

Funerals

While the Christian grieves at the death of a loved one, the extent of that sorrow is based upon one's knowledge of whether or not the individual has salvation through Jesus Christ. Based upon scripture we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep (1 Thess. 4:14) It is the policy of Sugar Creek Baptist Church to so assemble as the desires of the family dictate, not to mourn the dead, but to praise eternal life brought about by a living Lord. As a service of worship, the funeral will be a statement of the church family of the love to the departed one's family and an affirmation of our witness of eternal hope.

To implement this policy, the following procedures will apply:

1. When death occurs in the church family, the church office should be immediately notified. If death occurs outside normal office hours, the pastor or minister on call should be called, utilizing the crisis hotline, 281-242-5174. A minister will be assigned to assist the family in preparations and to offer Christian solace.
2. Funerals at Sugar Creek Baptist Church will be considered worship services. The order of service will include the singing of hymns and praise. A Sugar Creek Baptist Church Pastor will officiate or co-officiate the service. A non-staff guest pastor may be approved to officiate, with the approval of our Senior Pastor, through Pastoral Care Ministry office. The Pastor's message will focus on the comfort that God gives through the promises found in His Holy Word.
3. The Pastoral Care Ministry office authorizes and directs all funerals on Sugar Creek Baptist Church property. The Office must be contacted as soon as possible when the church facility is requested. The church facility is available, based on the Church Calendar, Mondays through Fridays (9-2), except holidays and weekends, with 48 business hours notice of need.
4. When the funeral service is held at Sugar Creek Baptist Church, viewing of the physical remains would best be accomplished during a period prior to the service at the funeral home or mortuary. A viewing at the Church must be approved at the time of planning the service, through the Pastoral Care Ministry office, and will only be allowed 1 hour immediately prior to the service time.
5. For a funeral service, the casket will be delivered, set up and moved by a funeral home director. The church staff will greet the funeral personnel upon their arrival and stay with the family and body until all have departed for burial.
6. If a casket is not a part of the service (due to cremation or private burial), then a memorial service may be planned at any available time (refer to #3 above) in the near future as the family and the Church determine what will best meet the need of all. It is not uncommon for a memorial service to be held one to two weeks, or more after the loss of a loved one.
7. Pastoral Care Ministry office assists the family with these specific planning details with notice of 48 business hours, Monday through Friday (8-5):
 - a) Selection and invitation of Officiating Pastor, Musicians, Sound technician
 - b) Memorial folder (meeting with family, planning service order and print of folder)

- c) Décor in the sanctuary (family may bring tasteful memorabilia to add personal detail)
 - d) Kleenex
 - e) Guest Book (when not provided by the funeral home, if notified before service date)
 - f) Pens at Guest Book and podium
8. Pastoral Care Ministry offers pre-planning funeral information and resources by calling for an appointment, 281-242-2858. Information is also on the [sugarcreek.net /care](http://sugarcreek.net/care) website.
 9. When flowers are used in the service, the water should be removed from the containers prior to the placement in the sanctuary. Immediately following the service, the floral arrangements are removed from the sanctuary by the family. Floral acknowledgments remaining in the sanctuary will be disposed of due to lack of storage and air conditioning limitations.
 10. It will be appropriate for family and friends to consider appropriate memorial gifts to the church as an expression of their love and appreciation of the deceased. The Pastoral Care Ministry office can direct family regarding questions concerning memorial gifts.
 11. Since the funeral service of a member is regarded as a worship experience of Sugar Creek Baptist Church, no fees are charged for the use of the church's facilities or its personnel for funeral services of members. The funeral of an individual who is not a member of Sugar Creek Baptist Church, but who is the immediate relative (mother, father, child) of a member, will be handled in the same way that the funeral of a member is conducted. The funeral of an individual who is not a member or immediate relative of a member will not be approved except when specific authorization is granted upon review by the Pastor and Pastoral Care Ministry office.
 12. When appropriate, a fellowship meal may be provided by concerned family and friends, or Adult Bible Fellowship or Women's Ministry group. This meal, when served at the church in association with the funeral, will be planned and carried out under the guidance of our Hospitality Ministry Team. There will be no charge for use of kitchen facilities or housekeeping services. However, the Hospitality Ministry Team coordinator may invite people to help with food provision for the meal. If a fellowship group desires to coordinate and take responsibility for this meal following the service, they will still receive guidance and limitations set by the Hospitality Ministry Team. A listing of guidelines for kitchen usage will be provided (in a separate document).