

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 notified. If death occurs outside normal church office hours, the minister on call can be reached by calling the church main number, 281-242-2858. The minister taking call will call to offer comfort, then Pastoral Care Ministry will be notified to follow up with condolences and needs.
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 Lead 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 calendar will be assessed to determine availability of space.
4. When the funeral service is held at Sugar Creek Baptist Church, viewing of the loved one 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 be held 1 hour immediately prior to the service time. The family may come in for private viewing 30 minutes prior to public viewing. Pastoral Care staff will be present to help the family have private time.
5. For a funeral service, the casket will be delivered, set up and moved by a funeral home director. The church Pastoral Care 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: 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. All details need to be expressed at the planning meeting so that on the day of service, all set up is completed as the family has requested.

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 delivered to the service, the water should be removed from the containers prior to the placement in the sanctuary. Immediately following the service, the family or their appointed help removes all floral arrangements and potted plants or funeral home may take some florals to the cemetery. 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. 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 requested, a fellowship meal (reception or repast) may be provided by the Church but is coordinated by our Hospitality Ministry Team, through the Pastoral Care office. The Hospitality Ministry Team coordinator may invite people (friends, connect class or other bible study) to help with donations for food provision or assisting with set up and serving of food. This time of fellowship is a sweet time to offer condolences and visit with family and friends.
13. Some directions above are set based on the Sugar Land campus and may change when a service is requested at the Missouri City or Richmond-Rosenberg campus. Pastoral Care office will help any of our families in need during their time of bereavement.