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## Funeral Policy

### Preface

The Christian gospel of peace, hope, and triumph is nowhere brought into sharper focus than at the death of Christians. Although we who believe in Christ sorrow at the death of persons we love, we don't "grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Christ died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, RSV). The plans Christians make to face death are a testimony of faith.

Christians ought to assemble, not to mourn the dead, but to confess our faith in a living Lord and be a witness to our hope and fellowship.

### Policy Statements

On the basis of this affirmation, the statements below are offered for the guidance of our church members in the matter of funerals:

The church may be used for funeral services upon request.

When a death occurs in the Aversboro Road Baptist Church family, the pastor should be called immediately. This call will give the family of the deceased the benefit of the pastor's solace and experience in making funeral arrangements.

The pastor, when called upon, will help the family select the hymns, Scriptures, and other elements of the funeral service to ensure the centrality of the theme of our victory over death through faith in our Savior. When previous ministers or other ministers of choice are asked by grieving families to conduct the funeral, the current pastor will be informed and shall assist as requested.

When the funeral service is held in the church, with the physical remains present, it is recommended that public viewing of the body may be arranged prior to the start of the funeral service.

In order that worshipers may center their thoughts on the comfort and strength God provides, a memorial service may be held without the physical remains of the deceased being present.

Members of the church are reminded of the importance of acts of thoughtfulness and practical concern to the living during the grief process.

## **Funeral Policy**

Because the funeral service is regarded as one appropriate function of the body of Christ, no fees are charged for the use of the church's facilities.

The pastor shall major on spiritual and emotional assistance and leave the physical arrangements to the funeral director, working together to structure the arrangements for the church funeral service and burial.

When military or fraternal groups are involved in a church funeral service, the pastor will be familiar with prescribed rituals and will carefully coordinate funeral services and graveside committals with these groups.