

FUNERAL POLICY

Funerals at St. Athanasius Lutheran Church are set within the context of the larger ministry of Word and Sacrament. In keeping with St. Paul's injunction that everything "*is made holy by the Word of God and prayer*" (1 Timothy 4:5), the committal at the graveside is the essential part of a Christian funeral, for thereby the body of a fellow believer in Christ is consecrated or set apart "*to the day of the resurrection of all flesh*" (Christian Burial, Lutheran Service Book Agenda, p. 130).

The funeral service itself is a worship service that focuses not on the deceased but on our gracious and merciful God and serves as an occasion to comfort and support the family and mourners with the power of God's Word and the prayers of the church. This understanding of the funeral service is basic for the following guidelines.

I. Who May Be Buried?

- A. All members of the congregation in good standing.
- B. Members in good standing of sister congregations.
- C. An individual of another congregation or of no affiliation, whose spouse or parent is a member in good standing with the congregation. Such cases shall be decided by the pastor in consultation with the board of elders.
- D. No excommunicated person shall be buried from the church.

II. Officiants At Funerals

- A. The called pastor (or vacancy pastor) of St. Athanasius Lutheran Church will officiate at all funerals.
- B. The pastor of St. Athanasius Lutheran Church may invite other clergy to participate at funerals. Visiting clergy shall only be those who are listed on the clergy roster of Lutheran Church—Canada, or clergy of other Lutheran synods that are in altar and pulpit fellowship with Lutheran Church—Canada.

III. The Funeral Service

- A. Funeral services shall be conducted in accordance with the Funeral Service order from the *Lutheran Service Book*. Eulogies are not to be given during the funeral service.
- B. Pre-service music, preludes, solos, hymns, etc. shall be consistent with the theology and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The use of musical instruments shall be governed by the principle just cited.
- C. The pastor, in consultation with the family, shall select the Scripture Readings and hymns for the funeral service.

D. Floral arrangements shall be subject to the above guidelines and by regulations governing the use of the property and buildings of at St. Athanasius Lutheran Church.

E. The congregation's funeral pall shall be used to cover caskets during the funeral service. The funeral pall is a large piece of white material adorned with a cross. It symbolizes the righteousness of Jesus Christ which covered the deceased at his or her baptism (Romans 6:3,5). With the funeral pall the church covers all her children alike.

F. If the family desires, the Mary-Martha Society of the congregation will, if possible, prepare and serve a luncheon following the service.

IV. Suggested Honorariums

A. Pastor (at the discretion of the family)

B. Organist – \$75.00 to \$100.00

C. Soloist/Instrumentalist – \$50.00

D. Custodian – \$50.00

E. Mary-Martha Society (funeral luncheon) – \$7.00 per person + \$100.00 to \$125.00

(adopted at the Voters Assembly meeting on May 2, 373)