



Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Rev. Patrick D. Clayborn, Ph.D.

Senior Pastor

GUIDELINES FOR FUNERALS

Funeral services are to celebrate the life of you departed loved one, as well as begin the healing process for friends and family. Funeral services should not highlight death, but rather focus on eternal life. In John 11:25-26 NKJV, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

The Christian faith is founded on the belief that life triumphs over death. In your meditation time you may share 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 with your family.

Bethel will attempt to do all within its power to assist you with your family as you move through this painful process- with peace, comfort, and the power of God. We must also be faithful to biblical precepts and traditional Christian procedures that govern the processes. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions on the following:

1. All funerals must be held during the day. Bethel does not funerals at night.
2. Sunday is a day of worship and rest in the Christian Community. Therefore, there are no Sunday funerals.
3. The funeral program should be short and succinct. It must be approved by the Senior Pastor or his designee before it is given to the mortuary or printer.
4. We strongly encourage the family not to make additions to the printed program. We recognize that several people may wish to speak or participate in the program, but this can put undue pressure on the family, and often delays the mortician's process.
5. If the family chooses to have a viewing before the beginning of the service, it must be clearly understood that the casket shall be closed and remain closed once the funeral begins. To open the casket after the Eulogy has been delivered is emotionally harmful to the family and attendees as well as scripturally and theologically unsound. The body has died but the spirit is still alive. We do not worship the body.
6. Bethel AMEC does not assume any responsibility for funeral repasts. This is a separate event for which the family should make those arrangements.
7. While the Pastor wished to perform all funerals, time and other commitments may not always permit. There are several competent ministerial staff members who stand ready to meet your needs.
8. A Member in good standing is not required to pay an honorarium to the Pastor or Minister and /or Musician; however, if the family so chooses, we ask that you give it directly to that person(s)
9. To avoid scheduling conflicts, please FIRST call the church to have the date and time approved.
10. Bethel assumes no responsibility for the funeral service if the date has NOT been approved and recorded into our church calendar.

Our prayers are with you as you continue your process of healing.

