

Union Congregational Church
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A Guide for Memorial and Funeral Services

We are honored that you have chosen Union Congregational Church in which to witness to God's love for us even in death. We look forward to working with you to make this Witness to the Resurrection one of beauty and comfort for you and you family. Included in this booklet are policies and fees set by the Church for the conducting of funerals and memorial services.

Union Congregational Church is handicapped accessible and equipped with an elevator for those who require it.

The Meaning of Memorial and Funeral Services

Christians recognize with all people the inevitability of death, but in the presence of death we witness our faith that God, in Jesus Christ, has conquered death and raises God's children from death to eternal life. Christians face the fact of death with neither sentimental nor morbid attitude. We prepare for it both in the world of daily affairs and in the realm of the spirit. We plan for its eventuality as part of life.

A Christian funeral should be a time of thanksgiving for the life lived, a time of mourning for the life lost, and a time of Christian witness to our God who is near and who promises us resurrection.

Those responsible for decisions in arranging the service should be less concerned about social custom and more concerned about the meaning and intent of our Christian faith in what we do at this time.

Music

The Church organist is expected to be asked to play at all funerals and memorial services. At the pastor's and the organist's discretion, guest organists, soloists and other musicians may be invited to participate.

We welcome the use of any favorite Christian hymns. The following are a few suggestions:

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
Abide With Me
Be Thou My Vision
Blessed be the Tie that Binds
Joyful, Joyful, We adore Thee
Amazing Grace

God of Grace and God of Glory
Holy, Holy, Holy

Open Casket

It is the policy of Union Congregational Church not to allow the casket to be open during a funeral. We feel this detracts from the decorum of the service and takes the focus away from the promise of the Resurrection of the body, placing it instead on the remains of the deceased.

In a memorial service the casket or ashes are not present.

Scripture Readings

The following are some readings from scripture appropriate for use at funeral and memorial services. You are invited to choose two or three readings for your memorial or funeral service. But please do not feel limited to these passages, they are only suggestions. If you would like a reading in addition to a Biblical text, you may do so *with the consultation of the pastor*.

Readings from the Old Testament

Psalm 23
Psalm 39
Psalm 139
Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

Readings from the New Testament

Romans 6:3-5; Romans 8:31-39
I Corinthians 13, 15:12-20, 15:35-50
Ephesians 3:14-21
Revelations 21:1-6
Luke 23:33, 39-43
Matthew 5:3-10
John 11: 32-44

Family and Friends Participation

It is appropriate for members of the family or friends to assist in the service. This may involve the use of musical talent, readings of scripture, or sharing of memories. We encourage members of the family to offer a eulogy. If this seems too difficult a task, something may be written for the pastor to read.

Flowers

Flowers are appropriate as tokens of love, however it is wise to avoid elaborate display. If you prefer not to have all expressions of sympathy and respect in the form of flowers, it is desirable to immediately designate a memorial fund to which friends and family may give. A lasting memorial in the service of the Church or a favorite charity is appropriate. If Hospice has been a great help to you and your family in your loved one's final days, consider making a contribution to this needed and under-funded ministry.

Receptions

Members Only: The Diaconate will be pleased to provide a collation for a donation. They will provide all the necessary paper products, beverages, and finger deserts and sandwiches. The committee will also set up and clean up after the collation. Checks should be made to Union Congregational Church and marked “collation.”

Committal Service

A brief committal service at the grave for family and close friends may occur before or after the funeral or memorial service. Holding the service prior to the church service allows time to greet those who have attended the memorial service at the collation.

The Aftermath of Death

Mourning is a unique process which is different for everyone. The mourning process can often be lonely and isolating. It takes time to understand one’s emotions and to express our feelings to those around us. In the weeks following death, friends and family may comfort you by making their Christian love felt in simple ways of kindness and concern: a brief call, a note of sympathy, or a helpful act. Often these gestures are reaffirming, but they can often feel inadequate.

Our church and especially our pastors are always here to speak with you and help you through your grief. They may also encourage you to attend one of the many grief counseling groups in the area.

Funeral Fees and Honorariums

	Member	Non-Member
Church and Services		
Pastor	donation	\$225
(Graveside service only)	donation	\$100
Church	free	\$200
Organist	\$150	\$175
Sexton	\$50	\$100
Bulletins	—	\$45

**If you have circumstances that will not permit you to pay the amount recommended, fees may be negotiated. Please speak to the pastor.*

***This fee schedule has been distributed to local funeral directors who will collect and issue payment, however, we encourage you to pay the church directly. All checks should be made directly to the staff member.*

Staff

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Notes