**The Christian Funeral**

*at*

***St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fuelling)***

***Decatur, Indiana***

***A Funeral Booklet***

**Statement of Philosophy**

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fuelling) exists to “disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church, the Holy Bible, and the Book of Concord of 1580”, namely, to bear witness to His salvation of sinners and His victorious presence in the world through His means of grace which are the true proclamation of God’s Word and the proper administration of His Sacraments (St. Peter Lutheran Church Constitution, Article II). All proper activity at St. Peter Lutheran Church revolves around this statement of purpose. Therefore, all funerals at St. Peter (Fuelling) are carried out in a manner consistent with this singular purpose.

A “church funeral service” is intended for the burial of those members of St. Peter who have departed this life in the Christian faith. In this, it proclaims the eternal victory of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord and is a wonderful comfort to those family members who believe the same.

Funerals are done at St. Peter because we believe in and desire God’s grace and blessing that He desires to shower upon all His people. Death is a consequence of humanity’s Fall into sin, however, death is only a temporary interruption of the fellowship we share with others in Christ Jesus, who will raise all believers up on the Last Day to everlasting life.

The funeral service is a public service of the Church. It is a public confession of our Lutheran faith concerning death, burial, resurrection and the life hereafter. In the funeral service the baptismal theme of death and resurrection with Christ is most prominent (Rom. 6:1-11). The service begins with the Triune name of God being spoken over the body of the baptized. The casket is covered with a pall as a remembrance of our being clothed with Christ in Holy Baptism (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14). The baptismal creed (Apostle’s Creed) is confessed, and the prayers confidently speak of the resurrection and the new life given in baptism.

In the sermon the pastor has the unique opportunity to preach God’s Word of Law and Gospel to many hearers who may not know the source of Christian comfort when a heart is troubled by sin, grief and sorrow of death. Here he can explain the connection between Christ’s work of salvation in Baptism and the death of a Christian. The focus of a Lutheran Funeral Service is the public proclamation of Christ crucified and risen at the death of a member, for the repentant hope of the unchurched and the comfort of Christians in attendance.

Confessing these words in love to all who worship at St. Peter, funerals are ordinarily conducted in the context of a congregational service of the Word of God, the dignity of which is preserved within the character of the regular worship life at St. Peter, in accordance with the Rite Of Christian Burial in the Agenda. The Funeral Service thus reflects and confesses our beliefs and practices as orthodox Lutheran Christians, and the funeral’s form is consciously and deliberately planned with this confession in mind.

As with all congregational services conducted at St. Peter, Jesus Christ is the central focus of the Funeral Service. In this same regard, music included within the Funeral Service at St. Peter shall be keeping with the doctrinal requirements of the Lutheran Confessions and the liturgical practice of St. Peter Lutheran Church. “Only doctrinally pure hymns and forms shall be used in public worship and official acts” (St. Peter Constitution, Article X). There is contained within this booklet a list of approved selections for families to consider as they discuss the Funeral Service. Eulogies are not performed during the service or in the sanctuary but may be done at the visitation or luncheon. Since God’s called servant to St. Peter (the pastor) is accountable to both the congregation and to the Lord for public worship conducted here, he thereby bears the spiritual responsibility and maintains supervision over the entire funeral service.

Because we understand a funeral to be a congregational service, the use of the church and our property or facilities for funerals is not open to everyone who might express a desire to have their funeral conducted here. Our church, property, and facilities are available, first to members in good standing of St. Peter Lutheran Church (Fuelling), and, second, to members in good standing of a sister congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod who can demonstrate a reasonable connection with the congregation of St. Peter. The request to have the funeral conducted at St. Peter by a member of a sister LCMS congregation shall be made by their pastor, and such requests require the approval of the St. Peter pastor and elders. All participants in funerals at St. Peter shall be ordained pastors or seminarians in good standing of the LCMS, and their participation shall be at the invitation and discretion of the pastor of St. Peter.

**Funeral Music**

The hymns for the funeral service will be chosen in consultation with the pastor. All other music will be chosen in consultation with the organist and/or Music director and approved by the pastor. What follows are suggested hymns and music for your consideration.

**Hymns**

438 A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

656 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

878 Abide with Me

596 All Christians Who Have Been Baptized

753 All for Christ I Have Forsaken

601 All Who Believe and Are Baptized

477 Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

744 Amazing Grace, How Sweet The Sound

397 As with Gladness Men of Old

633 At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing

467 Awake, My Heart with Gladness

697 Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death

364 Away in a Manger

676 Behold a Host, Arrayed in White

725 Children of the Heavenly Father

509 Christ is Surely Coming

458 Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands

420 Christ, the Life of All the Living

347 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

605 Father Welcomes

677 For All the Saints

742 For Me to Live Is Jesus

607 From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

594 God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It

349 Hark the Glad Sound

380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

740 I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb

461 I Know That My Redeemer Lives

486 If Christ Had Not Been Raised from Death

724 If God Himself Be for Me

748 I’m But a Stranger Here

745 In God, My Faithful God

938 In Peace and Joy I Now Depart

755 In the Very Midst of Life

672 Jerusalem the Golden

741 Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense

490 Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won

743 Jesus, Priceless Treasure

708 Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart

484 Make Songs of Joy

747 No Saint on Earth Lives Life to Self Alone

880 Now Rest beneath Night’s Shadow

386 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

552 O Christ, Who Shared Our Mortal Life

334 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

395 O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

449 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

450 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

355 O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide

679 Oh, How Blest Are They

675 Oh, What Their Joy

376 Once in Royal David’s City

598 Once in the Blest Baptismal Waters

671 Sing with All the Saints in Glory

508 The Day is Surely Drawing Near

709 The King of Love My Shepherd Is

348 The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

710 The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want

402 The Only Son from Heaven

758 The Will of God is Always Best

762 There Is a Time for Everything

482 This Joyful Eastertide

516 Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

760 What God Ordains is Always Good

730 What Is the World to Me

764 When Aimless Violence Takes Those We Love

763 When Peace, like a River

483 With High Delight Let Us Unite

**Notes**

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