

Funeral Policy

31st

31st Street Baptist Church

Updated 12/25



Funeral Procession by Ellis Wilson

Officiating Pastor:

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From your 31st Street Baptist Church Family

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

The loss of a loved one can be a painful time in any family life and it is our sacred responsibility to help you and your family through this difficult time. Funerals should be a celebration of life. Here at 31st Street Baptist Church, the pastor, deacons, staff, and congregation will provide comfort—from the death notification through the funeral services, and after care if needed. We hope that these guidelines will assist you and your family through this challenging time.

With the peace of Christ,

Rev. Dr. Joshua L. Mitchell, Senior Pastor

Protocol

Upon the transition of a family member, please follow this protocol:

1. Contact the Church

Sis. Liz Petty-Bumpus, Pastoral Assistant

1. Office: 804-226-0150

1. Email: info@31sbc.org

2. Notification of Death will be communicated with the Pastor, Grief Minister, and Deacon Chair

3. Dea. Freddie Oliver, Deacon Chair

4. Dr. Leo Keith, Minister of Grief Care*

*After initial notification, the Minister of Grief Care will become the primary point of contact with the church.

2. Oliver, Chair of Deacons

3. Dr. Leo Keith, Minister of Grief Care

1. Contact Your Funeral Director of Choice

2. Contact Relatives and Friends of the Deceased

Designate a Family Spokesperson

Funeral service times MUST be arranged with the Pastoral office and Grief Minister in consultation with the family and Funeral Director. In planning the home going service, we ask that the family choose a designated point person who will work directly with the Minister of Grief Care and Pastoral Office. The family spokesperson will be responsible for contacting all participants of in the homegoing service and for communicating the standards and protocols of 31st Street Baptist Church to them.

Schedule a Homegoing Service

Homegoing Services in the sanctuary may be held on Tuesdays- Saturdays.

Homegoing Services are typically rejected in the sanctuary on Sunday or Monday.

The Sanctuary will be available for viewings 1 hour prior to the scheduled service.

Select Music

A church musician can be provided to serve during homegoing experiences upon requests. Any additional musicians and singers should be arranged in conjunction with the Grief Minister and the Minister of Music. Please remember that the Christian funeral is a worship celebration and all musical selections should reflect appropriately. The church maintains the right to screen song selections to be played in the sanctuary.

Planning the Funeral Liturgy

“Reverend Dr. Thomas G. Long say, ‘Funerals allow us to mark ritually the profound significance of death...For Christians, an event as important as death needs to be experienced within God’s story. Just as baptism initiates people into the Christian community, funerals usher them on to God.’ In some instance, the profundity of death is quickly passed over to get people past their grief and on to celebrating the life of the deceased and perhaps Christ’s victory over death. However, a properly designed and officiated funeral can allow for lament, celebrating, and honoring Christ’s victory over death.” - Thomas G. Long, “Christian Funerals Going to be with God” & Willie Dwayne Francois III & Martha Simmons, Christian Minister’s Manual: For the Pulpit and Public Square for All Denominations

Prelude

As the family and friends gather for the homegoing service, the Musician will play softly to aid the gathered in mourning and celebrating the life of the deceased.

Procession

Ministers will process with the family from the vestibule to the front of the Sanctuary for the final viewing of the deceased. The Musician will play softly while the Minister recites passages of Scripture that speak to the death of a Christian. Once all of the family members have been seated, the casket will be closed for the last time. This begins the process of closure for the bereaved and the celebration of commending the deceased back to God. There is no final viewing after the casket has been closed.

Call To Worship & Invocation

The officiating minister greets the family and those present and invites them into the homegoing worship celebration for the deceased.

Hymn

The hymn celebrates the deceased’s ultimate victory over death. The congregation is asked to stand with the exception of the family. Suggested hymns are: Blessed Assurance, Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand, Standing on the Promises, The Solid Rock, Victory in Jesus, and When We All Get to Heaven.

Scripture

Scripture is read from both the Old and New Testaments by Ministers and/or Deacons of Community Baptist Church. The deceased’s favorite passages may be read at the time or you may use these suggested passages: Psalm 23, 25, 27, 42, 63, 91, 103, 122, 143; Isaiah 25:6-9, 61:1-3; Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-22; Job 19: 21-27; John 5:24-27, 6:37-40, 10:11-16, 11:21-27, 14:1-6; Romans 8:14-19, 34-39; Revelation 7:9-17, 21:2-7.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Comfort

A Minister offers a prayer of thanks to God for the life and witness of the deceased and of comfort for the bereaved family and all those mourning. This prayer may be followed up with a song by the family's request.

Acknowledgements and Resolutions

The Church Clerk will acknowledgement the many cards, condolences, resolutions, and other expressions sent to the family. Up to four pieces of correspondence may be read in part, but in the interest of time and sensitivity to the grieving family, only the official resolution from the church will be read in its totality.

Tributes

If the family desires, persons can be chosen to share appropriately reflections of the life of the deceased. At this time, 31st Street Baptist Church is requiring that all tribute participants will be pre-selected. Currently, we are not allowing "open floor" tributes during worship. Persons from the various areas of the deceased's life should be chosen to share appropriately and briefly. To honor the deceased and in consideration of the family, there will be a maximum of 4 speakers allowed 2 minutes for remarks.

Selection

This selection prepares the congregation for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclamation of the Gospel (Eulogy)

At the center of the homegoing service is the proclamation of the Gospel. It is the Pastor's delight, desire and duty to serve as officiant and to offer the eulogy for members. In special circumstances, the Pastor may defer to another cleric, especially a relative of the deceased. If the family desires an alternative eulogist or officiant, approval must be provided by the Pastor prior to the finalization of the service program.

Benediction & Recession

The Pastor offers a final word preparing the congregation for departure as the clergy, deceased, family, and congregation depart formally from the Sanctuary. Immediately before the Recessional, the Funeral Director will be invited forward to give BRIEF instructions pertaining to the departure, cortege, and burial. No other remarks or songs may be given by the Funeral Director at this time.

Please note that the final draft of the funeral order of worship must be approved by the Pastoral office prior to the homegoing experience and the printing of programs. By choosing to host the funeral of your loved one at 31st Street Baptist Church, you are consenting to abide by the policies as outlined. Please feel free to contact the Pastoral Assistant with any additional questions.

Homegoing Celebration Planning Sheet

Prelude

Church Musician

Procession

Clergy and Family

Invocation

Clergy

Hymn

Scripture Reading

Old Testament

New Testament

Prayer of Comfort

Clergy

Musical Selection (If desired)

Church Clerk

Acknowledgements & Resolutions

Reading of Obituary (silent)

Tributes

Selection

Proclamation of the Gospel (Eulogy)

Pastor

Benediction

Pastor

Recession

Clergy, Funeral Director, Family

Following the Funeral

Service Time and Repast

To ensure that the family is not overburdened by the length of service and can get to the cemetery at the appointed time, our funeral services are designed to be an hour in length. Prior the COVID-19 pandemic, the church would customarily offer a repast meal as a ministry to the family immediately following homecoming and committal services. Regrettably, we are currently not hosting any repasts in the Fellowship Hall.

Pastoral Care

When the phone calls and visits become far and few in between, counseling is available to you if you should need it. Counseling will be available to the family upon request. Please call the office to set up an appointment with the Pastor.

Fees

As death is a part of the Christian experience, it is the duty and honor of the Pastor and Congregation to provide appropriate Christian support and services during times of grief. There are no fees associated with building use, program printing, or pastoral services for any homegoing celebration for members of 31st Street Baptist Church. However, should families desire that homegoing celebrations be live streamed or to utilize church musicians to serve, some additional fees may apply. Please contact the church office for the most updated document outlining these additional fees.