



THE FUNERAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF ST. PAUL A.M.E. CHURCH

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The Rev. Nicholas Genevieve-Tweed, Pastor



Funeral Policies and Practices St. Paul A. M. E. Church

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a difficult experience. We grieve the loss of one who has been close, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregation in their time of need. It is through the Word of God that we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (Romans 15: 4). This policy is provided to assist our families in planning and providing a Christian funeral.

Although funeral services may be held in funeral homes, the best place for conducting a funeral service upon the death of a Christian is in the sanctuary of the church to which he or she belonged. By having the service at the church, all who attend will be reminded of our hope and assurance in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of St. Paul are encouraged to use the church building for funeral services. The sanctuary is also offered for the funeral services of Christians whose membership is in another church.

There can be alternative methods for the conducting of services at the time of death. These could include a private graveside service for family members as soon after death as possible and/or a public service of worship (a memorial service) conducted at the church later.

However, funeral worship services will only be conducted in the church sanctuary. The pastor is available to go with the family to the funeral home to assist in making arrangements if desired. The pastor will be happy to meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements.

Date and Time of Funerals

Dates and times for funerals at St. Paul A. M. E. Church are to be arranged in consultation with the pastor and the church office based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. The pastor **must approve all funeral arrangements** at St. Paul A. M. E. Church. Decisions concerning areas outside the scope of this funeral policy shall be decided at the discretion of the pastor.

Funeral services will need to be planned around already scheduled events so it is important that requests are forwarded to the church office as soon as possible to enable the church to accommodate the needs of the family.

Who Will Officiate?

Pastoral ethics require that the pastor conduct all funeral services held at St. Paul, unless by agreement with another pastor, he/she is invited to share in the funeral or act on behalf of the pastor of St. Paul. Any requests for another pastor or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by the pastor of St. Paul.

Structure of the Funeral Service

A funeral service held in the church is a service of worship, celebrating the deceased's life and the promise of eternal life. Consequently, **all parts of the service are to be consistent with the present worship practices of the church.** Generally, the outline for the funeral and burial service will take on a traditional African Methodist Episcopal Church form. The family **may** suggest other items to be included in the service, **with the approval of the pastor.**

Funerals for Non-members and Inactive Members

Conducting funerals for people who have no connection with the church is a normal part of the ministerial obligation. However, it is up to the discretion of the pastor to allow himself or the church to participate.

Funeral Music

Only music appropriate to a worship service shall be used. All musical arrangements (pianist, soloist, etc.) must be requested by the family when the program is being put together and must be approved by the Pastor. St. Paul has on staff musicians that are available to play for funerals, it is the responsibility of the family to provide for them. If possible, we will make every effort to help you, but please remember that the time and date may affect the availability of our musicians. ***As with weddings, a funeral is a service of Christian worship. Therefore, sacred or Christian music would be appropriate.*** Taped instrumental and accompaniment music, soloists and solos, anthems, and guest musicians must have the approval of the pastor. The use of congregational hymns is encouraged and may be selected with the pastor in consultation with the family during the service planning process.

In cases where an outside organist/pianist is desired, permission must be secured from the pastor. Additional musicians or soloists may be utilized. Please note that the use of taped music or pre-recorded accompaniments must be approved by the pastor and must be coordinated with the church office and media department.

Video Presentation

If a video is to be used during the service, it must be submitted to the church office 48 hours prior to the funeral service for review. All presentations should be on a memory stick and ***should NOT exceed five minutes*** in length.

Seating

The church alone assigns seating. Proper seating procedure must be coordinated between the church and the funeral director. In the event that additional seating is needed the pastor, Church officers and the head usher on duty at the funeral, must authorize it. Additional seating will be provided under the direction of the pastor/ Church Officer/s and the Usher's on duty. No unauthorized seating is permitted in the sanctuary.

Decorations

Families may wish to display the deceased's remains, as well as certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:

Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting. No nails, tacks, staples or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews. All decorations must be removed within 3 hours of the conclusion of the service. No furniture shall be removed from the church building. Photographs, pictures and mementos of the deceased and his/her family should be tasteful and in keeping with the sacredness and decorum of the sanctuary.

Flowers

Only fresh cut flowers and planters may be used in the sanctuary.

Closed Casket

All caskets must be closed for the burial service but may be open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only), if desired. When closed, the flower blanket, flag or coverlet covers the casket. The casket remains closed throughout the service. The casket will be closed before the ceremony begins. The funeral director in concert with the pastor will have direction over such matters as timing, closed caskets, music, flowers, etc.

Nursery

The church does not provide a nursery for funeral services. If needed, the family is responsible for securing an attendant.

Parking / Traffic Assistance

Parking assistance is generally provided by the funeral home. The church does not have any resources to assist in traffic control.

Parking is not allowed in the back of the church as the bays are leased.

Memorials

In certain circumstances, the family might request a contribution to the church or a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. The church will not manage, receive or distribute designated

funds for an outside institution. Undesignated funds and funds designated for an established project at Harmony will be received by the church. Funds designated for a project or ministry not previously established will be designated for such only with approval of the Deacons.

Fees

If the deceased or a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, siblings) is an **active member*** of St. Paul there is no fee for the use of the facilities. For all other individuals, additional fees will be assessed. Those who have been members of St. Paul but now are considered **inactive members** will pay the same fees as **non-members**. Fees are payable through the funeral Director and will be included with the overall funeral charges. Normally, honorariums for the pastor are at the discretion of the family, other fees for the pianist, or musicians are paid through the funeral director.

***active member** (defined below)

The following fees apply:

	Active Member*	Non- Member & Inactive Member
Use of Sanctuary		\$400.00
Pastor**		
Pianist/Organist	\$200.00	\$200.00
Sexton	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Sound System Technician(s)	\$100.00	\$100.00
Facebook Livestream/Zoom	-	\$100.00
	\$350.00	\$950.00

**For the purposes of this policy, active members are defined as those members of St. Paul A. M. E. Church who regularly attend church services and contribute to the church as they generally provide regular financial and personal support for the church. These privileges are also extended to the following:*

1. Homebound members.
2. Faithful attendees of the church who attend regularly but who have not officially joined the church as an official member and.....
3. Those who have served as former pastors of the church.

****There is no fixed fee for the services of the St. Paul minister; however, it is customary to give an honorarium to the officiating minister. Checks should be made payable to the individual minister. (contact the church office for correct spellings)**

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE DIES...

Contact Other Family Members and Close Friends **Contact Your Pastor and the Church** Notify employer of the deceased and your own employer. If children are in school, notify the school, choose a Funeral Home.

Before going to the Funeral Home...

It will save you considerable time and phone calls if you have the following information available.

1. Full name of deceased (include nickname or other names person may have used

2. Date of Birth _____

3. Place of Birth _____

4. Father's Name _____

5. Mother's Name (Maiden) _____

6. List of relatives and relationship to the deceased

7. List of church, professional organizations, clubs and other organizations in which membership was held: -

8. Compile a list of individuals who might be available to serve as pallbearers:

From the Church

To the Grave

9. If a memorial or funeral service is announced in the newspapers, take extra precaution for security at the home of the deceased during the indicated time of the service.

The following information will be needed *for the Funeral Home* and for the planning of the service.

Name of Deceased _____

Family Contact _____ Relationship _____

Family Address _____

Family Phone _____

Other Contact Phone _____

Funeral Home _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Funeral Director _____

Phone _____

Number of Family Members _____

Family Hour/Viewing Scheduled Yes/ No

Location _____

Floral Requests _____

Funeral Service Instructions

Service Location: St. Paul A.M.E. Church, 59 Court Street, Hamilton

Date & Time of Service: _____

Officiating Minister: _____

Scripture Readers: _____

Prayer of Comfort: _____

Eulogy _____

***Persons doing Eulogy MUST be named.
Spontaneous tributes are NOT PERMITTED.***

Video Presentation Format: (e.g. DVD/Powerpoint etc.) _____

Viewing (Beginning of the Service) *check one* Yes _____ No _____

Interment (Cemetery) _____

Pallbearers

From the Church

To the Grave

Honorary Pallbearers (if necessary) _____

Music (soloist(s)/tribute etc.) : _____

**St. Paul A.M.E. Church
Celebration of Life Template**

Date of Service: _____

Time of Service: _____

Place of Service: _____

Officiant: _____

Musician: _____

The Order of Service

.....Officiating

.....Organist

The Processional.....Clergy and Family

The Hymn of Comfort (or Celebration)
(Title of the hymn followed by author of tune in parenthesis)

The Prayer of Comfort
(Name of the person praying)

The Scripture Readings
First Lesson:
Second Lesson:

The Musical Selection (Optional)
(Name of the Song followed by the name of Soloist/Choir/Accompanist)

The Tributes:
Church/ Community/ Civic group
Professional or work related
Family

The Church Resolution (if Appropriate)
(Name and Title of the Church designee reading the resolution)

The Musical Selection (Optional).....
(Name of the Song followed by the name of the Soloist/Choir/Accompanist)

The Obituary.....

The Musical Selection
(Name of the Song followed by the name of the SOloist/Choir/Accompanist)

The Eulogy.....
(Name of eulogist)

The Recessional.....
(Name of the Song followed by the name of Soloist/Choir/Accompanist)

The Service of Committal will be at (Insert the Location of the burial site)

**Due to COVID Congregational singing will be replaced with a soloist (musical or vocal)*

Audio/Visual Requirements

Video Presentation Format: (e.g. DVD/PowerPoint etc.) _____

If using a soloist please answer the following:

Using a track? Y_____ or N_____

Music is best provided via USB flash drive or emailing electronic file to stpaulameaudio@gmail.com.

*All Video or Audio materials **must be** presented at least **24 hours in advance** to ensure everything is in good working order.*



WHERE TO FIND HELP TO DEAL WITH YOUR GRIEF

Our church offers Bereavement Ministry to anyone who requests it. It is especially helpful, supporting members who have lost loved ones. If you are interested, please contact Rev. Judith Gardner. She can be reached through the church office at 292-0505.



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