



# Panther Springs United Methodist Church

## Funeral Policies and Practices

### **Funeral Services**

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a difficult experience. We grieve the loss of one who has been close. It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregation and community 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.

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 is happy to meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements.

### **Date and Time of Funerals**

Funerals are very time sensitive, however, dates and times for funerals at PSUMC are to be arranged in consultation with the PSUMC pastor based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. The pastor must approve all funeral arrangements. Funeral services will need to be planned around already scheduled events such as weddings, conferences, worship, etc.

### **Who Will Officiate?**

Pastoral ethics require that PSUMC's current Pastor conduct all funeral services held at the church, unless by agreement with the Pastor, another leader is invited to share in the funeral service. Any requests for another clergy or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by the PSUMC Pastor.

### **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 church.

Generally, the outline for the funeral and burial service will take on a traditional United Methodist format. The family may suggest other items to be included in the service, with the approval of the Pastor. The Pastor is available to meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements and can also be available to go with the family to the funeral home if desired.

## **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. When closed, the flower blanket, flag or pall covers the casket. The casket remains closed throughout the service. The Funeral Director in concert with the pastor will have direction over such matters.

## **Care For Grieving Families On The Day of the Service**

A reception or meal on the day of the service may be hosted by the church. Tables and chairs can be set up in the fellowship hall to accommodate needs.

## **Funeral Music**

Only music appropriate to a worship service shall be used. All musical arrangements (pianist, soloist, etc.) must be arranged for and taken care of by the family. If possible, we will make every effort to help you, but please remember that time and date may affect the availability of our musicians / staff. 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 PSUMC pastor or worship leader. 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 PSUMC Pastor. Additional musicians or soloists may be utilized.

## **Video Presentation**

If a video or slide presentation is to be used during the service, it must be submitted to the church office at least 24 hours prior to the funeral service for review. All presentations should be in a completed DVD or Power Point format.

## **Decorations**

Families may wish to display certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. A table will be supplied for this purpose. 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.

