

# **Bereavement Ministry and Funeral Policy**

Wesleyan Chapel United Methodist Church (WCUMC)

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As Christians, we grieve as those who have a unique hope in the Risen Christ, thus empowering us to mark the occasion of death as a time in which the hope of the Gospel is reaffirmed. The United Methodist “Service of Death and Resurrection” acknowledges our loss, proclaims this hope, and offers us a sacred ritual that can be a great source of healing.

Planning the details of a worship service (and a funeral is a worship service!) and other tasks in the midst of grief can be overwhelming. Yet a properly planned service honors the loved one’s memory, reduces stress and strain on the family, and most of all glorifies God.

WCUMC has adopted this policy in hopes of providing reminders of all the necessary details and ease in planning. It is a user-friendly document for use in planning after the death of a loved one or in advance for thinking about how you might wish to be honored when the time comes.

## *Choosing the Location for the Service*

1. Services for church members are usually conducted at our church building, depending upon the availability of the space. The Sanctuary seats approximately 250 and can accommodate either a casket or an urn. The Chapel can provide an intimate setting for a smaller service, seating 50 people, but without the sound capabilities of the Sanctuary.
2. Families sometimes choose to use the chapel of a funeral home. An observance at the funeral home is appropriate for services that employ popular secular writings and music, or pre-recorded music. In this instance, the ministers and staff will work with the funeral home directors.
3. If a smaller, less-formal observance is desired, it may be conducted “at graveside” at the cemetery, or at the Columbarium, both located on the campus of WCUMC. Off-site services must be coordinated with the officiating pastor.
4. Retirement communities play an expanding role in the lives of older church members and their families. Sometimes when a loved one has lived at a retirement center for an extended period, a family may conclude that the locus of life and relationship is there; and that it is therefore appropriate and convenient to observe a memorial service at the facility itself. Most retirement communities will reserve a large room or even a chapel for such a service. Families should remember that burial or inurnment must occur separately from a retirement community observance, as caskets and urns may or may not be accommodated there.

### Scheduling the Service

1. There are several considerations for planning the day and time of a service including, but not limited to:
  - a. The availability of the family, the funeral home, the church, the clergy, and the music leader/musicians.
  - b. The travel time for out-of-town guests and family.
  - c. The timing of the publication of an obituary.
  - d. The timing of consultations with the funeral director, clergy, and director of music.
  - e. The minimum waiting period required by state law before cremation.
2. Services are typically conducted late-morning or early to mid-afternoon, in order to facilitate burial or inurnment after (or before) the funeral.
3. Because of demand upon facilities and personnel, Sunday church funerals are discouraged. Should a Sunday funeral be necessary, facilities and personnel will be provided as available.

### Planning the Service

1. The pastors of the church will assume the lead in preparing and conducting the funeral service.
2. In cases where pastoral staff are aware of a person's declining health and approaching death, the ministry of ongoing prayer and presence will be conducted by pastoral staff. The family is asked to contact the church office or pastor directly at the time of death.
3. After contact and conversation with family members, church ministers will ascertain whether or not needed clergy, staff, and church facilities are available at times desired for funeral services, and alert the family and/or funeral home.
4. Pulpit furniture and musical instruments will remain in place for funeral services.
5. The family and/or funeral home is responsible for the selection and delivery of floral arrangements and for their removal from the church facility after the service. For services that come shortly before a Sunday, families may choose to share the floral arrangements with the worshipping congregation for Sunday. In this instance, the church's floral ministry will determine the best location where the flowers can be enjoyed, taking into account that flowers might already have been ordered by someone else for that Sunday.
6. The church will reserve and prepare the Chapel/Sanctuary, Lee Hall, and/or Columbarium as needed.
7. WCUMC can provide a printed Order of Worship bulletin for services held at the church. The minister may work with the funeral home directors to provide a bulletin for a service

at a funeral home chapel or graveside. If families wish to provide the bulletin, a final proof must be approved by the officiating clergy.

8. An audio or video recording of the service may be requested by the family in the service planning process and is subject to the availability of an audio/video technician. This applies only to the portion of the service held in the Sanctuary and not at the cemetery or columbarium.
9. The family and/or funeral home bear the responsibility of selecting and contacting pallbearers and honorary pallbearers. If there is sufficient notice, the church office may be able to print the names of the pallbearers and honorary pallbearers in the worship bulletin.
10. Ushers chosen from the membership or selected by the family are available for assistance before and during the service.
11. Military and fraternal order rites are to be held in the cemetery or at the columbarium in coordination with the minister's service planning. They may be conducted after the religious portion of the ceremony has been completed.
12. Playing of bagpipes and the bugling of "Taps" may occur at the cemetery or Columbarium, or on the front porch of the Sanctuary, in hearing of worshipers gathered inside.
13. While open casket visitations generally occur at funeral homes, an open casket visitation may be provided at the church immediately preceding the service. The casket must be closed before the start of the service.
14. Out of respect, please do not use flash photography during the service and limit non-flash photography to a stationary position behind the worshipping congregation.

### Burial and Inurnment

1. Wesleyan Chapel United Methodist Church oversees two beautiful cemeteries. The WCUMC Cemetery is located on the grounds of the Church. The Union Chapel Cemetery is located off of Highway 210 W. between Hamptstead and Rocky Point in a beautiful and quiet, wooded setting. For more information on either cemetery, ask for a copy of the respective **Cemetery Policy**.
2. Members may be buried in WCUMC's Cemetery or in Union Chapel Cemetery at no cost for the burial plot.
3. For inurnment of ashes, WCUMC's Columbarium is located in a beautiful spot outside on the perimeter of the cemetery. For information on securing a niche and fees regarding the Columbarium, please ask for a copy of the **Columbarium Policy**.
4. For burial of ashes, the WCUMC Cemetery and Union Chapel Cemetery are available for members at no cost for the burial plot.
5. Non-members may purchase a plot at Union Chapel Cemetery only for burial of casket or ashes. Please ask for a copy of the **Union Chapel Cemetery Policy**.

### Costs

1. For professing members of Wesleyan Chapel, there are generally no costs associated with facility use for funerals (i.e. Sanctuary, Chapel, Lee Hall).
2. For non-members of the church, guidelines shall be established by the Trustees. Ask about **Facility Use Policy**.
3. Funeral homes often offer the opportunity for families to provide honoraria for the services of those leading and assisting in funeral/memorial services. A \$100 minimum honorarium is requested for the organist and \$50 for the sound technician. Other musicians and soloists will be considered on an individual basis.
4. While honoraria for Officiating Clergy is at the discretion of the family, a recommended amount would be \$150 - \$200.

### Memorials

1. Wesleyan Chapel is very grateful should the family choose for the church to be the beneficiary of memorials. These memorials are combined with the memorials received in memory of others into a common reserve fund to be available to meet the needs of the church as determined by the Finance Committee. Specific requests can also be honored.
2. Memorials may also be given for the maintenance and beautification of WCUMC Cemetery or Union Chapel Cemetery.
3. Occasionally individuals have chosen to remember the church in a very significant way in their will. WCUMC trustees can receive and establish memorial endowments in consultation with the family and the clergy.
4. Wesleyan Chapel is grateful and its members are encouraged to consider advanced legacy giving. Persons interested should contact the Pastor.

### Ordering the Worship

1. The ministers and musicians of WCUMC believe that funerals are a part of their call to ministry. They count it both a great responsibility and a great privilege to be with families in their grief, offering through their words, work, and witness the life and love of Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of the clergy to Order the Worship.
2. The use of outside speakers (including guest clergy) and/or family members requires the approval of the officiating minister. The family is asked to suggest to the officiating minister these speakers during the planning process.
3. Church musicians may or may not be available for services in funeral homes or other sites away from the church. Funeral homes are prepared to assist families with music at their facilities, if the church musician has stated that he/she is unavailable.
4. Our church staff musicians, in consultation with the officiating clergy and the family, will plan and manage the presentation of music. All music selections must be sacred in nature,

and approved by the church music minister and officiating clergy. The use of additional musicians or guest musicians will be at the discretion and invitation of the music minister. Pre-recorded music is discouraged in the Sanctuary and requires approval of the music minister and/or pastor.

5. The United Methodist Church generally uses the title *A Service of Death and Resurrection*. This is not intended to discourage use of familiar terms such as Funeral (when a body is present) or Memorial Service (when a body is not). Still, this naming “expresses clearly the twofold nature of what is done: the facts of death and bereavement are honestly faced, and the gospel of resurrection is celebrated in the context of God’s Baptismal Covenant with us in Christ” (UMC Book of Worship).
6. The following is provided as a sample of a customary Service of Death and Resurrection. The minister and the director of music welcome discussion with the family of their wishes regarding the service.

Prelude  
\* Words of Grace and Greeting  
\* Opening Prayer  
\* Hymn  
Scripture Readings  
Homily  
Witness [Family or other guest; optional]  
Prayer of Thanksgiving  
The Lord’s Prayer  
\* Hymn  
\* Benediction  
\* Postlude

\* *Standing as able*

7. The following scripture passages are all appropriate for use in the service.

Psalm 24	Luke 24:13 –35
Psalm 46	John 11:1 –4, 20–27, 32–35, 38–44
Psalm 90	John 14:1–4, 18–19, 25–27
Psalm 121	Romans 8:1–2, 11, 14, 17–18, 28, 31–32,
Psalm 130	35–39
Psalm 146	1 Corinthians 15:1–2a, 12, 16–18, 20, 35–38
Isaiah 40:1-8	a, 42b –44, 54–55, 57
Isaiah 40:28-31	2 Corinthians 4:5 –18
Isaiah 55:1 –3, 6–13	Ephesians 1:15 –23; 2:1–10

1 Peter 1:3 –9, 13, 21–25  
Revelation 7:2 –3, 9–17

Revelation 21:1-7

8. The following hymns are all appropriate for use in the service.

See hymns 700–707 (Death and Eternal Life) and 708–712 (Communion of the Saints) in the United Methodist Hymnal. Specific suggestions are below.

163 Ask Ye What Great Thing I Know	103 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
143 On Eagle's Wings	395 Take Time to Be Holy
557 Blest Be the Tie That Binds	314 In the Garden
733 Marching to Zion	545 The Church's One Foundation (1,5)
141 Children of the Heavenly Father	488 Jesus, Remember Me
368 My Hope Is Built	133 Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
318 Christ Is Alive	303 The Day of Resurrection
407 Close to Thee	116 The God of Abraham Praise
709 Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above	520 Nobody Knows the Trouble I See
491 Remember Me	504 The Old Rugged Cross
510 Come, Ye Disconsolate	57 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
315 Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain	308 Thine Be the Glory
666 Shalom to You	480 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
710 Faith of Our Fathers	383 This Is a Day of New Beginnings
512 Stand By Me	153 Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose
129 Give to the Winds Thy Fears	518 O Thou, in Whose Presence
704 Steal Away to Jesus	322 Up from the Grave He Arose
654 How Blest Are They	184 Of the Father's Love Begotten
496 Sweet Hour of Prayer	526 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
77 How Great Thou Art	66 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven (3, 4)
703 Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	

9. The following worksheet may be used in planning a service with the family or for advance planning for those who wish to provide advance information to the pastor. Advance planning relieves some burden from families in a time of grief.

## Service Planning Information Sheet

*For ministerial and office use and for advanced planning. For an electronic copy of this form, email [churchoffice@wesleyanchapel.org](mailto:churchoffice@wesleyanchapel.org) or call the church office. If you wish to place a copy of your advanced planning on file with the church, please communicate your Pastor.*

*Decedent or Person for whom you are planning:*

Full Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Date of Death:	
Address:	

Family contact:	
Phone number:	
Email:	
Funeral home:	
City:	
Phone number:	

*Service of Death and Resurrection...*

Date/Time:	
Location:	

Officiant:	
Guest pastor:	
Organist/Pianist:	
Guest Musician:	
Scriptures:	
Hymns:	
Witnesses:	
Other Requests:	

*Visitation/Reception...*

Date/Time:	
Location:	
Family requests:	
Dietary notes:	
Other notes:	

*Memorials...*

Recipient:	
Address (if not church):	
Flowers:	

*Additional Information...*

Specific Requests or instructions, stories for homily/eulogy (use additional pages as needed):	
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