

***FUNERAL POLICY***  
***GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH***  
***REDFORD TOWNSHIP, MI***

**Introduction**

A funeral is one of the single most stressful and sad services that any family will have to encounter. Death is a difficult time for all that are involved. That is the reason we have put together this little pamphlet. The Pastors at Grace Church wish to help you in all that needs be done so that your loved one will have a service that glorifies Jesus Christ and gives your family member the respect and honor deserved and also comfort for the survivors.

**A Funeral Service In The Sanctuary**

Since a funeral service is also a worship service it is all about Jesus Christ and what He has done for us with His own suffering and death on the cross. The funeral service will glorify Jesus Christ. Therefore, the honor and dignity of a worship service in the sanctuary of Grace Lutheran Church is reserved for members of the congregations only. The criteria of being “a member” of the church consists of weekly and active worship on Sunday mornings, receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion regularly and giving service to the Lord and His church during the week. Another criteria of being a member of Grace Church is as a “shut-in.” One who is unable to attend worship, but receives the Sacrament of Holy Communion on a regular basis by one of the pastors either at the home or in a nursing home. A member must be a person of prayer and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior of all. They also will be active and enrolled on our membership list. The pastors will meet with you at an established time (usually during visitation) to plan the service of your loved one with you.

**A Funeral Service At A Funeral Home**

Some members of the congregation wish to only have a service at the funeral home. This is a custom that many follow today. You will need to meet with a licensed funeral director at the funeral home of your choice. As a church we do not endorse any particular funeral home but recognize that all funeral homes in the Detroit area do a tremendous job. The funeral director will cover their guidelines with you. The pastor will also meet with you at a

certain time (usually during the visitation) to plan the service of your loved with you. He will be at the funeral home to conduct the service.

## **Music**

**In the sanctuary:** Music can calm the troubled heart. It is always important that the music picked was a hymn that your loved one enjoyed and brings comfort to you. The music must be the type that glorifies Jesus Christ and is used in our Sunday worship services. Our staff organist will play at the funeral if his schedule permits. We also have a guest organist who is usually available to play. She is also knowledgeable of our funeral services and does a fine job as well. The pastor will meet with you to plan the music for your loved one's service as well.

All music that will be used will come from our Lutheran Service Book. If there is a particular contemporary piece that is desired, our organist can play it. No taped music, C.D.'s or iPod music is allowed. In addition, no secular songs or music are allowed in the Sanctuary. This is the House of God.

**At the funeral home:** Many funeral homes have a small organ available that can provide "live" music instead of C.D.'s or iPods. Our church organist, if scheduling permits, will be happy to come to the funeral home and play for your loved one's service. If he is not available, many funeral homes have an organist that can be contacted. If none of this is the case C.D.'s and iPods are certainly acceptable. Please speak with the funeral director. Even at the funeral home any music that is used during the worship service must be music that honors and glorifies Jesus Christ.

If a secular song is desired because it was one of the loved one's favorite songs it can be played once the Christian funeral service has ended.

## **The Service**

When a loved one dies those who are still living are seeking comfort. We can find that comfort in the message of Jesus Christ and He crucified and risen for us. Therefore, this is the time when the Church speaks on behalf of Jesus.

The funeral service will be conducted as St. Paul says "decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40). It will be a service that will first of all

proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and second of all through Word and hymns, comfort the souls of those who are alive.

Prayers will be said, hymns will be sung, Scripture read, and a eulogy and a Christian message of hope will be delivered by the pastor.

While many families desire to speak about their loved ones and thank those who attended the service the Sanctuary setting is not an appropriate place to do so. Other desirable places for family to offer stories or memories is either at the cemetery following the committal service or at the memorial luncheon.

The funeral within the walls of the Sanctuary is the time for the Church and God's Word to speak and to be proclaimed. The pastors are called by the church to carry out that ministry.

### **Non-member Funerals**

**In a large congregation and in a large metropolitan area** the leadership of Grace Church understands that the pastors will be called upon to conduct funeral services for non-members. Whether they are services for past members, a family member of one of our current congregational members, family of past members, a congregational member family in need of clergy to conduct their loved one's service the pastors are willing to carry out this loving and important ministry.

#### **This type of service will be carried out under the following guidelines:**

It will only be conducted in a funeral home setting. While size of attendees and other issues may be a reason to hold the service in the Sanctuary non-member funerals will only be conducted by the pastoral staff at a funeral home. If you wish one of our pastors to conduct a funeral service please have the funeral director call us immediately to set a time and a date.

In some instances, a funeral can be conducted in our East Chapel here on the church property. Please speak with the pastor to make arrangements. If the East Chapel is used the same criteria for music and worship service apply.

## Memorial Services

We understand that many Christians today desire cremation. While cremation is not necessarily "banned" in Holy Scripture we understand that this is the wish of many today.

If a memorial service is desired, once again, the same criteria remains true for a memorial service as well as a funeral service.

If a memorial service is desired to be conducted in the Sanctuary of Grace Church the decedent must have been a member in good standing of the church. Please see above for criteria of being a member.

The music must also glorify Jesus Christ, His message of salvation will be proclaimed and the service will be conducted in the Name of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Just as a casketed body will be present at a funeral service we understand that the cremains of your loved ones might possibly be present during the memorial service. They must be placed in an urn and will be placed on a stand next to the Lectern during the memorial service. They will not be allowed to be placed on the altar. This same criteria applies to the East Chapel as well.

The pastor will set up a time to meet in his office to discuss the memorial service with you. Please call the church office once arrangements have been made through a funeral home.

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| <p><b>Final Note:</b> In all of these worship services, whether in the Sanctuary or in a funeral home or in our East Chapel the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ will be proclaimed and comfort provided to those in attendance will be offered in the Name of Jesus Christ as the only way unto Salvation. The entire worship service will be offered in the Name of the Holy Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p> |
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## Funeral Lunch Policy

We all find comfort in food and fellowship following a funeral service. The funeral director and the pastor can direct you to restaurants and local dining halls that will be willing to work with you.

The Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church may be used for a funeral lunch.

Here is the policy:

- 1) The funeral service must be conducted in our Sanctuary first and the decedent a member in good standing of Grace Church.
- 2) The caterer of Grace Church must be used. There are no exceptions.

Dimaggio's Bakery and Catering Service  
25861 Six Mile Rd.  
Redford, MI 48240  
(313) 538-9665

- 3) No outside food of any kind is allowed in the Fellowship Hall during the luncheon.
- 4) No alcoholic beverages of any kind are permitted inside the church building at all.
- 5) Smoking is allowed outside only.
- 6) All leftover food is to be taken by the family at the end of the luncheon.

Final thoughts: The prayers of the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church are always with you as you mourn and offer final respects to your loved one. Seek the Lord and find comfort in His message of love and forgiveness.

Our prayer is that this document will help you in funeral preparations. We wish the best for you and pray that the Lord will always be with you and give you peace in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

The Board of Elders of Grace Church  
The Pastors of Grace Church