



Edgington Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Established 1837

13228 140th Street West
Taylor Ridge, IL 61284
(309) 795-1713
edgingtonepc@gmail.com

Philosophy and Policy of Christian Funerals¹

The Christian funeral is a service of worship in which God's people witness to their faith in the hope of the Gospel, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, and in which also, assurance of God's love and salvation in Christ is ministered, especially to the Christian bereaved.²

The funeral is God's way of bringing comfort to the hearts of those who mourn as Scripture is read and preached, prayer is offered, praises are sung, grief is expressed, remembrance is cherished; and it is an occasion in which we, by the grace of God, bless the name of the One who gives and takes away. The presence of family and friends around at this time supports and strengthens the sorrowing ones. The funeral gives thanks for the life of the one who has passed away, and learns from it valuable lessons. Thus, in the funeral service we gather primarily to worship God, and confess our faith in a living Savior. Though we mourn our loss and remember our loved one, our eyes are firmly fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith.

I. Aspects of Christian Funerals

- a. The Bible is central at EEPC, and everything that takes place must be consistent with biblical principles of worship.
- b. Prayer in funerals normally includes: thanksgiving for the memory of the deceased, triumph in the resurrection of Christ, and intercession for the family and friends who remain.
- c. The gathered congregation are participants in the service; therefore, the singing of hymns, confession of sin, prayer, affirmation of faith, and hearing God's Word are appropriate means of worship.
- d. Since God is the object of worship, the eulogizing of a person in the worship service is discouraged. Rather, it is appropriate to testify to the deceased's faith in the Lord Jesus.
- e. Musical selections must be consistent with the purpose of the service itself, and will normally include hymns or other Christian songs.

II. Logistical Matters of Policy

- a. Viewing the remains is not a part of the worship service; therefore, the casket will be, and remain, closed for the duration of the service. The casket may be placed in the back of the church and open prior to the service, and will ordinarily be closed once the family has had a final viewing, and have taken their seats.
- b. Because fraternal or civil rites are not a part of the worship service, these organizations should pay tribute to the deceased at another hour and place.
- c. When funerals are conducted at EEPC, the pastor shall ordinarily conduct those services in their entirety. The pastor has the responsibility and discretion in carrying out the Session's guidelines for funeral services. Only those special requests (pertaining to the service: music or guest minister) that meet the approval of the officiating minister are acceptable. Any unusual request regarding the service itself must be approved by the Session prior to the funeral.

¹ Adopted 12/4/13.

² Adapted from *Philosophy and Policy of Christian Funerals* from First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, MS.