



A GUIDE TO PLANNING FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

CHRISTIANS believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them hope and cause for thanksgiving in the face of death. In this faith, we entrust those who have died to the infinite mercy and love of God.

—The Methodist Worship Book, England

A worship service following the death of a loved one does at least two things: It enables us to face the reality of our mortality, and comforts us in the celebration of another reality—life after death in God. As one of our creeds declares, “In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone. Thanks be to God!”

It is the commitment of the clergy, staff, and music leadership of First United Methodist Church to assist in the preparation and implementation of a service dedicated to God’s glory for those who mourn and gather to worship at the time of death. To this end, the following are guidelines and suggestions that we offer to assist those who mourn, and those who look to tomorrow.

Upon reading this information, please make an appointment with a First United Methodist Church pastor to discuss your decisions and initiate a special file. Your appointment will be welcomed, and the decisions made will be honored with sincerity, dignity, and confidentiality. The file will contain the written information of your choices so that, at the time of death, plans can be implemented smoothly.

MAKING ARRANGEMENTS AT THE TIME OF DEATH

An appointment with a funeral home/mortuary counselor will help you decide what you and your family will need from the many services available. The funeral home can coordinate details regarding transportation to and from services, visitations, preparation of an obituary for newspapers, completion of appropriate legal forms and documents, and arrangements with the cemetery or place of final rest.

Please contact First United Methodist Church if you plan to use the sanctuary or chapel for a service of worship. In addition, the Columbarium is available for the cremated remains of members and their families. Information regarding available niches is available from the Business Administrator.

THE SERVICE

A funeral is a worship service, the purpose of which celebrates life and gives comfort to those who mourn. The concern of those gathered ministers to our grief, but essentially a funeral is a service of worship to God. With this in mind, all that takes place should be consistent with this principle.

THE LOCATION OF THE SERVICE

It is appropriate to have the funeral or memorial service in the church, using either the sanctuary or the chapel. It is in the church that we are baptized and where we make promises in the baptism of our children. It is here that the congregation worships week by week. Here we open our lives to the Lord, find forgiveness, receive the bread and the cup of Holy Communion, and join with our families and friends in a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is fitting to recognize the end of our earthly life and celebrate our resurrection to life eternal in this same place.

TYPES OF SERVICES

The following are types of services reflective of the traditions in our church:

A funeral service is where the body is present either in a casket or an urn. Usually, the funeral service is concluded with a service of committal at the burial site. When a casket or urn is present in the church, it shall remain closed and ordinarily draped in a pall provided by the church. A pall is an embroidered cloth with a cross or other Christian symbol representing resurrection. The pall helps the congregation focus on the worship

of God and the hope of the resurrection, acknowledging the equality of all people in Christ. While the pall is the normal cover for the casket or urn, it is permissible for the casket of a veteran to be covered in the United States flag. An alternate pall provided by the church may be used on the casket during viewing or visitation at the funeral home.

A memorial service is where the body is not present. Interment of the remains in a service of committal has either preceded the memorial service or will take place at a later time.

A service of committal (often referred to as a graveside service) occurs at the interment site where the remains of the deceased are laid to rest.

Please note that fraternal and/or military rites are not a part of our worship to God, and therefore it is appropriate for these organizations to pay tribute to their deceased members at the cemetery or another location.

OFFICIATING CLERGY

It is expected that pastor(s) of First United Methodist Church will officiate all funerals or memorial services. If the family desires another minister to participate in the service, the pastor will need to be informed so that he or she may extend the invitation and communicate details of the service. If the pastor is not available to officiate the service, First United Methodist Church will make appropriate arrangements for another minister. The Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church of Salisbury has the final decision making authority for all services.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Services at First United Methodist Church are based on the Service of Death and Resurrection as outlined in The United Methodist Book of Worship. The church provides a standard service leaflet. Printing requests beyond the church standard will be invoiced. A funeral or memorial service typically follows this order:

Voluntary (*20 minutes of music prior to the service selected by the organist*)
Processional Hymn

Greeting
Hymn
Prayer
Words of Assurance
Readings from the Holy Scripture
Words of Remembrance or Eulogy
Prayer
Sending Forth
Hymn
Organ Voluntary

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

The central moment in any worship service, including funeral and memorial services, is the proclamation of the Word of God: it is the proclamation of a resurrection faith in a sermon or meditation. There are moments in a funeral for specific remembrances and thanksgivings by family and friends. Experience teaches us that two speakers with a combined length of 10 minutes is sufficient. We request that personal words reflect the goodness and Christian virtues of the deceased.

SUGGESTED READINGS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

Favorite scriptures of the deceased are always appropriate. For assistance in choosing scripture, please see the following list. Your preferences for scripture should be part of your file. The pastor may choose if you prefer.

Old Testament	Job 19: 23-27
	Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
	Isaiah 40:1-11
	Isaiah 40: 28-31
	Isaiah 65: 17-25
Psalms	Psalms 23
	Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11
	Psalms 90:1-10, 12
	Psalms 103
	Psalms 121

Psalm 130

Epistles

Romans 8:31-39
Romans 14:7-9, 10*b*-12
I Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58
II Corinthians 4:16-5:1
I Thessalonians 4:13-18
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25; 23:3-5

Gospel

Matthew 18:1-5
Luke 23:33, 39-43
John 11:17-27
John 14: 1-6, 25-27

MUSIC

The music for a funeral or memorial service shall be sacred and reflect the tradition of music at First United Methodist Church. Music should be scriptural in nature and primarily focused on God. Our Director of Music will provide music for the service in consultation with the pastor(s). If requested, The Chancel Choir, professional soloists and instrumentalists may be arranged through the Director of Music. When additional musicians are requested, a cost will cover associated fees.

For assistance in choosing hymns, please see the following list. It is recommended all hymns that are sung be chosen from the most current [United Methodist Hymnal](#). The family may select hymns from the following list or others from the hymnal.

- 57 O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
- 64 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty
- 66 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
- 88 Maker, in Whom We Live
- 89 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- 92 For the Beauty of the Earth
- 102 Now Thank We All our God
- 110 A Mighty Fortress is Our God

117	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
127	Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
138	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
139	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
306	The Strife is O'er
545	The Church's One Foundation
707	Hymn of Promise
711	For All the Saints

FLOWERS

Floral decorations shall be limited to one arrangement provided by the family for the altar. Please keep in mind the scale of our church and altar area when discussing your preferences with florists and designers. The church office can offer guidance in making arrangements for flowers. Any other symbols of remembrance, including photographs, shall be displayed in the narthex or fellowship hall.

LITURGICAL BANNERS

A liturgical banner is available to be displayed at the front of the sanctuary for all funeral or memorial services held in the sanctuary or chapel. This banner is symbolic of faith and hope in the resurrection. The church staff will facilitate its appropriate placement.

RECEPTIONS OR MEALS

The Bereavement Committee of First United Methodist Church is available to provide either a meal for the family *or* a reception for guests attending the service. The officiating pastor will ask the family their preference. The family is welcome to receive guests in the Elizabeth Stanback Room before or after the service, or during a reception following the service in the church fellowship hall. Should the family request a reception, a gift to the Bereavement Fund to assist with associated costs is appreciated.

EXPENSES TO THE FAMILY

For church members, there is no charge for use of the church's facilities or for the services of the pastor(s) and Director of Music. Costs to the family related to the memorial or funeral services will be for flowers and additional musicians.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

If friends and loved ones wish to designate a memorial that reflects the interest(s) of the deceased, our church offers numerous opportunities for gifts to existing designated funds. Information can be found on the church website or by contacting the Church Administrator. Each contributor and the family receives acknowledgement of any memorial gift or other act of generosity.

NOTES