

Consumers Guide to Choosing a Funeral Home in Lansing, Michigan



Educational Resource provided by
Pray Funeral Home

Who We Are:

Pray Funeral Home was first founded in Michigan in 1921 by a father and son, Ernest and Myron Pray. Their goal was to serve the needs of the local community in the Lansing area. Ernest and Myron Pray began their business in their own home, helping community members with the grieving process and handling funeral arrangements. Today, Joe Pray operates Pray Funeral Home that has become one of the largest family owned funeral homes in the area.

Why are we providing this Consumer Awareness Guide?

We receive numerous calls from people in many communities asking questions about funeral service. We thought that many more could be helped by providing this information through Lansing Funeral Advocate.

We want you to be aware of all your options when faced with the death of a family member and all the emotions that you may experience. Some families and funeral homes or discount firms or disposition firms tend to focus on price of the services rather than the reason those services may be helpful to you.

We have learned over the years that when a family looks for helpful and healing experiences, as well as a firm that takes care of the basic necessities for the disposition of the deceased, their grief experience is much better. We believe that there are funeral homes in the greater Lansing area that can help you through your loss in a helpful and meaningful way. There are also firms that special in providing discount services and minimal disposition services. That is why we have provided this awareness guide so you have the knowledge and the tools to make an informed choice that is best for your family.

Types of funeral oriented firms

In Michigan anyone taking care of a deceased person must be a licensed funeral director operating under the license of an establish funeral home, or under the supervision of a licensed funeral director

There are many different levels of funeral service providers. The three basic types are:

Full Service Funeral Homes: These provide a for the full needs of a family who have lost a loved one ranging from immediate disposition with no services to a complete funeral with a visitation or time for family to gather, funeral or memorial services and disposition including burial or cremation.

Discount firms: A funeral home that may offer less costly services by limiting service and disposition choices.

Direct disposition firms: Firms who specializes in the disposition of a deceased human body with minimal or no service or memorial options.

Fair Pricing

Many firms may discount their services, particularly cremation services, because they may not be secure in explaining the value of the minimal services they provide. For example, they may discount their direct cremation charges by artificially reducing the price without reducing their expenses. This often results in those firms shifting the discounted amount to the families who desire a full service funeral. Resulting in higher costs for the families who choose to have a traditional funeral or memorial.

Our Service Goals:

Pray Funeral Home staff support these service goals:

- To help the families of our community through one of the most traumatic times of their lives by arranging meaningful services that depict the lives of their loved ones.
- To provide support to families beyond the actual funeral services.
- To support the community of Charlotte as a whole through educational programs, economic and personal support of community projects, and personal and corporate involvement in community development.

Affiliations:

Pray Funeral Home maintains several affiliations with local and national funeral service associations to keep up with the most recent knowledge and options for families we serve.

Our affiliations include membership in the:

National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA)

Michigan Funeral Directors Association (MFDA)

International Order of the Golden Rule (OGR)

International Cemetery Crematory and Funeral Association (ICCF)

Each of these associations have a code of ethics that as members we must adhere to in service to our communities.

Awards

Our Family and Staff have earned numerous awards from our local community and also from our national and international associations

Every year since 1989, Pray Funeral Home has been awarded with the National Funeral Directors Association Pursuit of Excellence Award.

In 2006, Pray Funeral Home was inducted into the National Funeral Directors Association Hall of Excellence as recognition of our commitment to service within our local community.

In 2010 Pray Funeral Home received the Keeping it Personal Runner Up from the ICCFA for the Most Personalized Service or Memorial service.

In 2011 Pray Funeral Home received the Keeping It Personal Grand Prize from the ICCFA for the Most Personalized Service or Memorial service.

In 2012 Pray Funeral Home received the Golden Rule Community Service Awards from the OGR

Pray Funeral Home has received numerous Peoples Choice Awards from the Community Newspapers annual consumer surveys, the most recent being 2012

Why Funeral Homes Do What They Do:

Funeral homes provide dignified and compassionate care to families at a most difficult time in their lives. They believe that a meaningful funeral service that reflects the lives of those being remembered can help the family through this difficult time in a positive way.

A funeral home's services are designed to help families through the loss of a loved with compassionate, meaningful, and personal care. The goal of a funeral home is to understand and see that your wishes for a dignified service are fulfilled in every way.

What Does A Funeral Home Do?

When a member of a family dies, many people today choose what is considered to be a traditional service or ceremony. This service usually includes a time for people to gather together, often the day before the funeral itself. The following day there is a funeral ceremony held in a church or other place of worship, possibly at the funeral home itself. Burial or cremation will often follow the service with the family and friends gathering at the cemetery or crematory for a committal service. A traditional service provides familiarity for many people but involves many arrangements and details that the funeral home should take care of for you.

Depending upon the wishes of the family and their decisions following the death of their loved one, there are many activities that a funeral home will take care of for you. No funeral service is ever exactly the same but for any family, a funeral director and the staff of the funeral home should...

- Be on call to serve families at any time of the day or night
- Remove and transfer the deceased from the place of death to the funeral home within one hour of time of notification. The funeral home will also transport the deceased to and from the crematorium if necessary
- Perform professional care of the deceased including washing, embalming, restorative art, dressing, placement in the casket, hairdressing and cosmetology
- Arrange a consultation with the family to gather information necessary for completing paper work and to arrange the details of the funeral service

- Organize, complete and file all the necessary paperwork, including certifications of death or other permits and authorization; acquire a requested number of certified copies of the certificate of death for the family
- Compose and write, with information provided by the family, an obituary, including service information, biographical information and survivor information – and send to all newspapers requested by the family

If a funeral or memorial is selected by the family the following tasks should also be taken care of by the funeral home...

- Offer assistance to the family by contacting the family's choice of clergy, musicians and/or singers, if requested, and will make arrangements with any special groups (military, fraternal) to be present at or participate in funeral services; will arrange for honorariums to be given to appropriate persons as requested by the family
- Contact and arrange necessary details with the cemetery, crematory or other place of disposition; determine any required fees, regulations and other requirements prior to funeral services
- Help families with questions about social security benefits, insurance claims, pensions and other related inquiries
- Provide memorial products which may include a register or guest book, acknowledgement cards, thank you cards, memorial folders, prayer cards and memorial tribute DVDs, as requested by the family
- Help families by arranging flowers, framed photos, photo collages and other memorial pieces in the chapel during services and/or visitation; ensure their care of, and return to family after the services
- Direct the chosen funeral services in a professional manner, from visitation, to funeral service, to processional, to disposition of remains through burial or cremation
- Deliver, at the conclusion of the service, flowers, register book, flower card, memorial contributions made to the family, photos or memorabilia that were on display and any other items belonging to the family
- Assist the family with other arrangements that are needed after the service, including the death dates added to an existing grave marker or purchase of a new monument, insurance paperwork and personnel to assist in these matters.

10 Attributes of a Professional Funeral Home

- 1 Expertise
- 2 Reputation
- 3 Resources to provide meaningful options
- 4 Creativity
- 5 Dedication
- 6 Commitment to family and community
- 7 Professionalism
- 8 Compassion
- 9 Integrity

How to Choose a Funeral Home:

The choice of a funeral home may be one of the first decisions you make in pre-planning a funeral.

People often choose a funeral home based on a combination of four factors:

- **Accommodation:** a funeral home must be open to your unique wishes and needs. When you need special music, treatment of photographs, special videos, even special scenery or creative display of touch stone items that must be included in the service or memorial the funeral home should be able to accommodate that or any other special needs such as holding services at distant sites, churches or even in a different city.
- **Recommendation:** a funeral home may be recommended to you by friends. If the recommendation indicates that the wishes of the family have been cared for with respect and dignity, then you should consider the services of that funeral home. Make an appointment for a meeting with the director and a tour of the home;
- **Price:** funeral and burial costs can vary greatly depending on the choices that you and your family. Cost comparison is to be expected and all funeral directors will gladly give you an itemized projection of costs. All funeral homes and disposition companies operate under the Funeral Rule of the Federal Trade Commission which requires that a General Price List be available for individuals inquiring in person for pricing information. Pre-planning a funeral is a very cost effective and time saving practice.
- **Creativity:** funeral and memorial services should be as unique as the person who they are commemorating. The ability of the funeral home to incorporate the deceased's favorite, colors, or wishes such as the inclusion of horse drawn wagons, antique cars, military honors, butterfly or dove, special venue such as a park, or even a "party" should be a consideration in today's funeral and memorial planning.

Five Common Questions our funeral home gets asked:

1. What services do you provide?

We provide a full range of services for funeral management. These services include interment, cremation, embalming, visitation, viewing, burial, memorial services and gatherings. A funeral director will take care of the whole funeral process, from pre-arrangement and preparation to the actual funeral and burial or cremation.

2. Why is a funeral important?

A funeral gives people a time and a place to come together and support one another and begin the healing process. Without a funeral, it is often difficult to feel that you have said *good bye* to

someone you have loved.

3. What kind of training does your staff have?

Joe E. Pray has been a licensed Funeral Director for over thirty years. He is a graduate of Life Appreciation training and actively seeks continuing education within funeral service. He has authored numerous articles for professional journals on funeral service and serving the needs of a community through a family owned firm.

Joseph Eugene Pray has been a licensed Funeral Director for over 60 years and has graduated from the Life Appreciation Training program.

J. Tyler Pray has a degree in Mortuary Science from Wayne State University. He is also a graduate of the Life Appreciation Training program. Tyler also participates in numerous continuing education venues to keep abreast of improvements in family service.

As well, all of our staff are skilled in assisting family members and friends in working through the grieving process.

4. Is it possible to pre-plan a funeral?

Absolutely, yes. In fact, it is much more common to pre-plan a funeral. Making many decisions ahead of time will save you and your family time that can be spent with your loved one in the last stages of life. Making decisions at a time when your emotions are at rest also gives a great peace of mind knowing that your plan is in place.

5. Is there a difference between a family funeral home and a funeral home operated by a corporation?

Family-owned funeral homes such as our funeral home are locally owned and operated. Many families have been in funeral service for generations, creating a personal relationship with the community and becoming actively involved with the communities in which they serve. Family owned businesses are sensitive to the needs of the community in which they live and are committed to offering the highest quality of service and product to their clients. When dealing with a family-owned funeral business such as Pray Funeral Home, keep in mind that everything we do reflects our commitment to providing quality service to the community. Customer trust is built slowly over time and we value that loyalty through our service and commitment.

Common Services Requested From Our Funeral Home

We can provide you with a traditional service during which a viewing, visitation, ceremony and burial or cremation may be performed. We can also help you arrange a “Family Affirmation Service”, a less formal service that recognizes that family members often want to be involved in the actual service. We can also help you make choices regarding a funeral celebrant, musicians

for the ceremony, bereavement travel arrangements, grief counseling, web casting and life video services. Pray Funeral Home is capable of providing catering services for receptions at family homes or reception halls in the community.

If a “green burial” is the request of the family, Pray Funeral Home offers formaldehyde free embalming and metal and concrete free burial containers.

We can accommodate your wishes for a “clean cremation” in which we use caskets and shrouds made of naturally combustible materials. These do not release potential harmful chemicals into the atmosphere during cremation. Clean Cremation units also do not use metal screws or staples that would require separation from the cremated remains following the cremation process.

Common Products Requested From Our Funeral Home

We can assist you in making choices about caskets, vaults, urns, prayer cards, thank you cards, obituary notices and grave markers. Choices range in style and price to accommodate a wide range of decision.

Other Services That We Offer:

Certified Celebrant on staff for families that do not have a close church affiliation or that choose to conduct a less formal service

Creationeer - a unique option that we have at Pray Funeral Home. Our staff Creationeer helps a family weave the unique stories and memories that they hold into a memorable, helpful and healing service.

The Family Remembrance ProgramSM is a unique program exclusively available through Pray Funeral Home to record, preserve, and share the stories of your family member, or your entire family.

Our **Video Tribute** program uses your existing photos and arranges them with video interludes and captions and music to create a moving tribute to your family member.

Our **Living AlbumSM** program can incorporate your existing video with family photographs and music into a memorable 7 to 10 minute video presentation.

Our **Remember a Life Well LivedSM** program includes a one-hour interview with up to three family members or friends telling their favorite stories and memories about their family member. Portions of these interviews are mixed with photographs and music for a video presentation 10 to 12 minutes in length.

Our **Your Life; Your StorySM** program offers you the opportunity to leave a unique gift to your family members. This program is available at the time you make pre-arrangements. It

allows you to record your life story in your own words on video. This can be a gift to your family members and friends now, and it can be incorporated into a Living Album in the future.

Your Life, Your StorySM is available either as a simple 50-minute interview videotaped by our staff as part of your pre-arrangements with Pray Funeral Home. Alternately, it is available as a professionally produced and edited story, by our expert videographer at your home, or at the location of your choice. The professional edition starts with an hour long interview and incorporates pictures and other images of other memorabilia to make a truly unique gift for your family.

Cremation Ark for a meaningful presentation of the cremated remains held in a cremation urn and a dignified means of transfer during memorial services and interment.

Private Cremation Transfer A dignified presentation of the cremated remains in a private chapel with time for reflection as we transfer the custody of the cremated remains to your family members.

Prays Peace of Mind PreplanningSM to help relieve your family with many of the decisions and expenses that need to be taken care of after you are gone.

Life Tribute VignettesTM Arrangement of remembrance items to share the favorite stories of the life being celebrated

Masterpiece Memorialssm Personalized custom memorials and acknowledgements that truly represent the memory of the deceased family member.

WWW.PrayFuneralHome.com Informational web site to help answer many of your questions and provide other helpful information

Online Book of Memories to share service information condolences and stories on line

We Help You Create The Most Meaningful Service Possible For Your Loved One.

When you meet with our staff, a director will express condolences and begin with asking for your concerns, questions and wishes. Time will be taken to get a sense of the person who has passed; things such as their occupation, interests, memberships, talents, hobbies and unique characteristics. The funeral director will also be interested in details about your family; how they will be participating in the planned ceremony and if there are special considerations to be taken into account. By asking questions, the funeral director will begin to understand your vision and help you by making suggestions and guiding you through the many decisions that must be made.

Request a tour of the funeral home facilities. Ask as many questions as necessary until you are satisfied. Your choices are guided by your needs and your decisions determine the total outcome as well as the cost.

By law, you must be provided with price lists showing the costs for products and services. Once you have made decisions, examine the statement of proposed costs and check all charges that apply to your selections. If you are confused by anything you see, hear or read, speak to the funeral director and an explanation will be provided. The Pray Funeral Home staff will appreciate this approach and will work to help you and your family at every point.

Estimating the Cost of a Funeral

According to many sources a traditional funeral, including a casket and vault, costs about \$8,000, although extras such as flowers, obituary notices, acknowledgment cards and limousines can add thousands of dollars.” The costs of a funeral must take into account:

- Professional and administrative services (embalming, funeral home staff, office administration)
- Facilities and equipment (preparation room, visitation, reception room, chapel)
- Transportation (transfer from the place of death, funeral limousine, cars for the family)
- Merchandise (casket, vault, prayer cards, grave markers)
- Cash disbursements (flowers, cemetery plot, obituary, death certificates, honorariums, headstone)

Coping with the emotional loss of a loved one can complicate the process of planning a funeral. However, pre-planning and arranging for pre-payment of a funeral can ease this complication. There are a growing number of options available to the public today when you wish to pre-plan and pre-pay for a funeral. The Pray Funeral Home can tailor a plan that’s right for you. We can arrange for single pay plans or automatic monthly bank withdrawals designed to meet your budget concerns. Payments on many pre-arrangement plans can be made monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually. Payments can be spread out over 1 year, or as long as 10 years depending on the pre-arrangement beneficiary’s age and health. Some pre-arrangement plans can be transferred to other family members. Pre-payment can protect you and your family from future inflationary trends while providing peace of mind knowing that they will be cared for after you are gone.

The experienced staff at Pray Funeral Home can meet with you to discuss your wishes regarding pre-payment arrangements. Alternately, we invite you to explore the idea through our online **Advance Planning Site found at www.PrayFuneralHome.com**.

Grief and Dealing with the Death of a Loved One

The death of a loved one is life’s most painful events. Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the death and the person who has died. It is an essential part of healing. You are beginning a journey that is often frightening, painful, overwhelming and sometimes lonely. The staff of the Pray Funeral Home recognizes the symptoms of grief and understands the process of grieving. We provide a safe, comfortable atmosphere and professional staff to guide you through the process of grieving.

We can help you and your family to communicate your feelings in a positive and productive manner. You need to express your grief openly. By sharing your grief outside yourself, healing occurs. Ignoring your grief won't make it go away; talking about it often makes you feel better. Allow yourself to speak from your heart, not just your head. Our staff is sympathetic and compassionate, trained to listen and to express support and comfort during this very difficult time in your lives.

The Pray Funeral Home has a wide array of resources to help you deal with grief and the grieving process. We are committed to walking this journey with you until you are ready to move ahead on your own. We would be honored to serve your family.

Thank you for reviewing our new CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE TO FUNERAL HOMES IN LANSING MICHIGAN. I hope you have found this knowledge helpful.

If you have any questions or comments, please call us at (517) 215-7492 or you can email us at info@lansingfuneraladvocate.com.

Sincerely,
Joe E. Pray