

## **GUIDELINES FOR FUNERALS**

*Funerals are services of worship, remembering the deceased, celebrating God's grace and preparing family and friends to grieve properly in the light of Christian hope. Because funerals are an important part of the healing ministry of the church, the following guidelines are offered so that families may have some direction in the midst of difficult and often confusing circumstances.*

1. Death of a member of Pisgah is to be reported to the Pastor as soon as possible. (A list of emergency contacts is provided on the Table of Contents page.)
2. The Pastor needs to be consulted before any date or time is set. Funerals require a considerable amount of preparation, including developing a sermon, printing a bulletin, organizing the service, and contacting the choir. In addition, the schedule of the congregation must be considered; some events involving many people cannot be rescheduled as much as we would want to at a time like this.
3. Generally, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours notice is needed by the Pastor and church staff for a funeral to be held in Pisgah. On weekends, when there is no secretary working, a longer time is generally highly advisable.
4. Because of the full schedule of activities at Pisgah on most Sundays, and the desire to be as accurate as possible in newspaper announcements of funeral arrangements, it is generally wise to expect that unless church staff has been notified by noon on Saturday, a funeral should be postponed until Monday instead of scheduled for Sunday afternoon.
5. Before digging a grave, verification of the site with the Pisgah Cemetery Committee is necessary. (Again refer to Emergency Contacts numbers)
6. The church considers the Worship Center (Sanctuary) to be the most proper place for funerals to be held for all members of the church, regardless of age.
7. The Order for the Burial of the Dead from the Lutheran Book of Worship is the order for all funerals done through Pisgah. The Pall is ordinarily used at all funerals. The coffin remains closed throughout the worship service.
8. The Pastor welcomes suggestions of favorite Bible passages, hymns, poems, and/or stories that might be used in the service. Hymns that are not in the Lutheran Book of Worship, With One Voice or Pisgah's Hymnal Supplement often cannot be selected to be sung by the congregation in light of the copyright laws; depending upon the hymn, these hymns may be sung as anthems by the choir, used as sermon illustrations or the tunes may be played as preludes.
9. Unless the family requests otherwise, Pisgah Lutheran Church will provide flowers for the altar in loving memory of the deceased member.
10. The service begins with Entrance Rite (generally in the Narthex) and concludes with the Dismissal ("Let us go in peace.") in the cemetery. This order of worship is not to be interrupted for the exercises of secular or fraternal organizations; such rites may be performed after the service of worship is completed. (This includes funerals done from the funeral homes.)

11. Subject to Minister of Music's availability, provide organ music, if requested, at all funerals held at Pisgah, consulting with families if requested. The Minister of Music will assist in the hiring of substitute musicians when Minister of Music is not available.

*Approved by Music & Worship Committee 9/30/02*

*Approved by Congregation Council 10/13/02*

*Our prayer is that guidelines do not have to be used, but we know that death is a reality to us all. In times of need and grief, we want our families to know what to expect and how to help us help them.*

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## **CEMETERY GUIDELINES**

1. No cemetery plot will be sold.
2. No cemetery plot will be granted to non-members, except to former pastors and their dependent family members who make a written request and receive Congregation Council approval.
3. Holders of plots forfeit their rights to the plot upon termination of membership. If family members are buried already in the cemetery, other family members may be buried in vacant grave sites within the plot with a donation of \$300.00. These funds will be used to help fund the up-keep of the cemetery.
4. Holders of plots will provide a permanent marker for each grave in their plot within one (1) year after burial.
5. No trees or shrubs are permitted in the cemetery.
6. Coping may be installed around a two (2) grave plot assigned to a deceased family member. Coping can be installed around a four (4) only after all grave sites in the plot have been filled. Installation of any and all coping must be approved by the Cemetery Committee on a case by case basis, so that uniformity may be maintained.
7. No cemetery plot will be exchanged without the agreement of all parties concerned and approval by the Cemetery Committee.
8. No graves shall be dug without first verifying the site with a designated contact from the Cemetery Committee.
9. Because of space limitations, no new plots will be assigned until a family's time of need.
10. Circumstances not considered in the guidelines set forth herein will be considered by the Congregation Council at such times as a decision is necessary.
11. In order to utilize all grave sites, plots that have grave sites remaining after church members are all deceased will be made available to the church for other members or their families.

*Approved by the Cemetery Committee, July 30, 2000*

*Approved by the Congregation Council, August 13, 2000*