

In our efforts to assist you in properly planning a memorial or funeral service for your loved one, our church staff has prepared this information for your perusal and consideration.



YUMC Funeral Guide

Guidelines and Suggestions for Planning a Funeral Service



"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Matthew 5:4

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1. Beginning the Process

Yorktown United Methodist Church

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(refer to MINISTRIES > FUNERAL menu to complete and submit a Funeral Request Form)

The passing of someone we love is painful, and it is natural for us to mourn. As Christians we share in our grief, but understand that this life is not the end. Following death, those we love celebrate life through the funeral service to share in the promise and hope of the Resurrection through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **In our efforts to assist you in properly planning a memorial or funeral service for your loved one, the following information concerning the funeral service is intended for your consideration.**

Christians recognize the inevitability of death, and the Christian gospel powerfully addresses the reality and experience of death. Christians affirm their confidence in Christ's victory over death and the grave and proclaim that death cannot separate human beings from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. The belief of Christians in the resurrection from the dead is not a belief which denies the reality of death or suggests that persons have within them some form of immortality. Rather, it is a belief that God's love and power are greater than the power of death, so that though we die from this human life, we are given new life, a new existence in God's eternity. All this, Christians affirm because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on Easter.

The Christian funeral is a worship service in which God's people witness to their faith in the hope of the Gospel, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

A funeral service at Yorktown United Methodist Church is worship of the true and living God. The funeral is God's way of bringing comfort to the hearts of those who mourn as scripture is read and preached, prayer is offered, praises are sung, grief is expressed, and remembrances are cherished. The presence of family and friends at this time serves to support and strengthen those who sorrow. The funeral gives thanks for life and lifts meaningful memories of the lost loved one, helping us learn vital lessons from it. Though we mourn our loss and remember our loved one, our focus is fixed on the grace of God.

Additionally, the Christian community has special responsibilities toward persons who are dying and toward those who are bereaved. Persons who are confronted with imminent death should not be isolated from the Christian community nor should members of the community try to convince them that they are not dying. Instead they should be supported with love, and affirmed as persons loved and forgiven by God.

We grieve the loss of one who has been close, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregation in their time of need. It is particularly through the private and public ministry of the Word of God that we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (Romans 15: 4).

We realize that the funeral is a personal experience as well as a religious one. Consequently every effort is made to be sensitive to the preferences regarding death and burial of the dead which are characteristic of each family and honor those customs whenever possible. Our Pastor will work with your family and Funeral Director(s) to ensure that there is adequate understanding of the funeral with respect to our own church's theological understanding and practice.

Please contact Yorktown United Methodist Church Office and ask to speak with our Pastor regarding planning, counseling, and providing services for a Christian funeral service.

It should be clearly understood that our Pastor is ready and willing to assist and serve you in the planning of a funeral or memorial service. Please keep in mind that contact with the Church should be made as swiftly as possible in order for our Pastor to assist you from the beginning with the necessary preparations.

Pre-Planning Considerations

Because it is difficult when under emotional stress to plan wisely, members are encouraged to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements that will be necessary at the time of death including the Christian options of burial, cremation or donation for medical purposes.

Counseling on the Occasion of Death

One of the most valuable services the Church provides its members at the time of death is that of pastoral counseling. When a death occurs, please contact YUMC Church Office to consult with our Pastor as soon as possible. Our pastor is able to discuss with compassion and objectivity those important decisions that the bereaved family needs to make and arrange for a Christian burial service.

2. Planning for the Funeral Service or Memorial

Services on the Occasion of Death

The funeral or memorial service attempts to do three things:

- honor the life of the deceased
- bring comfort to the grieving, and
- to recognize our dependence on the grace of God

Every aspect of the service should contribute to those three things. The pastoral staff will work with families in developing an appropriate service for your loved one and your family.

Where to Have the Service?

We are here to support you if you choose to utilize the sanctuary at YUMC for a funeral service or the chapel at a funeral home for the memorial service. Regardless of where the service is held, prayers are offered by the people of God.

Services of Committal

Interment may precede or follow the worship service. Members and friends of the family should gather at the graveside or columbarium for a service of farewell, which is to be conducted with dignity and brevity. The service includes readings from scripture, prayers, words of committal and a and a blessing, reflecting the reality of death, entrusting the one who has died to the care of God, and bearing witness to faith in the resurrection from the dead. Please note, because fraternal or civil rites are not part of the worship service, these organizations should pay tribute to the deceased following the Christian service.

Services with a Casket

The distinction between a memorial service and a funeral service is the presence of the casket. A service with the casket is usually referred to as a "Funeral Service." Without the casket, the service is called a "Memorial Service." Funeral practices are constantly evolving. The practice of an open casket is more often being reserved for private family and close friends. It is not appropriate to have an open casket in the sanctuary. If the family desires "viewing", it should ordinarily take place at the funeral home or before worship services begins at the church.

Cremation

Cremation is a matter of personal / family preference.

Officiating the Service

When funerals are conducted at Yorktown United Methodist Church, our Pastor ordinarily conducts the services. The pastor will work with the family in developing the service. If an organist is needed, the music staff will assist in meeting the appropriate desires of the family.

The funeral conducted by a minister of the church is a service of Christian worship. Therefore we recommend you review the order of worship for funeral in the United Methodist Church on pages 870-875 in The United Methodist Hymnal.

The Pastor is responsible for the worship service. While the Pastor, family and funeral director work together, details of the funeral service should be planned through consultation with the Pastor. The funeral director "directs" services according to the plan established by the Pastor after consultation with the family.

Music

At the worship service, it is appropriate for worshipers to sing hymns, psalms, spirituals or spiritual songs which affirm God's power over death, a belief in the resurrection to life everlasting and the assurance of the communion of the saints. The Director of Music and/or organist can provide guidance for the selection of appropriate music. Use of recorded music is available. [NOTE: an index of suggested music can be found on pages 652-656 and 941-942 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*].

Media Capabilities

An integrated sound system is available that includes CD/DVD player, USB audio recording, LCD projector to present video and/or pictures. Videos and pictures must be embedded within a PowerPoint file for best results. Should you choose to utilize the video equipment, we require that the file (or media) be sent to the Church Office at least 48 hours prior to the funeral service.

Flowers

If a pall or a United States flag is not used to cover the casket, a spray of fresh flowers may be used. A fresh floral arrangement on the altar area is appropriate – you choose the local florists. The church's Worship Committee is available to work with the family and/or florist on floral arrangements in the sanctuary. Fresh floral sprays are welcome in the Narthex (front entrance welcome area) or the Fellowship Hall if a reception is held after the service of burial.

Facilities and Services of the Church

For members of the YUMC congregation, on the occasion of death, the Church will provide its physical facilities and services at no charge. We do recommend the use of ushers. Ushers assist with seating for those attending the service and distribute the funeral service bulletin.

Visitation / Reception

Visitation may be held at the church before or after the service. You may or may not choose to host a reception following visitation or the service in The Fellowship Hall. If you choose to do so, the Church Office needs to know as soon as possible in order to confirm and make appropriate arrangements for use of this space.

Memorial Gifts

In lieu of flowers, a donation to the church or another charity is a common practice. Memorials received by the church are applied to the designated cause of the donor. Undesignated gifts by policy of the Finance Committee are applied to the general budget. The church acknowledges all memorial gifts to both the donor and the family.

Honorarium for Funeral Support Participants

It is customary and appropriate to provide an honorarium for those who assist in the service. The services of the Pastor are a part of pastoral duties representative of the Church and there is no financial obligation. If the family feels strongly about a gift to the Minister, it is then appropriate to make a donation made payable to Yorktown United Methodist Church and designated for the "Pastor's Discretionary Fund" or the Church's "Memorial Fund." Below recommended guidance will help you with what is an appropriate honorarium for those who assist with the service (if applicable):

- \$150 Out of town minister plus consideration for the travel
- \$200 Organist
- \$150 Soloist
- \$60.00 minimum if nursery is requested (2 people at \$15.00 per hour/2 hour minimum)
- \$50.00 per for custodial services (weekends only)

Honorarium should be made to Yorktown United Methodist Church – please indicate on memo line, the purpose of the check and name of deceased. Contact the Church Office at 914-962-5749 with questions.

3. The Order of Worship

While recommending the service in The United Methodist Church Book of Worship, our pastor is happy to plan with you a service that meets your particular needs and wishes.

The Christian funeral service is understood as a service of worship and should be approached as such. Thought should be given to the designing of the service, and it is expected that those present will participate in corporate worship. The singing of hymns, reading of scripture, preaching of gospel, confession of sin, affirmation of faith, the celebration of the Lord's Supper are all appropriate to the Christian funeral service. In designing such a service, the family should be consulted and their desires should influence the shape and design of the service. It is strongly recommended that Christian funerals be conducted at the church.

It is not necessary to have the body or the deceased present for the service for worship. Services of worship with the body being absent are called memorial service and are recognized as appropriate and equally meaningful as when a casket is present. Such a service may be scheduled before or after the committal service, if the body is to be interred.

The committal service should be performed with dignity and simplicity. It is to be brief, with scripture, prayer and a statement of the Christian hope. The church is encouraged to support the wishes of the family of the bereaved with respect to memorial gifts in lieu of or in addition to flowers.

This is a typical funeral service order for the United Methodist Church which is also referred to as a service of death and resurrection.

- Entrance and Gathering
- The Word of Grace
- Greeting
- Hymn
- Prayer (includes a Prayer of Confession and Psalm 130)
- Proclamation and Response
- Readings (select 1-2 readings such as Old or New Testament lesson, poem, reflection, etc.)
- Sermon
- Naming (the life and death of the deceased may be gathered up in the reading of a memorial or appropriate statement, or in other ways, by the pastor or others involved)
- Witness
- Hymn
- Affirmation of Faith
- Commendation
- Prayer of Thanksgiving
- The Lord's Prayer
- Hymn
- Dismissal with Blessing

4. YUMC Facility

Our building offers the following:

- Access ramp for disabled people
- Sanctuary with seating to accommodate 175-200 people
- Media equipment (microphones, CD/DVD player, LCD projector & screen, USB audio recording)
- Bathrooms (mens & womens)
- Fellowship hall to accommodate 85-100 seated or up to 200 standing
- Full functioning kitchen (3 stoves, 3 sinks, 1 refrigerator)

Sanctuary



Sanctuary (close up of altar area)

