

## **Funeral Policy for Georgian Shores United Church**

Re: Funeral / Memorial / Celebration of Life Services

(Approved — May 2018)

“In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone.

God is with us. Thanks be to God.”

from *A New Creed*, United Church of Canada)

### **Theological Basis**

Georgian Shores United is a caring Christian community called to make a compassionate difference in the lives of its members and beyond. In the realm of bereavement care, it is our goal to support the process of grieving with meaningful ritual and counsel, and to point to God who mysteriously brings life out of death. The death of any loved one is a time to recall the miracle of life, to give thanks for the life of the deceased, and to mourn our common loss.

Informed by the stories of the life lived, it becomes a powerful and inspiring service, giving voice to memories, purpose, gifts, and weaving the threads of word, music, artistry and prayer into a beautiful tapestry of remembrance and love.

### **Policy**

The service is normally presided over by a lead minister or his/her designate; or, with the agreement of the minister and Council, other ministers / presiders may be involved.

- Typically, the office administrator and/or clergy will gather the initial information about the request. Not every request can be granted. In the absence of a lead minister, other ministry personnel in consultation with the Worship Ministry, will decide who presides.
- For requests for outside ministers to preside, please see UCC Manual (2013), I.2.5.4.
- Worship services will normally take place in the sanctuary, but other venues may be considered at the discretion of the minister(s). The ceremony will be performed in such a fashion that it is clear that people have participated in Christian worship. Non-religious services will not be performed. However, the minister will be sensitive to the broad spectrum of religious practices from which families come. Likewise, Georgian Shores United will not play the role of a funeral home, i.e., looking after cremation; doing the contact work for cemetery burial; or staffing the collection of memorial donations, except when the family wishes donations be made to Georgian Shores United.
- Service planning: The minister will guide the family in preparing tasteful, appropriate rituals, music, and words of remembrance that honours their loved one(s).

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- Organizational Rituals (e.g. Legion, Clubs and associations) shall take place outside the bounds of worship, prior to the worship service.
- Our music director will be the primary provider of instrumental music for funerals and memorial services and will be consulted regarding music in collaboration with the minister and the decedent's loved ones. If there is a request for a guest pianist/organist, our music director will be consulted.
- Projection of pictorial tributes, pre-recorded music and microphones requires our trained audio-visual technician and must be arranged through the office administrator.
- We request that memorabilia displayed in the sanctuary be in good taste and approved by the minister. We discourage an open mic at the service and recommend reserving that for the reception.
- Receptions following the service of worship will be the responsibility of family members who are arranging the memorial service. The church has an auditorium that can be utilized (if available) for a reception. Unless pre-arranged with another caterer, our Women's group will often cater for a set fee.
- A fee schedule is available for all aspects of the service and aft-service reception. All fees should be paid out to either the minister or office administrator *in advance* of the service.