



Funeral Planning Guide

*"We seek to worship with hope,
grow together as a community of faith,
and serve with generosity and a passion for justice."*

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Dear Friends,

Whether you are making pre-arrangements or are grieving the loss of a loved one who has recently passed away, conversations about life and death are never easy. Yet through the planning and the preparations we remember the words of Romans 14: *"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."* God walks with us through the delicate highs and lows of this process, and the family at Beargrass Christian Church is here to walk through it with you as well.

Our Beargrass pastors, staff, and congregational leaders seek to work with individuals and families to create a memorial service that honors the life of the one who has died and also reassures the friends and family left behind of the hope and promise of new life through Christ. The resources in this packet are designed to be a starting point to help ask the vital questions about what a memorial service might look like. As no two services are alike, what is most important in planning is that the service brings meaning and honor to the one who has died and to their loved ones processing their grief. Our hope is that this packet will prompt meaningful conversations among family or friends and help equip individuals to know that the funeral service will be full of God's spirit and hope.

If you have any questions about the information in this packet or about the service itself, please do not hesitate to reach out to our pastors or church office. We are here for you!

Blessings,

The Ministers of Beargrass Christian Church

First Steps for a Funeral / Memorial Service with Beargrass

The ministers welcome opportunities to work with individuals and families to plan funerals even before the time of death when possible. Individuals are encouraged to communicate their wishes and desires with family and friends. Whenever possible, these wishes and desires should be put in writing (using the attached form as a potential starting point) and filed with the responsible parties as well as the church office. In the event that you are planning a service for a loved one who has already died, this packet will just as importantly walk you through the process of what you need to know for the days ahead.

WHEN DEATH OCCURS

Please directly notify the pastor as soon as possible when a death occurs. Our pastors are available to offer prayer and comfort, guide the loved ones through the funeral process, as well as assist with the practical realities of dealing with grief and loss. The pastor will arrange a time to sit down with the remaining family or friends to go over plans for the service and details for arrangements that need to be made.

SCHEDULING FORMAL SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

Funeral and memorial services are always under the direction of the church pastor. **Please contact the minister or church office before making formal arrangements with the funeral home or planning service / visitation times.** The minister will work with the family and funeral home to ensure your loved one's funeral is handled with the utmost dignity and respect.

FUNERAL HOME INVOLVEMENT

It is very important that the church minister and staff work with the funeral home directors as a team. If you have not yet contacted the church when you begin working with the funeral home, please ask the funeral director to call the church as soon as possible. Please do not schedule a funeral without first contacting the church and speaking with the minister.

VISITATIONS

On occasion, families request that a visitation be held at the church. Typically a visitation takes place prior to the service, but other arrangements can also be made upon request. By speaking with a pastor we can guide you through the range of options and possibilities that may work best for your family circumstances. You may wish to provide photos (either posters / collages or a digital slideshow) of the individual's life to be on display during the visitation; please inform the minister if you would like more information about options for displaying photos and mementos.

Planning the Memorial Service

Beargrass strongly encourages everyone to fill out the funeral planning form provided in order to make the service as personal and meaningful as possible.

A minister from Beargrass will typically officiate any funeral/memorial service held at the church, unless other arrangements have already been agreed upon with the Senior Pastor. Additional ministers, family members, friends and members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to assist with the service.

MUSIC

Our ministers or musicians from the church are available to consult on planning music for the service and to play during the service. Outside musicians may also be invited upon arrangement with the church music staff (with any rehearsal necessary being organized through the church music staff).

Typically, a service will include three pieces of music: an opening hymn, a hymn of reflection or special music, and a closing hymn. Music used in the service should be appropriate for the sacred setting but need not be limited to "traditional" funeral hymns or music. Our Music Director and/or Organist can assist you in planning which songs may be most impactful as part of the service (also see the "Music Planning Guide" below for more information about selecting music for your service).

FLOWERS

Flowers are often an appropriate memorial tribute. Flowers for a funeral or memorial service may be delivered during office hours on weekdays prior to the service or while someone will be at the church on the day of the service to accept flower deliveries. The funeral home or families should make arrangements to have the flowers removed after the service – or, if you wish, some flowers may be left at Beargrass for use in Sunday service (a memorial recognition can be shared during worship if arranged with the minister in advance).

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS DURING THE SERVICE

Personal reflections from family or friends are a great way to help remember and honor the one who has passed. Rather than an "open call" for anyone present to speak, what is typically most meaningful is to intentionally invite 2 or 3 representatives to speak on behalf of a different aspect of the person's life

(e.g., one representative to speak on behalf of the family, a second person to speak on behalf of work or hobbies, and a third representative to speak on behalf of the church community or other passion). By inviting people to prepare remarks ahead of time, the speakers are typically more prepared and thoughtful than by waiting until the service to allow an open call. The pastor can help walk through various options for who could speak on behalf of the one who has died and help equip the speakers to offer meaningful reflections during the service.

MILITARY AND OTHER CIVIL RECOGNITIONS

Military honors and other civil recognitions can be a meaningful part of the funeral/memorial. If such arrangements are to be included as part of the service, please let the pastor know through the attached form so that it can be included as part of planning process.

Commonly Used Scriptures

Scripture is a way to both remind us of ancient wisdom that has gone before us and also find words to convey the faith of the one who has died. When selecting a scripture, it can be helpful to think about which verses feel authentic to the faith of the individual and also which would bring hope to the friends and family who gather to grieve the loss of a loved one. Please note the list of scriptures below is not nearly an exhaustive list but rather some suggestions if you need a place to begin.

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19:23–27 I know that my redeemer lives
Isa. 25:6–9 God will swallow up death forever
Isa. 26:1–4, 19 God will keep them in peace
Isa. 40:1–11, 28–31 Comfort my people
Isa. 40:28–31 Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength
Isa. 43:1–3a, 18–19, 25 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you
Isa. 44:6–8 I am the first and the last
Isa. 55:1–3, 6–13 Ho, everyone who thirsts
Isa. 61:1–4, 10–11 The spirit of the Lord is upon me
Isa. 65:17–25 I create new heavens and a new earth
Lam. 3:19–26, 31b–32 The Lord’s steadfast love

PSALMS

Ps. 16:5–11 The Lord is my chosen portion
Ps. 23 The Lord is my shepherd
Ps. 27:1, 4–9a, 13–14 The Lord is my light and my salvation
Ps. 39: 4–5, 12 Lord, let me know my end
Ps. 42:1–6a As a deer longs for flowing streams
Ps. 43 Give judgment for me, O God
Ps. 46:1–5, 10–11 A very present help in trouble
Ps. 90:1–10, 12 Teach us to number our days
Ps. 91 The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Ps. 103 Bless the Lord, O my soul
Ps. 106:1–5 O give thanks to the Lord
Ps. 116:1–9, 15 The Lord has heard my voice
Ps. 118 Open the gates of righteousness
Ps. 121 I lift up my eyes to the hills
Ps. 130 Out of the depths I cry to the Lord
Ps. 139:1–12 Where shall I go from your spirit?
Ps. 145 I will extol you, O God my King
Ps. 146 Hallelujah! praise the Lord, O my soul

EPISTLES

Rom. 5:1–11 Hope does not disappoint
Rom. 6:3–9 Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him
Rom. 8:14–23, 31–39 Nothing can separate us from the love of God
Rom. 14:7–9, 10b–12 Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's
1 Cor. 15:3–8, 12–20a Christ raised from the dead
1 Cor. 15:20–24a In Christ shall all be made alive
1 Cor. 15:35–44 The natural body and the spiritual body
1 Cor. 15:50–57 We shall all be changed
2 Cor. 4:16–5:1 Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal
2 Cor. 5:1–10 From God we have a house not made with hands
Eph. 1:11–2:1, 4–10 Saved by grace through faith
Phil. 3:7–11 Knowing him and the power of his resurrection
Phil. 3:20–21 Our citizenship is in heaven
Col. 3:1–17 Set your minds on the things that are above
1 Thess. 4:13–18 The comfort of Christ's coming
2 Tim. 2:8–13 If we died with him, we shall also live with him
Heb. 11:1–3, 13–16; 12:1–2 Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses
1 Peter 1:3–9 Without seeing Christ, you love him
1 Peter 3:18–22; 4:6 Christ's ministry to the spirits in prison
1 John 3:1–3 We are children of God
Rev. 14:1–3, 6–7, 12–13 Rest for the saints
Rev. 21:1–4, 22–25; 22:3–5 A new heaven and a new earth

GOSPELS

Matt. 5:1–12a The Beatitudes
Matt. 11:25–30 Hidden from the wise, revealed to infants
Matt. 25:1–13 Wise and foolish bridesmaids
Matt. 25:31–46 The Last Judgment
Luke 7:11–17 Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain
Luke 18:15–17 We enter the kingdom only as children
Luke 23:33, 39–43 Today you will be with me in Paradise
John 3:16–21 God so loved the world
John 5:24–29 Whoever hears and believes has eternal life
John 6:37–40 Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away
John 6:47–58 Whoever believes in me has eternal life
John 11:17–27 I am the resurrection and the life
John 11:38–44 Lazarus raised from the dead
John 14:1–6, 25–27 Let not your hearts be troubled

Music Planning Guide

For people of faith, the funeral or memorial service is a time to gather to remember and say good-bye to a loved one. The message is one of hope – and music can be an important factor when processing grief and loss.

There are few things more powerful, encouraging, and incredibly comforting than singing a beloved and Christ-exalting hymn in the midst of a difficult time. There are dozens of Christian hymns that represent different tones, emotions and life experiences. Hymns sung at funeral and memorial services can bring comfort and joy at the time of loss. Some hymns are somber, while others are more celebratory of life and one's relationship with God.

We offer the attached listing of hymns for your reference. This, of course, is not a complete list. The deceased may have particularly loved a hymn, or a season (for example, Christmas Carols can be used if that was a special time for the deceased and family, or perhaps one of the old-time favorites such as "In The Garden" or "The Old Rugged Cross" were especially meaningful). Whatever you select, the memorial service is the opportunity to honor your loved one and offer hope and comfort.

** indicates hymns that also lend themselves well to be sung as a solo*

Hymns of Praise

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (*Chalice Hymnal #2*)
Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty (*Chalice Hymnal #4*)
For The Beauty Of The Earth (*Chalice Hymnal #56*)
To God Be The Glory (*Chalice Hymnal #72*)
God Of Grace And God Of Glory (*Chalice Hymnal #464*)
Love Devine, All Loves Excelling (*Chalice Hymnal #517*)

Hymns of Faith

*How Great Thou Art (*Chalice Hymnal #33*)
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (*Chalice Hymnal #65*)
I Was There To Hear Your Barning Cry (*Chalice Hymnal #75*)
Great Is Thy Faithfulness (*Chalice Hymnal #86*)
Amazing Grace (*Chalice Hymnal #546*)
*Because He Lives (*Chalice Hymnal #562*)
In The Bulb There Is A Flower (*Chalice Hymnal #38*)
Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine (*Chalice Hymnal #543*)

Hymns of Consolation

O God Our Help In Ages Past (*Chalice Hymnal #67*)

*His Eye Is On The Sparrow (*Chalice Hymnal #82*)

Fairest lord Jesus (*Chalice Hymnal #97*)

*In This Very Room (*Chalice Hymnal #295*)

My Jesus, I Love Thee (*Chalice Hymnal #349*)

*There Is A Balm In Gilead (*Chalice Hymnal #501*)

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go (*Chalice Hymnal #540*)

It Is Well With My Soul (*Chalice Hymnal #561*)

Near To The Heart Of God (*Chalice Hymnal #581*)

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand (*Chalice Hymnal #628*)

Solos

The Lord's Prayer, *arr. Malotte*

Before the Throne of God Above, *arr. Shane*

There is a Higher Throne, *arr. Getty*

Give Me Jesus, *spiritual (various arrangements)*



Funeral Planning Form

If planning a funeral after the death of a loved one, please complete this form and return to the church office or pastor as soon as possible and make an appointment with the pastor for initial consultation.

If making pre-arrangements, please complete this form and make additional copies so that it can remain on file:

1. One copy to remain on hand with the individual planning the service
2. One copy with the church office and/or pastor
3. One copy with a trusted family member / friend who will likely be involved in planning your service

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

(if individual is already deceased) **Date of Death:** _____

Surviving Family Contacts: (names & phone numbers and/or email)

Primary Contact (for planning the service): _____

Additional Contacts involved in planning the service:

List all relatives to mention at the service (parents, children, grandkids, etc):

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Officiating Minister(s): _____

If more than one minister, list lead/officiating minister first and how you would like other ministers to be involved in the service (e.g., say a prayer, read a scripture, etc.)

Which Funeral home / location is your family working with?

Funeral Director (and contact info): _____

Are there prearrangements made with the funeral home?

Plans for body (check one):

Burial – at cemetery: _____

Entombment – at cemetery: _____

Cremation

Other: _____

VISITATION (if applicable):

Date / Time of Visitation: _____

Length of Visitation: _____

Location of Visitation:

Visitation will be off-site at _____

I/we would like to arrange for or a visitation at Beargrass

There will not be a visitation

MEMORIAL SERVICE:

Date / Time of Service: _____

Location of Service:

Beargrass Christian Church Sanctuary

Beargrass Christian Church Chapel

Other: _____

GRAVESIDE SERVICE (if applicable):

Date / Time of Graveside service: _____

Location of Graveside service: _____

If the service is at Beargrass, would you like to request a video and/or audio recording of the funeral service?

___ Audio CD ___ Video recording ___ Live broadcast on YouTube

Please note that our ability to provide any audio/video recordings depends on the scheduling availability of our tech team and sometimes may encounter glitches that may cause errors with a broadcast and/or recording.

I prefer that memorial contributions go to:

Note: if the church is to be included in memorial contributions or estate, would you like more information about the "Beargrass Forever" endowment fund program? ___ Yes ___ No

MUSIC FOR THE SERVICE

Usually up to 3 songs – see pages 8-9 for more information

First Song / Hymn:

Title: _____

Type: ___ Pre-Recorded ___ Congregational Hymn ___ Solo / Performance

Instrument (if played live): ___ Piano ___ Organ Other: _____

Second Song / Hymn:

Title: _____

Type: ___ Pre-Recorded ___ Congregational Hymn ___ Solo / Performance

Instrument (if played live): ___ Piano ___ Organ Other: _____

Third Song / Hymn:

Title: _____

Type: ___ Pre-Recorded ___ Congregational Hymn ___ Solo / Performance

Instrument (if played live): ___ Piano ___ Organ Other: _____

PERSONALIZING YOUR SERVICE

For the bulletin and/or projector screen:

Is there a particular quote or poem you would like to be included?

Do you have a favorite photo that can be provided for the service? _____
If so, please attach a digital or printed copy along with this packet.

Do you wish to include a photo slideshow during the service? _____
If so, our tech team will need a completed video file (ready to play on a computer) in advance. Slideshows are typically 3-5 minutes maximum.

Personal Reflections / Speakers during the service *(typically up to 3 people invited to speak prior to the service, each representing a different aspect of the person's life – e.g, representing the family, representing work / hobbies, etc):*

Reflection # 1: _____ **Representing:** _____

Reflection # 2: _____ **Representing:** _____

Reflection # 3: _____ **Representing:** _____

List scriptures you would like to be used *(usually 1 or 2):*

Can you briefly describe why these verses feel meaningful for the service?

Optional: **Non-scriptural reading (poem, etc...):**

Do you wish for Communion to be served? _____

The most meaningful services I have attended have included *(please give a general idea of the tone and feel of the service):*

Other Requests / Notes:

FORMATIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

Please attach notes or fill in the sections below to describe some of the most important parts of your life that should be included as part of the eulogy / reflections during the memorial service – especially “stories” that may not necessarily be included as part of an obituary:

Overview / Stories about Upbringing / Family of Origin:

Work / Career / Professional History:

Favorite Things in Life (hobbies, pets, vacations, events, people, etc):

Greatest accomplishment(s):

Faith Journey/History (church memberships, denominations, Sunday School, etc.):

Any regrets or things that you wish had been different?

What words of wisdom / advice to remember:

ADDITIONAL TRIBUTES / HONORS

Have you been a member of the military? _____

If yes:

Which branch? _____

Dates of service: _____

Will there be military honors? Yes No

Flag draped on casket? Yes No

Honor Guard during funeral / graveside? Yes No

“Taps” played at graveside? Yes No

Will there be a ceremony on behalf of any civic organizations (Shriners, Elks, sororities, etc): _____

OTHER NOTES / SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR THE SERVICE: