

St. James United Methodist Church

Funeral Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees

November 11, 2025

Christians believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them hope and cause for thanksgiving in the face of death. In this faith, we entrust those who have died to the infinite mercy and love of God.

--The Methodist Worship Book, England

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a difficult experience. We grieve the loss of one who has been close, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13). This policy is provided to assist our families in planning and providing a Christian funeral.

There can be a variety of methods for conducting services at the time of death. A pastor will be happy to meet with the family to plan the funeral worship arrangements.

Date and Time of Funerals

Dates and times for funerals are to be arranged in consultation with the preferred pastor or pastor on call based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. The pastor must approve all funeral arrangements at St. James United Methodist Church. Decisions concerning areas outside the scope of this funeral policy shall be decided at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

Funeral services will need to be planned around already scheduled sanctuary events (such as weddings, conferences, workshops etc.) Preferred times for a service are Monday –Thursday. Due to weekend staffing, there may be limitations to what we can provide for a funeral outside of these times.

A pastor from St. James UMC will conduct all funeral services. Any requests for another pastor to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by the Senior Pastor.

Video/Picture Presentation

If a video is to be used during the pre-service time, it must be submitted to the church during normal business hours (M-Th 8:30-4:30) 24 hours prior to the service for review. All presentations should be in MP4 format. Any background music must be approved by the Director of Classic Worship.

Music

All music, whether in the service or background, must be approved by the Director of Classic Worship.

Photographs and Mementos

Any displays of pictures must be of an appropriate nature. There is a table in the Mission Café for displaying during the reception. During the service we will also move any flowers in the Narthex to the reception area. All items must be removed within 1 hour of the conclusion of the reception.

Childcare

The church does not provide childcare for funeral services.

Bulletin

The church office staff will ordinarily produce the bulletin for funerals and memorial services. The pastor will work with the family to assist with details regarding the bulletin and have the family proof it before printing.

Flowers

We generally display one flower arrangement at the front of the sanctuary. All other arrangements will be displayed in the Narthex.

Reception or Family Meal

The church will do everything reasonably possible to accommodate a member's request for a family meal at the home (maximum of 20 people) **or** a reception after the funeral. Only active members of the church and their family are eligible for this ministry. There is no charge for this ministry, however, donations are accepted. Members of the church provide this service as a ministry in the spirit of Christian love.

Non-members may choose a refreshment package option at an additional charge by contacting the church Director of Hospitality at 501-217-6752.

Memorial Donations

In certain circumstances, the family might request a contribution to the church or a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. The church will not manage, receive, or distribute funds for an outside institution. Contributions to St. James UMC will gladly be received by the church. Contributions for a project or ministry not previously established will be designated for such only with approval of the Finance Ministry Team.

Honorariums and Fees

If the deceased or a member of their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, siblings) is an active member* of St. James UMC there is no fee for the use of the facilities. For all other individuals, additional fees will be assessed. Those who have been members of St. James UMC but now are considered inactive members will pay the same fees as non-members. Fees are payable (by cash or check made payable to St. James UMC) on or prior to the day of the funeral. Normally, honorariums for the pastor, pianist or musicians are paid following the services.

*Active Member (defined below)

The following fees apply:

	Active Member	Non-member
Use of Sanctuary	No Fee	\$200
Use of Mission Café for Reception	No Fee	\$200
Pastor (Officiating)	Honorarium**	Honorarium**
Pastor (Additional)	Honorarium***	Honorarium***
Pianist/Organist	Honorarium****	Honorarium****
Soloist	Honorarium****	Honorarium****
Sound System Operator	\$50	\$50
Facilities Management	No Fee	\$100

*For the purposes of this policy, active members are defined as those members of St. James UMC who regularly attend church services and contribute to the church as they generally provide regular financial and personal support for the church. These privileges are also extended to the following: 1) Homebound members, 2) Faithful attendees of the church who attend regularly, who have not officially joined the church as an official member, and 3) Those who have served as former pastors of the church.

**The suggested honorarium for the officiating pastor is generally \$300-\$500. Checks should be made payable to the pastor.

***The suggested honorarium for an additional pastor is \$100-\$200, depending on the extent to which the additional pastor is involved in the planning, preparation, and leading of the service. Checks should be made payable to the pastor.

****The suggested honorarium for the Organist/Pianist or Soloist is \$100-\$200. If the family has made arrangements outside of St. James for another musician or soloist, they should pay them directly.

PLANNING INFORMATION

Name of Deceased _____

Family Contact _____

Executor of Estate _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Family Phone _____ Other Contact Phone _____

Funeral Home _____

Number of Family Members _____

Date of Service _____ Time _____

Scriptures Requested _____

Hymns Requested _____

Family/Friend Participating with Eulogy or Poem _____

Preservice Organ Music (Yes or No) _____ Slideshow (Yes or No) _____

Livestreamed Service (Yes or No) _____

Reception or Family Meal _____

Number Expected _____

Memorial Gift Instructions: _____
