



***Date Approved: February 15, 2010.....***

***Approved By: Bethel Lutheran Board of Elders .....***

### **Title: FUNERAL POLICY**

**Purpose:** 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. At such times of loss, all may be reminded by even the place of service of what our hope and assurance are in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of Bethel are encouraged to use the church building for funeral services. 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 public service of worship conducted at a later date. The pastor is available to go with the family to the funeral home to assist in making arrangements if desired. The pastor will also be happy to meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements. The following policy's purpose is to help in these arrangements by providing a framework that protects the beliefs of the faith and also provides a dignified service that honors the deceased and emphasizes the hope of the resurrection.

### **POLICIES:**

1. **Date and time of funerals:** Dates and times for funerals at Bethel are to be arranged in consultation with the pastor based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family.
2. **Who will officiate:** Bethel's pastor will conduct all funeral services held at the church. Bethel's pastor and the Board of Elders must approve any requests for another ordained pastor of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod to assist in the service.
3. **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 through Jesus Christ. Consequently, all parts of the service are to be consistent with the present worship practices of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and Bethel Lutheran Church. Generally, the outline for the funeral and burial service as found in the approved LCMS hymnal currently being used at Bethel would be followed. The family may suggest other items to be included in the service, with the approval of the pastor.
4. **Pastoral Services to Members of Other Congregations:** A request of this nature will be considered on a case-by-case basis with approval coming from the Board of Elders.
5. **Funeral for Non-members:** A request of this nature will be considered on a case-by-case basis with approval coming from the Board of Elders.
6. **Funeral Music:** Music performed at a service of Christian burial is understood as an act of worship, offered to God in devotion, thanksgiving and praise. Therefore, all music used during the funeral service (including prelude and postlude) must be sacred in nature and approved by the pastor. Typically the organ is the main instrument for the service and the church will provide an organist. Outside organists, additional musicians and soloists may be utilized with the permission of the pastor. The use of taped music or pre-recorded accompaniments is discouraged.

7. **Services by Fraternal Orders, Lodges etc.:** Services by fraternal orders, lodges, veterans groups or other organizations are not appropriate at a LCMS funeral service. If they are held, they should be limited to the funeral home or graveside and must be coordinated with the pastor prior to the service. Such services are not to be confused or combined with the official funeral service.
8. **Decorations:** Paraments on the altar, lectern and pulpit will remain the color of the day or season. Families may wish to display the deceased's cremains, as well as certain mementos or pictures of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:
  - a. Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.
  - b. No nails, tacks, staples or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews.
  - c. All decorations must be removed following the service. No furniture shall be removed from the church building.
  - d. No videos or PowerPoint presentations may be shown.
9. **Flowers:** Flowers delivered to the church will be taken care of until the funeral home arrives to prepare for the funeral. From that time on the funeral home will manage the placement of the flowers and transfer them to the cemetery or appropriate location. Bethel will accept flowers for the altar if the service calendar is open on that particular Sunday.
10. **Closed casket:** All caskets must be closed for the funeral service, but may be open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only), if desired.
11. **Nursery:** Under normal conditions, the church does not provide a nursery for funeral services.
12. **Parking/Traffic Assistance:** Parking assistance is generally provided by the funeral home. The church does not have any resources to assist in traffic control on city streets or highways.
13. **Family Fellowship Meal:** A fellowship meal will be provided upon request. A meal coordinator will contact the family to make arrangements.
14. **Bulletins:** if bulletins are to be given out during the service, the church secretary will prepare them.
15. **Memorials:** In many cases, the family might request that memorials be made to Bethel Lutheran Church and/or School or to other charitable organizations. Memorials designated for Bethel Lutheran Church and/or School will be received, managed and distributed by the Bethel Lutheran Foundation. Bethel Lutheran will not manage, receive or distribute funds for outside organizations.
16. **Fees:**

Officiating Minister:	Honorarium
Organist:	\$60.00
Sound Technician:	\$60.00

