship and community.

Members

For active members of St. Paul and their immediate family, we are happy to provide a meal with enough notice and when possible. If you desire a meal, you should let the pastor know at least two days before the service. You may also use the activity center to cater a meal. Catered meals are secured by the family with the caterer of their choice.

Non-members

Non-members may use the activity center to cater a meal. Catered meals are secured by the family with the caterer of their choice.

Building Use Fees and Honorariums

There are no fees for active members' use of the church's facilities. Though a donation to help cover the cost of utilities is appreciated.

Honorarium checks should be made out to the individual persons and not the church and cash should be in clearly labeled envelopes. The family is welcome to distribute themselves or give them to the church office to be distributed on their behalf.

Special Circumstances- We desire that any Christian who wants to have a funeral in a church is able to do so. Building fees help cover the cost of usage and individual honorariums help compensate people for the time, energy, and effort given to make the service as comfortable and meaningful as possible. However, if the cost is prohibitive to your family, please discuss this with our Pastor. The Pastor has the right to adjust the costs when there is financial need.

Honoraria	Active Member	Non-member
Pastor	-	\$200
Musicians/vocalists (each)	Donation encouraged	\$150
Sound Technician	Donation encouraged	\$75
Facility Host (for visitations at the church)	Donation encouraged	\$75

Building Use Fees	Active Member	Non-Member
Sanctuary (includes parlor for family gathering)	-	\$300
Rowsey Chapel	-	\$100
Activity Center for meal	-	\$150
Visitation in the parlor		\$100

MEMBER DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy, all references to “member” mean active professing members of St. Paul UMC and their immediate family members (spouse, children, parents, siblings). An active member is someone who has been participating in the life of the church and fulfilling membership vows for at least one year prior.

These privileges also extended to Homebound members, faithful attendees of the church who attend regularly but who have not officially joined the church as an official member and, those who have served as former pastors or staff of St. Paul.

If there is a question about whether someone is an active member or not, the pastor may be consulted and makes the final determination.

CHECKLIST FOR FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SERVICE PREPARATIONS

- ___The pastor is notified.
- ___The church office is notified.
- ___The service is scheduled through the church office, if it is to be held at the church.
- ___The family plans the service with the pastor.
- ___All fees and honoraria are delivered to the church office.

FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE WORKSHEET

This form is to help you think through some of the possibilities available to you as you plan a funeral. In times of grief and stress, a basic guide or outline can be very helpful, and we hope that this worksheet can provide some assistance to you and your family. Filling this out to the best of your ability ahead of meeting with the pastor or funeral home and bringing it with you will save you some time and decision making during those meetings.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to bring those up with the pastor.

Name of the deceased: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of death: _____

Date of Service: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Primary family planning contact: _____ Family Relationship: _____

Funeral or Memorial Service Pastor Officiating: _____

Funeral Home used: _____ Contact staff person: _____

What is to be done with the flowers after the service? _____

Will photos, albums, keepsakes, or other items be displayed? Yes No

Music selected: Organ/Piano Vocalist: Other instrumentalist:

Hymns selected: Hymnal, #:

Hymnal, #:

Hymnal, #:

Family and friends to be invited to speak (limit of 3, five minutes each):

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Do you wish memorial contributions in your loved one's name to be made to St. Paul UMC?

Yes No

Will there be a burial service to follow the service? Yes No Time: _____

Location: _____ Name of cemetery: _____