

Celebration of Life Services



ADVENT
UMC

Connect Grow Serve

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Celebration of Life

Advent UMC is here to walk with people through all the stages of life. While most stages of life are times of celebration, the death of a loved one can be a time of deep pain and grief. It is at times of loss where we, the people of Advent, offer the gift of community and the assurance of faith to those who mourn.

This is why we call our funeral services a Celebration of Life. For in the Church, we cannot speak of death without witnessing to the resurrection. As Jesus taught us when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25)

Our pastoral staff is committed to minister to the spiritual needs of the grieving while helping them attend to the tasks of planning a service. Our role is to help you find comfort for your grief and the support of a loving community. The most important aspect of this process is working with you to discover what best bears witness to the person we mourn while proclaiming the hope of resurrection to you.

This booklet is designed to help guide you in the process of planning as it relates to the Church and the services we provide.

Basic Outline

There are traditionally four components to a Celebration of Life service: Visitation, Worship, Reception, and Committal (or Interment).

Visitation is a time for family, friends, and/or co-workers of the grieving family to visit and support the family in both sorrow and joy. This also provides people who cannot attend the service a time to share their condolences. Typically, the time of visitation is 1 hour before worship. Families may also choose a time of visitation in a funeral home the evening before the service.

Worship. One of our pastors will meet with the family to plan the worship service. Working with the family, we will select music, scripture passages, develop the bulletin, and set the tone of the worship time. It is important to us that the music, readings, and tone reflect the life we are celebrating.

Reception is a time to visit, share stories, and embrace a wounded community gathered together to support each other in love. We recommend holding the reception immediately following the worship service; however, this is not always possible. A reception only needs to provide a meal option if taking place during a lunch or dinner hour. We have a coordinator for this. We will put you in touch with them to make arrangements. Otherwise, a family may choose to offer light refreshments.

Committal (or Interment) is a time for immediate family and the pastor to gather for a brief service at the site where the loved one will be put to rest. Arrangements for this are to be made with the funeral home or cemetery director. If you wish to have a pastor present, please check their availability before selecting a date.

FIRST STEPS

- STEP 1: Contact Pastor.

We ask you to please notify the pastoral staff of either a death in the family or a pending death. Our main role is to minister to the spiritual needs of both the dying and the family.

- STEP 2: Contact Funeral Home.

Many families will use the service of a funeral home to help with the physical, legal and organizational realities involved in the death of a loved one. You do not have to use a funeral home, but if you choose not to you will need to make arrangements on your own. The church is only capable of working on the issues related to the service. If you need assistance in choosing a funeral home, please let us know.

- STEP #3: Contact Church:

A service to celebrate the death of a loved taking place in the church or using one of Advent's pastors off-site needs to be coordinated through the church office. Please do not publicize a date until approved by the church office. The church office will contact the Music Director to arrange a musician.

- STEP #4: Make Reception Plans:

The family is responsible for contacting the funeral luncheon coordinator to work out details related to the reception. A guide for what the church can offer is located on page 8.

- STEP 5: Plan Service with Pastor:

The pastor will help the family select the scripture to be read, the hymns/or songs to be sung and determine the need for special music. The role of the pastoral staff is to listen to the desires of the family and guide them to a place where the church can meet the family's need.

We encourage families to share with us scripture verses that may have held special meaning for your loved one. If family members need help finding a verse, you may choose from one of these verses:

Psalms

Psalm 23
Psalm 42: 1-5
Psalm 46: 1-7
Psalm 90
Psalm 118
Psalm 121
Psalm 130
Psalm 142: 1-6

Old Testament

Job 19: 23-27a
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8
Isaiah 25: 6-9
Isaiah 40: 1; 6-11
Isaiah 40 1-11, 28-31
Isaiah 43: 1-3a, 5-7
Jeremiah 31: 8-13
Lamentations 3: 22-26, 31-33

Gospel

Matthew 5: 1-10
Matthew 11: 25-30
Matthew 18: 1-5, 10-14
Mark 10: 13-16
John 1: 27-29
John 11: 25
John 14: 1-6

New Testament

Romans 5: 1-11
Romans 8: 31-35, 37-39
1 Corinthians 15: 51-57
Philippians 3: 20-21
Philippians 4: 4-7
1 Peter 1: 3-9
1 John 3: 1-2
Revelation 21: 1-4

- The family can choose a reading that is not in the Bible. However, we ask that readings be respectful of the faith in which we lead this service.
- The family may choose readers from within the family or elect to have the pastor read.

Music offers those who are grieving a way to both express emotions of grief, while celebrate the joy of the resurrection. Personal preferences and favorite music of the deceased should be considered when planning a service. Sometimes, a family needs help finding the right music. Here a few suggestions for you to consider:

Amazing Grace	UMH #378
How Great Thou Art	UMH #77
Hymn of Promise	UMH #707
In the Garden	UMH #314
I'll Fly Away	FWS #2282
Be Still, My Soul	UMH #534
Be Thou My Vision	UMH #451
Abide with Me	UMH #700
For All the Saints	UMH #711
Rejoice in God's Saints	UMH #708
Soon and Very Soon	UMH #706
I Sing A Song of the Saints of God	UMH #712

Do we need a soloist?

The pastor will ask the family if they wish to have a soloist for the service. Often, one beautiful voice offering a musical selection with special meaning allows the grieving family to listen and enjoy the moment. Sometimes, however, the people gathered to remember the deceased are not the strongest singers. A soloist becomes more of a song leader, one strong voice leading others to join in on singing.

Basic Order of Service

The family may choose to follow the more traditional order of service found in the United Methodist Book of Worship. It is also the family's choice to include Holy Communion. However, many families choose a less formal order of service. The less formal service follows this basic format:

Prelude

Processional Hymn — A procession hymn is selected to allow the family to enter after all the guests have been seated.

Greeting and Words of Grace:

Hymn/Solo

Prayer

Reading(s) — The family may choose a poem, lyrics to a song or some other reading not found in the Bible. However, we ask that all readings be respectful of the faith in which we lead this service. There may be more than one scripture verse to read as well.

Time of Remembering — family, friends, or co-workers invited to speak about the loved one. The emotions related to loss come strongly to the surface when people are in a service speaking in front of loved ones. We recommend the following:

- No more than three people speak.
- Try to keep speakers to 2-3 minutes to be respectful of all people's time.
- Ask people speaking to write down their words. Then if the person speaking becomes overwhelmed and cannot continue, the pastor can help finish reading the message.

Hymn/Solo/Special Music (OPTIONAL)

Scripture:

Message:

Hymn/Solo

Prayers with Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Commendation

Benediction

Hymn/Music

Other Guidelines

VISITATION

- Visitations at the church are typically held one hour prior to the service. It is preferred that visitations on the day before the service take place at the funeral home.
- If a family works with a funeral home, the funeral home director will typically handle things related to the visitation.

When a family does not work with a funeral home director,

The family is responsible for providing:

- Pictures or picture boards for display
- Digital images on either Windows Media movie slideshow (MP4), QuickTime slideshow or PowerPoint as a movie
- Guest book for visitors to sign
- A basket for cards
- Designate a person responsible for collecting and safeguarding memorial cards; the placement of flowers in the sanctuary, lighting of the altar candles and passing out the bulletins.

Advent will provide:

- Tables for displays
- Stands for picture boards
- Projection system for videos

WORSHIP BULLETINS

Advent will produce a worship bulletin for the service based on the information provided by you in consultation with the pastor. A color photo of the deceased may be used on the cover of the bulletin. The family will need to provide us a digital copy of the photo. Once prepared, the bulletin will be shared with a designated family member for proofing before it is printed.

VIDEO PROJECTION

We do not have the volunteer support to offer use of the projection system for worship material. However, if a family puts together a series of pictures in a power point or similar program, we can run that during the visitation hour.

CASKET/URN

When a casket is present, it will be placed in the front of the sanctuary. If it is open during the visitation, it will be closed for the service. A traditional funeral pall may be placed over the casket. Advent UMC does not own a funeral pall so one will need to be provided.

When the service is over, the family and pallbearers will follow the pastor and the casket out of the sanctuary. They will continue following outside until the casket is placed in a vehicle for transportation.

When the family chooses cremation and brings the remains in an urn. The urn will be placed in the front of the sanctuary on a stand with flowers and a picture of the deceased. A funeral home director is generally not available at the church to direct the visitation and service. Therefore, the family should designate a person or persons to be responsible for setting up the urn in the front of the sanctuary.

INTERMENT/INURNMENT

Burial arrangements are to be made with the funeral director or cemetery. The pastor typically joins the family at the burial site. So please make sure to coordinate the day and time of this with the pastor. We strongly recommend this take place after the reception, if possible.

FLOWERS

Flowers may be ordered from a florist of the family's choice. Advent UMC does not use a florist so we do not provide support in this area. Delivery of flowers needs to be coordinated with our office to make sure someone is present to receive them. The family may choose to leave a single arrangement that will remain in the sanctuary through Sunday worship. All other flowers will be disposed of if left at the church.

RECEPTION

Advent UMC will provide desserts, coffee and lemonade. We will also take care of setting up Wesley Hall, serve food and clean-up. If a meal is desired, the family is responsible for making those arrangements with a caterer and the cost of the caterers services. The family is requested to bring in containers for any leftover food and is responsible for its removal. Please do not use styrofoam products for the reception, and let your caterer know as well.

Memorial Gifts

People often want a tangible way to express their love and support for those who have experienced a loss. Families also find comfort and meaning supporting organizations which were meaningful to Their loved one. Memorial gifts are an excellent option to fulfill these needs.

If you would like memorial gifts to be designated to the church, please notify the pastor and indicate this in the obituary notice and in the memorial service bulletin. Gifts received will be acknowledged to both the donor and the family of the deceased.

The family should inform the pastor where they would like memorial gifts directed. Gifts may be designated to our general fund to be used as needed by church leaders. However, gifts may also be designated to one of the following specific areas of ministry:

- Worship and Music
- Education
- Outreach
- Building
- Children, Youth and Family

The use of designated gifts will be determined by a team of leaders within the ministry area of the congregation in conversation with the family.

Fees are typically handled through the funeral director. The following is offered for those who choose to not use a funeral home:

FEES:

Building Fees:

Members:	No Fee
Non-Member:	\$500.00
Clergy Fee	\$200.00
Musician	\$150.00
Soloist	\$150.00
AV / Soundboard Tech	\$ 50.00
Custodian Fee	\$100.00