



NGWANE PARK ALLIANCE CHURCH BEREAVEMENT POLICY

Version 1.0

1. PREAMBLE

Death is a subject that is difficult to address. It is almost inevitable though, that at some point the Ngwane Park Alliance Church (NPAC) will be affected by a death. This might be the death of a church member or an immediate relative of a church member. Every death and the circumstances in which it occurs are different. Our thoughts and prayers as a Church go out to the bereaved at any time of loss and grief. The NPAC wishes to be there for her members in such times, to minister to their needs and bring comfort to their heart. The Church commits itself to be always available to provide guidance, counsel and to minister to the bereaved and their loved ones during the time of loss and bereavement.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on how to deal considerately, sensitively and compassionately with difficult matters in sorrowing circumstances. This shall be achieved mainly through the provision of spiritual and moral support to the bereaved member. Where possible, the NPAC shall endeavour to provide material support as well.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The management of a bereavement situation is a whole NPAC issue but there needs to be clear lines of accountability to ensure that our aims are fulfilled. The main areas of responsibility are outlined below.

- 3.1 The Local Church Board (LCB) shall be responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and to provide relevant support where possible;
- 3.2 The Pastor, with the support of the (LCB) shall have overall responsibility for spiritual support and direction in this instance;
- 3.3 The LCB Secretary shall be the first point of contact for the individual concerned and the family;
- 3.4 The LCB shall be responsible for coordinating all activities relating to a death incidence once it has been reported to the Pastor;
- 3.5 The LCB shall identify appropriate material support within the NPAC for the individual or family concerned, as the case may be;

4. FUNERALS

- 4.1 There shall be no restrictions in attending funerals, but the NPAC shall be directly responsible for spiritual and material support and funeral services relating to NPAC members only.
- 4.2 The NPAC does not encourage memorial services.
- 4.3 The NPAC shall not perform rituals of any kind, be it to the corpse, grave, bereaved, cultural procession or whatsoever.
- 4.4 The NPAC shall not observe any kind of customs that are contrary to the fundamental beliefs of the Church as stated in its constitution.
- 4.5 The NPAC does not encourage laying or reading of wreaths.
- 4.6 The NPAC shall attend burial services and not return to the grave or to the bereaved member or family to perform any unbiblical rituals, like cleansing ceremonies and unveiling of tombstones.

5. FUNERAL SERVICES

- 5.1 The NPAC shall be fully responsible for the funeral service of a church member and their immediate relatives who may not be members of the NPAC but attend services at this local church.
- 5.2 In the event of a death of a relative of a NPAC member who does not attend church services at NPAC, the NPAC shall only take a leading role upon request by the member and the deceased's family.

6. DEATH REPORTING PROCEDURES

When a bereavement or loss situation occurs, the following steps shall be taken:

- 6.1 The bereaved member shall report the death to the LCB Secretary as soon as it is appropriate;
- 6.2 The LCB Secretary shall immediately inform the Pastor about the received death report;
- 6.3 With the guidance of the Pastor, contact shall be made with the family to get the details and offer appropriate support;
- 6.4 The NPAC members shall then be informed about the death and funeral arrangements once they become available.

7. GROUP COVER FUNERAL INSURANCE SCHEME

- 7.1 The NPAC at the time of this policy shall not enlist the services of a Group Cover Church Policy Scheme
- 7.2 However, the NPAC through the LCB and in consultation with the Committees, shall revoke section 7.2 as may be appropriate.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 8.1 The NPAC shall make some financial contribution towards the funeral expenses in the event of a member of the NPAC's death at a rate stipulated in Clause 9;
- 8.2 The NPAC shall make some financial contribution towards the funeral expenses in the event of the death of a NPAC's member's immediate relative including spouse, biological parents, biological or adopted child at the rate stipulated in Clause 9;
- 8.3 In the case where the member is covered through an insurance policy managed by NPAC, the financial contribution towards the funeral expenses shall be in accordance with the funeral benefit, less any expenses that might have been incurred by the Church in processing of the claim;
- 8.4 In the case where the member is covered through an insurance policy which has a Family Support Rider, NPAC shall ensure that the affected family is provided with the after death financial support for a period not exceeding Six (6) months by conducting family visits aimed at providing both spiritual and physical support where necessary.

9. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The NPAC's amount of financial contribution to be made shall be as follows:

- 9.1 Members of NPAC from the age of 18 years, shall be entitled to E5 000.00.
- 9.2 Members of NPAC from the age of 0 to 17 years, shall be entitled to E3 000.00.
- 9.3 On the occasion of the death of a spouse, parent, biological or adopted or foster child of a NPAC member, where such next of kin is not a member of NPAC, then:
 - 9.3.1 A contribution of E2 000.00, regardless of the age.
- 9.4 The rates above shall be periodically reviewed by the LCB and communicated to the NPAC membership immediately after such review has been made.
- 9.5 In reviewing rates done, the NPAC's financial muscle (strength) on a sustainable basis shall be taken into account and that of particular local churches. This shall always be the essential underpinning factor for determining revised rates in this regard.

10. SOURCE OF FUNDS

This benevolent initiative shall be financed through the Insurance cover of the Church or through the coffers of the NPAC in the case of members not yet covered through the Church Insurance Policy.

11. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION PAYMENT

- 11.1 The financial contribution by the NPAC shall be paid to the bereaved member or family at the latest seven days after the day of the funeral;
- 11.2 Where the death is found to have not been reported on time for the payment to be made before the funeral date, payment shall be made immediately upon receiving such a report, even if the funeral has already taken place, provided the death qualified for the support.

12. TRANSPORT

12.1 Members

- 12.1.1 In case of the death of a NPAC member or his/her immediate relatives, transport for church representatives to the bereaved family to pass condolences shall be provided at the expense of NPAC;

12.2 Any other persons

- 12.2.1 In case of a death of any other person whose funeral members of the NPAC wish to attend or pass their condolences, the related transport expenses shall be directly borne by the affected NPAC members.
- 12.2.2 The LCB shall be responsible for organising transport once a list of the members attending has been established and is sufficient to cover the said costs.

13. SPECIAL CLAUSE

For purposes of ensuring equitable and fair treatment to all members of the NPAC, once this policy is implemented, it shall be applied until it is repealed for a better one. It is acknowledged that once it is implemented, it shall raise a reasonable expectation from the NPAC members and subsequently create a personal right to this initiative. It is for this reason that the financial muscle and sustainability of this assistance becomes critical in its establishment.

14. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- **A child** shall mean a Ngwane Park Alliance Church Member's child who has not attained the age of twenty-one (21) years or if still a fulltime student, the age shall extend to twenty (25) years. If incapacitated from maintaining herself/himself through some physical infirmity, provided such child is wholly dependent on the parents, there is no age limit.
- **A member** is a person who has become a member as per the Constitution of The Alliance Church in Swaziland.

15. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy document shall come into force on the date the NPAC adopts it.

16. AMENDMENT

Any amendments, alterations or additions of any Clause or paragraph of this policy shall be made only on approval of the Local Church Board at a properly constituted meeting where the Local Church Pastor shall be present.

Signed:

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Pastor

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Chairperson

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Secretary

Date: