

Funeral Policy

Funeral Services

Although funeral services may be held in funeral homes, the best place for conducting a funeral service upon the death of a church member is in the sanctuary of the church to which he or she belonged. We are reminded that God's promise of eternal life triumphs over death, and the appropriate location to celebrate our baptismal covenant in Christ containing this promise is in Kingsway Schaeffer Memorial Chapel, where Epiphany's regular worship takes place. In certain circumstances, it may be desirable to relocate the service to a larger sanctuary or site; all requests for such relocation must be determined in consultation with the Pastor, to preserve the sanctity of the worship service. Epiphany members are encouraged to conduct funerals and/or memorial services (celebration of life) in Schaeffer Chapel, and there is no fee associated with such a service for Epiphany members; associate members and non-member funerals may also be conducted in Schaeffer Chapel for a fee, set by Kingsway, to cover utilities and cleaning services. All payments by non-Epiphany members must be made to Kingsway directly, prior to day of the service.

Appropriate rites for death vary, and can include an immediate public church service (with or without Holy Communion); a private worship service for family; graveside services (public and/or private); ceremony at a columbarium to inter ashes; a service at a future time, if the deceased has donated his/her body to science; a service to spread ashes in a specific location. Often multiple rites are desired by the family to properly honor their loved one, particularly if a large portion of family/friends reside out of town.

Epiphany's Pastor can accompany the family during the initial funeral home visit, to assist with arrangements, if desired, and/or meet with the family to plan the service, including desired music and hymns; Scripture readings; eulogy and remembrances; date and time.

Date and Time of Rite

Epiphany's pastor will consult with the deceased's family regarding an appropriate date and time of the funeral/memorial service, based on the pastor's availability and the family's wishes.

Fees

Kingsway Christian Church does not charge a fee for use of Schaeffer Memorial Chapel during Epiphany member funerals/memorial services. Kingsway sets all use fees for non-Epiphany member services and the use of any fellowship spaces, and requires payment in full prior to the date of the service/fellowship event. The non-Epiphany member's family and/or executor is wholly responsible for payment of any fees directly to Kingsway in a timely manner, and will be required to sign a standard Hold Harmless agreement.

Presiding Pastor

ELCA pastoral ethics, authority and responsibility require that Epiphany's Pastor conduct all official rites of the Epiphany congregation, including funeral services held at Schaeffer Chapel for Epiphany members. On occasion, a guest pastor may be invited to participate in a portion of the service which shall be specified by Epiphany's Pastor; or act on behalf of Epiphany's pastor during schedule conflict. All requests for participation in the service by another member of clergy or a layperson must be reviewed with and approved by Epiphany's Pastor during the planning phase.

Format of the Service

Funeral and memorial services conducted at Schaeffer Chapel are services of worship celebrating the deceased's life and eternal life in Christ Jesus. Rites drawn from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal shall be used as a framework. Requests for secular music and/or readings, DVD or CD excerpts or the use of electronic media shall be approved by the pastor in advance, based on their appropriateness for use during a sacred worship service. The family may suggest items for inclusion in the service such as hymns, Scripture, poetry and eulogies, with the approval of the pastor. Family members and friends may serve as readers, worship assistants, etc. as they desire.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion is an expression of Christ's gift of grace as well as a reminder of Christ's promise of eternal life through baptism. When shared in the worship community around the familiar table, Holy Communion can be a powerful expression of healing for those who grieve. The Sacrament is a sign of the completion of baptism, a foretaste of God's holy banquet, and the anticipation of reuniting with all the faithful saints before God and Christ, the Lamb of God. It is appropriate to celebrate Holy Communion as part of a funeral or memorial service, and it is Epiphany's policy to invite all persons to Christ's Table.

Pastoral Services to Non-Epiphany Members

Sometimes Pastors are asked to be involved at the funerals of people from other churches. It is the policy of the ELCA that the responsibility and authority for pastoral acts or services rests with the Pastor of the congregation where the deceased held membership. If Epiphany Lutheran Church's Pastor is asked to provide pastoral services for members of other congregations, she/he will contact the clergy of the church in which the person held membership before providing the service. The Pastor who performs a service for a member of another congregation is obligated to provide information regarding that pastoral act or service performed to the Pastor of the congregation in which the person held membership. If the request for pastoral service involves an individual who has had conflicts with his/her Pastor or congregation, the immediate family will be urged to resolve the difficulty prior to receiving pastoral service.

Conducting funerals for people who have no connection with the church is a normal part of the ministerial obligation. For individuals without a church home whose family/friends request Epiphany's Pastor to conduct a funeral or memorial service, the Pastor will work with those making the request to determine what portions of the ELW worship service are appropriate (Was the person baptized? Did the person express faith in God?). The Pastor has the right to refuse to conduct any funeral or memorial rite that contains elements inconsistent with ELCA doctrine, traditions or policies, or if family members/representatives cannot agree on the format, elements, date/time, etc. of the service.

Music

Epiphany's Director of Music will play piano and/or organ at all funeral/memorial services conducted in Schaeffer Chapel or other designated location for members, if he/she is available. If unavailable, he/she will make every effort to suggest a suitable substitute and work with the deceased's family to arrange a substitute. All outside musicians or vocalists must be pre-approved by the Pastor and Director of Music. The deceased's family/executor agrees to be wholly responsible for the payment of the fee for the Epiphany Director of Music or the approved substitute, plus any guest musician/soloist engaged. The use of pre-recorded music is discouraged, consistent with ELCA guidelines for a sacred worship service. Music performed at a worship service is understood as an important part of worship offered to God in

devotion, thanksgiving and praise. The Pastor and Director of Music will approve all funeral/memorial service music selections during the planning phase with the family, and offer suggestions for suitable alternatives if necessary.

Bulletins

For Epiphany member funerals/memorial services, Epiphany's Administrator will work with the Pastor and the deceased's family/representative to prepare appropriate worship bulletins. The family is responsible for providing the Administrator all details including obituary, names of family/friends who will take part in the service, and for proof-reading the bulletin prior to publication. Epiphany will bear the cost for Epiphany member funerals only. Non-member bulletins will be invoiced to the deceased's family/representative in the week following the service; non-members may also opt to provide their own bulletins.

Services by Fraternal Orders, Lodges and Similar Organizations

Services by fraternal orders, lodges, or other organizations are not appropriate at a Lutheran funeral service. If they are held, they should be limited to the funeral home or graveside, and must be coordinated with the Pastor prior to the service. Such services are not to be confused or combined with the burial office and committal. A guest speaker from such an organization may be permitted to offer a eulogy or brief remembrance, with pre-approval by the Pastor.

Sanctuary Décor

Paraments on the altar, lectern and pulpit will remain the color of the day or season.

Families may wish to display the deceased's cremains, as well as certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:

- Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.
- No nails, tacks, staples or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews.
- All decorations must be removed immediately following the conclusion of the service.
- No furniture shall be removed from the church building.
- No electronic media displays shall be permitted.

Flowers

Only fresh cut flowers and planters may be used in the sanctuary. Flowers must be removed from the sanctuary immediately following the conclusion of the service. Flower arrangements should be appropriate in style and size to a Christian worship service, and should not obscure the altar, pulpit, or any other item central to worship.

Lutheran Casket Etiquette

All caskets must be closed for the funeral service, but may be open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only), if desired. If a viewing is requested at Epiphany Lutheran Church before the funeral this may be done, after consultation with the Pastor. It is recommended that Epiphany's funeral pall cover the casket or urn. The casket remains closed throughout the service. When the service is in a funeral parlor or private house, the casket is closed and in place before the liturgy begins. Funeral directors are required to consult with the Pastor prior to the service, to be instructed on appropriate casket delivery, handling and timing, use of the pall, flowers, and dismissal. The Pastor holds the authority and responsibility of all worship services for the Epiphany congregation, and shall have the

final word regarding requests by funeral directors and their personnel for appropriate handling of caskets and cremains.

The casket is to enter the sanctuary in the position with the feet toward the altar. The position reflects the accustomed role of the deceased in the church -- facing the altar as part of the congregation. Pall Bearers may be arranged (typically six per funeral). The Paschal candle, which symbolizes Christ's triumph over the powers of death, is lit during the funeral as a reminder of the deceased's baptism into Christ.

Use of Pall

The congregation will provide a funeral pall to be placed over the casket or urn during the service. The pall recalls the white robe given in Baptism, the robe of Christ's righteousness. The pall further has democratizing value, for it prevents both the display of a costly casket and embarrassment at a simple one. This action of placing the pall over the casket will take place prior to the liturgy. The pall will be the only thing covering the casket during the worship service.

Nursery

Under normal conditions, the church does not provide a nursery for funeral services.

Parking/Traffic

The funeral home is responsible for providing traffic control assistance required for procession from the church to the cemetery, if applicable. All fees associated with this service must be borne by the deceased's family or representative, negotiated with the funeral home in advance.

Family Reception

When available, the church will do everything possible to accommodate requests for a fellowship meal following a funeral service. For Epiphany members, Epiphany's Fellowship Team will work with the family/representative to determine options for a suitable reception after the service, if desired. All costs associated with such receptions will be borne by the deceased's family/representative, including rental of the Kingsway Fellowship Hall, if applicable, and any janitorial fees charged by Kingsway Christian Church.

Memorials to the Deceased

In certain circumstances, the family might request a trust fund or contribution to a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. These arrangements must be made with an organization outside the church. The church will not manage, receive, or distribute designated funds for an outside institution.

Undesignated funds and funds designated for an established project at Epiphany Lutheran Church will be received by the church as part of the Memorial Fund. Funds designated for a project or ministry not previously established will be designated for such only with approval by the Congregation Council.

A list of memorial donors will be made available to the deceased's family/representative by the Epiphany Financial Secretary for the purpose of writing thank-you notes.