

## **East Petersburg Mennonite Church**

### *Funeral Policy*

Last Updated: October 10, 2019

Funeral services are designed to meet the needs of the family, worship God, and celebrate the life of the deceased. When possible, every attempt is made to accommodate the family's requests. Planning a funeral is difficult under emotional stress. The Church Office and Lead Pastor will work alongside the family to plan the funeral service and review our funeral policy. Please do not finalize your funeral plans before initially speaking with the Church Office and Lead Pastor. Also, please know that if you wish, one of the most important resources the Church provides is an opportunity to talk to a pastor, or counselor, about faith but also the journey through grief.

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### **Funerals for Members and Attendees**

There is no fee for the use of our facilities for a funeral if the funeral is for a member of our church community or a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, siblings). Those who have been members of East Petersburg Mennonite Church but are no longer members or in-attendance will pay full rental fees (*See Reservation Form for our costs*). Membership is understood as defined in our by-laws.

### **Funerals for Non-Members**

We believe that we can be a great witness for our faith when it comes to performing funerals for individuals who are not members or have no connection with East Petersburg Mennonite Church. However, when it comes to funerals for those who are non-members or who have no connection, it is up to the discretion of the pastor if they will allow themselves or the church to participate. A facility rental fee will be the responsibility of the renting party. Rental costs include the costs of using the sanctuary, cleaning fee, and lobby. (*See Reservation Form for our costs*)

### **Funeral Officiation**

It is the policy of East Petersburg Mennonite Church that a current and active pastor (Lead or Associate) in our church community will officiate over the funeral service, with approval from the Lead Pastor. Any requests for another pastor or layperson to assist in the funeral service must be approved by the Lead Pastor of East Petersburg Mennonite Church. According to the LMC Guidelines, former pastors will not be welcomed to perform funerals.<sup>1</sup> Families wanting to include former pastors in a Funeral Service will be encouraged to host the funeral at the funeral home. We recommend a love-offering to each pastor needed of at least \$150.

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<sup>1</sup> Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Guidelines for When the Former Pastor Remains in the Congregation

## **Funeral Planning**

When a member's funeral is hosted at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, a current and active pastor will be responsible for not only conducting/officiating the funeral but work with the family in planning it as well. Non-members are not bound by this policy, but cannot incorporate former Pastors of East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

## **Funeral Service**

Funerals usually include a viewing, funeral service, meal, and graveside meditation. While many chose a funeral home for a viewing or funeral, there is also great symbolism to hosting such a celebration and memorial in the church. Though these various aspects are customary, they are totally a family decision. Funerals should match the character and nature of our worship gatherings; seeing God proclaimed and worshipped.

## **Funeral Music**

Music that celebrates our faith or the life of the individual is an important aspect of funerals. Any desire for musicians or song leaders must be arranged for and taken care of by the family or funeral planners.

## **Service Bulletin**

When possible, the Church Office and Pastor(s) will work with the family or funeral planners to develop a simple bulletin with the order of service.

## **Audio and Media**

East Petersburg Mennonite Church has a more than adequate audio and video setup for funerals. Funerals that require the use of our audio system (for preaching, sharing, or songs) or media system (For PowerPoint, song projection, slideshows, or video) must use our in-house sound and media techs. Our church will help arrange any audio or video techs for your funeral. We encourage a love-offering to each tech needed of at least \$75 for opening, closing, and setting up the building for this event.

## **Nursery and Childcare**

As a church, we do not provide a nursery or childcare for funeral services. If this is something requested, the family is responsible for securing an attendant that conforms to Pennsylvania State Law with background checks, proper child-to-caretake ratios, and other pertinent requirements.

### **Decorations and Flowers**

Often families wish to display memoirs or photographs of the deceased or their family. A table will be provided at no cost for this in our church lobby if requested. It will be the responsibility of the family or renting party to provide a table cloth. No nails, tacks, staples, screws, or tape can be attached to any wall, door, or any other structural part of the building. Any candles must be wax and flame-free, but battery-operated candles are acceptable. Fresh flowers and planters are also welcomed and can be placed in the worship space, lobby, or at the entrance. All decorations must be removed within three hours of the conclusion of the funeral.

### **Family or Funeral Meal**

We recognize that often, families desire to celebrate the life of their loved one with a meal for those in attendance at the funeral. Many times families wish to use an outside company to cater the meal. While this is often the easiest and most recommended route, at times, the church Kitchen Committee will also do their best to accommodate a simple fellowship meal after the funeral for church members. Kitchen Committee involvement depends on the schedules and availability of those on the Kitchen Committee, and no guarantee is made. For members of our church community, the Kitchen Committee does not charge for their preparation or serving, however, will invoice the family or planning party for the cost of the food and refreshments. Donations are certainly welcome for the preparation and serving. Non-members may rent the Fellowship Hall for funerals but are responsible for the use fees and providing their own food and refreshments.

### **Schedule and Dates**

Please confirm any possible dates for your funeral (viewing, funeral service, meal, or graveside service) with the Church Office as soon as possible. No planning should be done without incorporating the Office and Lead Pastor. We will do our best to accommodate your schedule. It is the policy of our church that funerals are not held on Sundays.

### **Set-Up**

Any furniture moved or requested must be made known 48 hours before the funeral service. Our Sexton will see to any request we can facilitate. It is essential we know catering plans and an expected number of attendees in advance of the funeral. We encourage a love-offering to the sexton of at least \$75.

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East Petersburg Mennonite Church, the Church Office, and our Pastor(s) are ready to assist you as needed. Our church community is compassionate and understands that the care during and after the loss of a loved one is a hard journey. We have experience with planning, as well as helping find you the resources you need as you journey through grief and mourning.

**Contact Information:**

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