



Funeral Policies and Practices

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a challenging 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. Through the Word of God, we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (ROMANS 15:4).

EGCC provides this policy to assist our families in planning and executing a Christian funeral. Although funerals may take place in funeral homes, the best place to conduct a funeral service upon the transition of a Christian is in the sanctuary of the church to which they belonged. By having the service at the church, all who attend will learn of our hope and assurance in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of EGCC are encouraged to use the church building for funeral services.

There can be alternative methods for conducting services at the time of death. These could include a private graveside service for family members as soon after death as possible or a public service of worship (a memorial service) conducted at the church later. However, funeral worship services will only take place in the church sanctuary. The Senior Pastor or a member of the Bereavement team will be happy to meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements.

FUNERALS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

EGCC will ONLY host funeral services for those who were ACTIVE MEMBERS at the time of transition. We also extend this privilege to the IMMEDIATE FAMILY of active members (spouse, children, and parents). Pastoral staff or EGCC ministry teams may participate in outside funeral services at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

For this policy, active members are those individuals who have completed Ground School, regularly attend church services, and provide regular financial and personal support for the church. EGCC also extends these privileges to the following persons:

1. Homebound members.
2. Faithful attendees of the church who attend and contribute regularly but have not officially joined the church as an official member.

FUNERAL OFFICIANT

The Senior Pastor or staff designee will conduct all funeral services held at EGCC unless the Senior Pastor approves of a guest officiant. All guest officiants must receive pastoral approval three days before the funeral or memorial service.

DATE AND TIME OF FUNERALS

The Bereavement Team will arrange service dates and times at EGCC in consultation with the Senior Pastor based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. The Senior Pastor must approve all funeral arrangements at EGCC. The Senior Pastor will make all final decisions concerning areas outside the scope of this funeral policy at his discretion. Funeral services must be planned around already scheduled events such as weddings, conferences, workshops, etc. (please refer to the church calendar on the EGCC website or app).

STRUCTURE OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE

A funeral service held in the church is a worship service 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 worship practices of EGCC. Generally, the funeral and burial service outline will take on that practice. The family may only include other components in the service with the approval of the Senior Pastor.

CLOSED CASKET

All caskets must be closed for the church service but may remain open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only) if desired. The casket remains closed throughout the funeral service. In concert with the officiant, the funeral director will have direction over timing, closed caskets, music, flowers, etc.

FUNERAL MUSIC

As with weddings, a funeral is a Christian worship service. EGCC only allows sacred music that is appropriate for a Christian worship service. All musical arrangements (pianist, soloist, etc.) must be arranged for and taken care of by the family. The Praise team is made available for funeral and memorial services held at EGCC and will make every effort to assist. However, the time and date of the service may affect the availability of our Praise team and musicians. All EGCC Praise team members sing with EGCC musicians. If the Praise Team will minister during the service, the family must email a final copy of the funeral program to music@exceedinggrace.cc at least 48 hours before the service to ensure the proper service flow.

Recorded instrumental and accompaniment music, soloists and solos, anthems, and guest musicians must have the approval of the Senior Pastor. Congregational hymns are encouraged and may be selected with the Senior Pastor in consultation with the family during the service planning.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

The media team may be available for funeral and memorial services held at EGCC. A minimum of a three-day notice must be given to the media Team Lead by emailing media@exceedinggrace.cc (i.e., if the service is on a Saturday, the information needs to be sent by noon on Wednesday). The family must provide all assets for services, such as slideshows, videos, music, etc., at the time of the three-day

notice. Last-minute requests may not be honored. Also, a final copy of the funeral program needs to be emailed to media@exceedinggrace.cc at least 24 hours before the service so that we can effectively follow the flow of service (i.e., if the service is on a Saturday, the information needs to be sent no later than noon on Friday).

- All videos must be submitted as mp4 files and must be 1080p or 720p. We cannot play videos from YouTube or other streaming services.
- Slideshows and other graphics must be submitted as JPG or PNG files.
- Please provide an image or graphic to keep on the main screen during the service. The image dimensions must be 1080 x 1920.
- All music must be given as a list found through Apple Music or an Apple Music playlist.
- If the family does not provide appropriate pre/post-service music, our team will play instrumental music.
- If you want the service streamed live, please advise in the initial notice of services needed, as this service will require more personnel.
- For live streaming, our team will provide a link to the stream that only viewers with the link can access.

DECORATIONS

If the family wishes to display the decedent's remains and mementos or photographs of the deceased and their family, the following guidelines apply:

- Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.
- Nails, tacks, staples, or screws are prohibited on the walls and furnishings.
- The family must remove all decorations within 1 hour of the conclusion of the service.
- No furniture shall be rearranged or removed from the church building.
- Families may only use fresh-cut flowers and planters in the sanctuary.

FAMILY MEAL

EGCC does not have adequate space for post-service family meals (repast). The church will issue a \$250 check for meal costs and preparation.

The Bereavement ministry team, Flight Team leaders, and church members provide this service as a ministry in the spirit of Christian love. Their mission is to serve willingly and pleasingly, inspired and led by God.

NURSERY

The church does not provide a nursery for funeral services.

PARKING / TRAFFIC ASSISTANCE

The funeral home generally provides parking assistance. EGCC does not have designated staff for traffic control.

When A Death Occurs

When a death occurs, the order in which things occur often depends on where the death occurred (i.e., at home, supervised care, etc.). We suggest that you do not go through this emotional process alone. If you are planning services for your loved one, please consider the following information as a guide to assist you:

- Contact other family members and close friends.
- Notify your employer and the employer of the deceased.
- If children are in school, notify the school.
- Contact your church (Exceeding Grace Christian Center - phone: 727-323-8278 or bereavement@exceedinggrace.cc).
- Choose a Funeral Home (before going to the Funeral Home, the following checklist will help you remember what information will be needed when meeting with a funeral director).
 - Full legal name
 - Home address
 - Social Security number
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Date of birth
 - Place of birth
 - Father's name
 - Mother's maiden name
 - Marital Status
 - Name of Spouse (if married or widowed)
 - Veteran's discharge papers (DD-214 - if applicable)
 - Recent Photograph
 - Highest education
 - Occupation
 - Clergy name and phone number
 - List of relatives (name and relationship)
 - Insurance policies (if applicable)
 - Clothing

The funeral arrangement process may include the following:

- Deciding the type of service (funeral service and burial, cremation, etc.)
- Scheduling the date, location, and time for the service
- Selecting a casket, urn, or other items and choosing items for burial or inurnment
- Preparing an obituary notice
- Preparing and filing the official death certificate and the number of certificates needed (long/short form)
- Signing necessary documentation by the appropriate individual(s)
- Selecting pallbearers

Local Funeral Homes & Crematories

A Life Tribute Funeral Care

5601 Gulfport Blvd S
Gulfport, FL 33707
Phone: (727) 347-5521

716 Seminole Blvd
Largo, FL 33770
Phone: (727) 559-7793

Anderson-McQueen Funeral Homes

7820 38th Avenue N
St Petersburg, FL 33710
Phone: (727) 347-6636

2201 Dr. Martin Luther King Street S
St Petersburg, FL 33705
Phone: (727) 822-2059

Brett Funeral Home & Cremation Services

4810 Central Ave
St Petersburg, FL 33711
Phone: (727) 321-3321

David C. Gross Funeral Home & Cremation Center

3622 Central Avenue
St Petersburg, FL 33711
Phone: (727) 408-6651

Gulf to Bay Cremation

587 S Duncan Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727) 754-4008

Lawson Funeral Home & Cremation Services

4535 Central Avenue
St Petersburg, FL 33713
Phone: (727) 623-9025

McRae Funeral Home

1940 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Street S
St Petersburg, FL 33705
Phone: (727) 895-6005

Memorial Park Funeral Home & Crematory

5750 49th Street North
St Petersburg, FL 33709
Phone: (727) 361-9656

Mohn Funeral Home & Cremation Services

9700 Seminole Blvd.
Seminole, FL 33772
Phone: (727) 393-3481

National Cremation Society

4945 E Bay Drive
Clearwater, FL 33764
Phone: (727) 536-0494

Sanchez Rehoboth Mortuary & Cremation Services

6501 25th Way S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Phone: (727) 317-0035

Smith Funeral Home & Cremation Services

1534 18th Ave S
St Petersburg, FL 33705
Phone: (727) 894-2266

Smith-Youngs Funeral Home

1005 Howard Street
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727)442-2388

Sylvan Abbey Funeral Home & Sylvan Abbey Cemetery

2853 Sunset Point Rd
Clearwater, FL 33759
Phone: (727) 796-1992

TR Dallas Funeral Services

1479 S Martin Luther King Jr Ave
Clearwater, FL 33756
Phone: (727) 330-7661

SAMPLE PROGRAM ORDER

Procession

Parting Glance

Opening of Service / Welcome

Music Selection

Invocation / Prayer

Scripture Readings

 Old Testament

 New Testament

Music Selection

Reflections / Tribute

Resolution and Acknowledgments

Music Selection

Words of Comfort / Eulogy

Recessional

RESOURCE NUMBERS

Pinellas County Vital Statistics – Phone: (727) 507-4330

Social Security Administration – Phone: (800) 772-1213

Pinellas County Recording of Deeds – Phone: (727) 464-4876

Pinellas County Probate Division – Phone: (727) 464-7000

Department of Veteran Affairs – Phone: (727) 319-7200

Pinellas County Driver License & Motor Vehicle Service Center – Phone: (727) 464-7777

Pinellas County Medical Examiner – Phone: (727) 582-6800

Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation – Phone: (800) 226-6667

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) – Phone: (844) 545-5640

Railroad Retirement – Phone: 877-772-5772

Cycadia Monument – Phone: (727) 786-1551