

“That you may not grieve as those who have no hope!”

~ 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ~

If there ever is a good time to talk about funerals, now might be a good time. Because of the size of our membership, there is nearly one funeral a week. Every experience of death is distinctive and personalized for family members of the loved one who has died. Every experience of death is a unique moment of faith for those who have known the deceased. For the pastoral staff here at St. James, the death of one of our members provides the opportunity to share in the grief process, a process which often begins prior to the moment of death, and continues into the weeks, months and sometimes, years into the future.

Although funeral practices have changed in various ways in recent years, St. James stands solidly within our current theology and practices for Christian burial as described by the ELCA. Some of those practices are as follows:

The Christian funeral is a service of worship. The funeral service takes place within the church of the parishioner, because this is where the person’s worship and faith life have been centered and nourished. As a worship service, congregational singing, lay participation, and Holy Communion are all to be encouraged. Oftentimes, for various reasons, this is not possible. [Manual of the Liturgy, Lutheran Book of Worship]

Certainly, funeral services in funeral homes are acceptable. Certainly, memorial services are no less celebrations of the life and faith of the deceased.

At St. James, we encourage a genuine and ongoing ministry to the bereaved families. This would include attendance at the funeral service (we are members of one faith community!), as well as ongoing visitation and contact by our congregation members with those remaining family members in the weeks and months following the funeral service.

Through our Stephen Ministry Program, we offer participation in the *Journeying through Grief* program where loved ones of the departed one, are given four excellent pamphlets dealing with grief. This takes place over a 12-month period following the funeral, where a Stephen Minister is also available for on-going grief support.

We have the opportunity here at St. James to complete worksheets that allow us to plan our funeral services. This is a sensitive gift to those left behind who might be responsible to plan such a service. Completing the worksheet also gives each of us the opportunity to take ownership of this celebration of our faith and life. These worksheets can be found in the Gathering Area and on our website (www.StJamesGettysburg.com).

Finally, although the moment of death can become a time where we might be overcome with grief and sorrow in such a way that we do not always respond as we might otherwise, it becomes so very important to contact the church office or the pastor on call before any funeral planning begins. Most important, this is a time for the church to offer pastoral care and concern. What a gift to be able to share this together!

If anyone has questions or concerns, please, let’s continue this conversation with one of the pastors.

St. James Lutheran Church
Gettysburg, PA
Funeral Information & Suggestions Worksheet

These stated preferences are given in a desire to be as helpful as possible. I understand that it is impossible to anticipate all circumstances that may surround my death, so I trust my loved ones to recognize my death as they deem proper.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1) Upon my death, I want to donate my organs as indicated:

- Any needed organ or body part
- No donation
- Only those organs listed here:

2) Please notify the following:

Executor/trix: _____ Phone: _____

Next of Kin: _____ Phone: _____

or _____ Phone: _____

(First next of kin notified will notify other family members.)

3) Choice of Funeral Home:

_____ Phone: _____

4) Location of cemetery plot of cemetery preference:

5) I prefer to be cremated:

- Yes
- No

If yes, I prefer to have my ashes disposed of in the following manner:

with or **without** a pastor present (please circle one).

6) Service

- Funeral (with body present)
- Memorial Service
 - Before my body or ashes have been interred, or
 - After my body or ashes have been interred

a) Location of Service – choose one

- I would like a service at
 - St. James
 - Another house of worship (please name) _____

- I would like a service at the funeral home
- I would like a graveside service

I understand that ceremonies or tributes of social or fraternal societies cannot be accommodated within the service of the church.

b) Content of Service

My preference for Scripture passages includes the following:

List book, chapter, verse or quote

My hymn preferences are:

List either titles or numbers in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship.

- I would like a soloist or choir to sing at my service, if possible.
- I prefer #___ eulogy(ies) by
 - Family members
 - Friends
- I prefer no eulogy other than the minister's message

In addition to St. James' current pastor, I would like

name: _____ *phone:* _____

to participate in my service.

7) Burial

- I prefer to have my
 - Body interred in a cemetery
 - Ashes interred in a cemetery
- I prefer to have my ashes entombed in St. James Columbarium
- I prefer to have my body donated to medical science. To do so, please contact:

- I prefer that my interring occur immediately following the service
- I prefer that only my loved ones be present for my interring
- My interring should be at the convenience of my family

8) Memorials

- People may remember me however they wish
- I request that in lieu of flowers, memorial gifts be made to (check all that apply)
 - St. James Lutheran Church
 - My favorite charity(ies)

 - The donor may select the charity

9) Other Preferences:

You are welcome to attach additional pages.