

## **Funeral Policy**

### **Acacia Park Lutheran Church**

#### **Introduction**

At a person's death, the church shares in the grief of those who mourn and remembers together the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise that we are claimed by Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> At Acacia Park Lutheran Church, we welcome you to share your burdens with our community and celebrate with us the hope of new life in Christ.

#### **Preparations**

It is often best to have a funeral plan in place before death occurs. Going over funeral arrangements with both a pastor/spiritual leader and a lawyer is suggested. However, death can be unexpected and in such situations, the pastor at Acacia Park Lutheran Church is readily available to help and walk alongside a family on this difficult journey. The pastor at Acacia Park Lutheran Church can provide assistance from choosing a funeral home/parlor to planning and scheduling a service. In most cases, the funeral home/parlor takes care of the scheduling and arrangements, working in partnership with the pastor/spiritual leader who takes responsibility for the funeral service and pastoral care. It is strongly suggested that the family schedule a time to meet with the pastor to plan together the funeral service, to provide background on the deceased as needed, and to voice any concerns or requests.

#### **The Funeral Service**

Because a funeral is a continuation of the baptismal journey, it is suggested that every funeral service be held at Acacia Park Lutheran Church in the presence of the gathered community and that holy communion be celebrated. The celebration of the gift of holy communion is a feast with all the saints throughout time and space, including the recently deceased. A funeral service with holy communion is the best symbol for what a Christian believes about death and resurrection. However, circumstances arise in which the deceased was not baptized or the family wishes not to include holy communion in the funeral service. A smaller, simpler service can be used. The pastor and the community of Acacia Park Lutheran Church are happy to honor and accommodate any circumstances and wishes of the family of the deceased. Some families wish for music and/or accompaniment for hymns and songs during the service. At Acacia Park, our own parish organist is often available for funerals. If unavailable, there are a number of local organists or pianists that can be contacted. We welcome any outside musicians, though it is advisable that any live music reflect the tradition of the church. At Acacia Park Lutheran Church we welcome guest pastors and presiders to assist in funerals. After consultation with the pastor, we are happy to print the funeral bulletin free of cost. In the case of cremation, we suggest that the remains be present for the funeral service as well as the interment service graveside. On occasion, it will be necessary to have the funeral service and interment service on different days. At Acacia Park, we are happy to accommodate such scheduling circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Funeral, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006.

## **Suggested Donation/Fee\***

### **Members**

Pastor: An Honorarium is optional

Building Use (Sanctuary)/coordination/pastoral presence: \$250 donation is optional

Organist/pianist: \$200

### **Non-Members**

Building Use (Sanctuary)/coordination/pastoral presence: \$500

Pastoral presence only: \$300

Organist/pianist: \$200

*\*If a family expresses difficulty in providing any of the amounts listed above, we simply suggest that they contribute whatever amount they are able. As noted under "non-members," if the church facility is not used for the funeral service, it is customary to provide an honorarium of \$300 to the pastor.*

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Is it required that the deceased or any family member of the deceased be a member of Acacia Park Lutheran Church?** No, for funerals at Acacia Park Lutheran Church we provide access to our pastor and our facility for all, both member and non-member.

**Can the funeral service take place in a setting other than Acacia Park Lutheran Church?** Yes, often families request that the service take place at the funeral parlor. Others request only a graveside service. At Acacia Park, we strive to accommodate all requests. In the event that the service does not take place on site at the church, there will be no suggested donation for building usage.

**Is there parking available at the church?** During the school year and during school hours, there is limited street parking available on the blocks bordering and surrounding the church. In the event that a funeral service is scheduled during the school year on a weekday during school hours, we do our best to reserve 3-4 parking spots immediately in front of the church entrance for family. During the summer or outside of school hours, there is ample street and school lot parking.

**Can flowers be placed in the sanctuary?** Yes, we welcome any floral arrangements to be placed in the sanctuary.

**Is there space for open-casket viewing?** Yes, in the event that the family of the deceased desires to have a time for viewing prior to the funeral service, a space at the back of the church sanctuary is set up to accommodate viewing.

### **Contact Information**

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