



Funeral and Memorial Service Planning Guide

Asbury United Methodist Church

*Jesus said, I am the
resurrection and I am life.
Those who believe in me,
even though they die, yet
shall they live, and
whoever lives and believes
in me shall never die.*



Dear Asbury Family,

When the death of a loved one has occurred, it is often a time of deep grief and pain as we wrestle with loss. At Asbury, we are honored to provide care and support during this difficult time.

A worship service following the death of a loved one does at least two things: It enables us to face the reality of our mortality and comforts us in the celebration of another reality—life after death in God. This service enables the believing community to witness its shared faith by providing opportunity for people to share pain and joy, support the family, pray, and grieve as one community while reaffirming its covenant with God and with each other.

The information in this packet serves as a beginning point for families and friends facing the death of a loved one. If you are working through this process and have any questions, please call the church office at 205.995.1700.

Sincerely,

Rev. Maggie Dunaway

Pastor of Congregational Care

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WHEN DEATH IS IMMINENT OR WHEN DEATH OCCURS

When death is imminent, or your loved one has died, a minister or a member of our Congregational Care team will be honored to come pray with you. If time and circumstances allow, **please call the church at 205.995.1700** to notify us of your situation. In the event that you call after hours or during the weekend, you will be directed to the “minister on call” by our emergency extension in the voicemail system. A minister will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF SERVICE

The first decision in your planning should focus on when and where to hold the service. A funeral or memorial service for a **member, longtime visitor, or immediate member of a member’s family** can be held at Asbury in the Sanctuary or Williams Chapel or the family may choose to have the service in the chapel of a funeral home. There are many excellent funeral homes, cremation facilities, and cemeteries in the Birmingham metro area. The church does not endorse specific providers. Should you decide to hold the service at Asbury, the Sanctuary and Williams Chapel are available for services and we ask that you call the church to coordinate a service that does not conflict with church activities.

TYPE OF SERVICE

There are several types of services to consider:

- ▶ **Visitation.** Often held before a funeral or memorial, a time for friends and extended family to offer expressions of sorrow and sympathy to the family of the deceased.
- ▶ **Funeral Service.** Ceremony commemorating the deceased with a casket present during the service.
- ▶ **Committal Service.** Service that takes place at the gravesite, usually following the funeral service.
- ▶ **Graveside Service.** The funeral service takes place at the gravesite. Frequently a graveside service is the choice of those who want a simple service.
- ▶ **Memorial Service.** A service of commemoration where there is no casket.

COLUMBARIUM

A columbarium is a permanent structure with niches or compartments designed to hold urns containing ashes of loved ones. A columbarium provides individuals the opportunity to have a final resting place within the shadow of their church home, a place they know, love, and cherish. Family, friends, and the church family can visit and meditate at any time.

Asbury United Methodist Church is honored to offer a custom, granite columbarium to its church members and their immediate families. A set of two 104-niche units is located along the long, left wall in the Prayer Garden between the Sanctuary and Williams Chapel.

If you are interested in purchasing a niche, visit asburybham.org/columbarium to review the policy and download an application. The completed application and reservation fee can be submitted to the church office during business hours. When approved, inurnment ownership rights will be sent to the purchaser. To set up an appointment to view and select an available niche in the columbarium, contact **Maggie Dunaway, Pastor of Congregational Care**.

MINISTER

All the ministers at Asbury perform funeral or memorial services and will be happy to assist in honoring your loved one. Approval from the senior pastor must be obtained if you are interested in having another pastor or minister (that is not on staff) officiate the service.

FEES

There are no fees for funerals or memorials held at Asbury UMC. If outside musicians or vocalists are invited, the family will be responsible for compensating those participants. If asked, the Congregational Care Director can provide a list of suggested honoraria for clergy and staff involved in the service.

FLOWERS

Floral offerings are a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one. Flowers should be delivered at least one hour prior to the service. Removal of flowers is the responsibility of the funeral home or the family.

MEMORABILIA

Frequently, family members set up a memory table in the entry area of the sanctuary with photos, albums, awards or certificates of achievement, hobby examples, or other personal items relating to their loved one. We provide the table(s) and cloth(s) for these displays and will be happy to assist you in arranging the items. You may also wish to play a photo slideshow of your loved one in the sanctuary prior to the service. Contact **Maggie Dunaway, Pastor of Congregational Care**, to make these arrangements.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorial gifts provide a meaningful way for individuals, families and groups to witness their thanksgiving for the life of a loved one. To give a gift in another's memory is a faithful expression of respect and love that goes beyond death. In lieu of flowers, families may wish to offer donations to Asbury, specific ministries of Asbury, capital improvement projects, or other areas of interest to the family. We are also happy to assist with gifts offered to other national or local charities. This information is typically included in the obituary as a "family wish"

statement and also included on the Order of Worship bulletin given to family and friends at the service.

MUSIC

Music is an integral part of any worship service at Asbury. Often, music can speak volumes when we are unable to speak ourselves. There is great and wonderful church music available in traditional or contemporary styles. **Nancy Beard, Director of Music**, will help the family arrange musicians and vocalists. You are encouraged to include music that is important to you or your loved one. If you do not have any particular hymns in mind, your pastor will help you choose appropriate music for the service. A list of possible selections is also included at the end of the guide. Secular music is not encouraged for a service but can be used during the visitation.

- ▶ **Prelude:** The organist/pianist will play for 15 minutes prior to the service. This will include requested hymns or a selection of the musician's choice.
- ▶ **Processional:** The family will walk into the sanctuary with the pastor and be seated.
- ▶ **Solos and congregational hymns:** These complement the service and will be interspersed at the discretion of the pastor.
- ▶ **Recessional:** The casket (if applicable), pastor and family exit the chapel to this music.
- ▶ **Postlude:** the organist/pianist will play until the guests have left the sanctuary.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

This is a suggested guideline for a typical order of service at Asbury but it can be modified to suit the needs of the family.

- ▶ Prelude
- ▶ Family Entrance
- ▶ Pastoral Greeting
- ▶ Opening Congregational Hymn
- ▶ Prayer, often with the Lord's Prayer in unison
- ▶ Words of Remembrance or Eulogy
- ▶ Special Music
- ▶ Reading of Scripture
- ▶ Homily, offered by the officiating pastor
- ▶ Closing Congregational Hymn

- ▶ Benediction
- ▶ Family Recessional
- ▶ Postlude

SCRIPTURE

Scripture readings are the heart of the funeral service, as they provide a firm foundation for our understanding of what God is doing in our lives through Jesus, for his promises transcend our doubt, and his life redeems our deaths. The pastor can include readings that are important to the family or the deceased or if you do not have any particular scripture in mind, a list of possible scripture selections are included at the end of the guide.

EULOGY OR WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Family members and friends may wish to share their own memories of their loved one during the service in addition to the pastor's sermon. If you wish to do this, please keep these suggestions in mind:

- ▶ Funerals are very emotional experiences, and intense grief can surprise even seasoned public speakers. Speakers should type their eulogy in advance of the service so that the pastor can read it in the event the speaker is unable to continue.
- ▶ A eulogy should be targeted to about 500 words in length. This will take about 4-5 minutes to present. Longer eulogies can easily lose a congregation's attention or fail to communicate about the deceased effectively.
- ▶ No more than two eulogies (total of 8-10 minutes) should be planned. The service will become uncomfortably long when more eulogies are included.

Even when a deceased person is not well known to the pastor, the pastor will give full attention to honoring and naming the memory and identity of the individual in his/her sermon.

ASBURY UMC STAFF CONTACTS

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LIST OF SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES

Old Testament

Genesis 15:15 *Abraham's death*

Genesis 49:1, 29–33; 50:1–2, 12–14 *Jacob's death and Joseph's response*

Exodus 15 (UMH 135) *Canticle of Moses and Miriam*

Joshua 3:14–4:7 *Crossing over Jordan*

Job 1:21 *Job's faith*

Job 14:1–12a *We are of few days*

Job 19:25–27 *My Redeemer lives*

Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31 *A good woman*

Isaiah 25:1, 6–9 *God will swallow up death*

Isaiah 26:1–4, 19 *Your dead shall live*

Isaiah 35:1–6, 10 *Zion restored*

Isaiah 41:8–10, 13 *Do not fear*

Isaiah 57:14–19 *Poem of consolation*

Isaiah 61:1–4, 10–11 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*

Isaiah 66:10–13 *A mother comforts, so does God*

Ezekiel 34:11–16 *Shepherd of Israel*

Ezekiel 37:1–14, 21–28 *These bones can live*

Micah 6:6–8 *What does the Lord require?*

Zephaniah 3:16–20 *Restoration of Israel*

Psalms

Psalms 27 (UMH 758) *Devotion and deliverance*

Psalms 34 (UMH 769) *Thanksgiving for deliverance*

Psalms 40 (UMH 774) *Thanksgiving for deliverance*

Psalms 71 (UMH 794) *Deliverance from evil*

Psalms 77 (UMH 798) *Deliverance from trouble*

Psalms 84 (UMH 804) *How lovely is your dwelling place*

Psalms 118 (UMH 839) *Thanksgiving for deliverance*

Psalms 126 (UMH 847) *Prayer for deliverance*

Psalms 143 (UMH 856) *Prayer for deliverance*

Gospels

Matthew 5:1–12 *The Beatitudes*

Matthew 6:19–21 *Do not lay up treasures on earth*

Matthew 11:25–30 *Come to me all who labor*

Matthew 25:31–46 *As you did it to one of the least*

Matthew 28:1–10, 16–20 *Go make disciples*

Mark 16:1–8 *Jesus goes before you*
Luke 1:67–75 (UMH 208) *Canticle of Zechariah*
Luke 12:22–40 *Do not be anxious; be ready*
Luke 24:1–12 *The empty tomb*
John 3:13–17 *God's gift of eternal life*
John 5:19–29 *Whoever hears and believes has life*
John 6:30–40, 47–51 *Jesus the bread of life*
John 10:1–18, 27–30 *Jesus the Good Shepherd*
John 12:20–36 *Unless a grain of wheat dies*
John 15:1–17 *The vine and the branches*
John 16:12–22, 33 *Sorrow becomes joy*
John 20 *Jesus' resurrection*

Epistles

Acts 10:34–43 *Peter's sermon on the resurrection*
Romans 5:1–11, 17–21 *Peace with God through faith*
Romans 6:3–11 *Dying and rising with Christ*
Romans 14:7–9 *Lord of the dead and the living*
2 Corinthians 5:1–11a, 14–20 *At home in the Lord*
Ephesians 3:14–21 *Know the love of Christ*
Philippians 3:7–21 *The power of Christ's resurrection*
Colossians 3:1–17 *Raised with Christ*
1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 *Concerning those who sleep*
2 Timothy 4:6–8, 17–18 *I have fought the good fight*
Hebrews 11–12 *The saints of God*
1 John 3:1–3 *We shall be like God*

LIST OF SUGGESTED HYMNS

from **Book of Worship of The United Methodist (1992)**

- 110 A Mighty Fortress is Our God
- 700 Abide with Me
- 154 All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
- 378 Amazing Grace
- 163 Ask Ye What Great Thing I Know
- 451 Be Thou My Vision
- 364 Because He Lives
- 369 Blessed Assurance
- 557 Blest Be the Tie That Binds
- 400 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
- 140 Great is Thy Faithfulness
- 128 He Leadeth Me
- 128 Here I Am Lord
- 77 How Great Thou Art
- 707 Hymn of Promise
- 103 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- 314 In the Garden
- 377 It Is Well With My Soul
- 89 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- 357 Just As I Am
- 133 Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
- 368 My Hope Is Built
- 57 O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
- 117 O God Our Help in Ages Past
- 143 On Eagle's Wings
- 474 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- 702 Sing With All the Saints in Glory
- 496 Sweet Hour of Prayer
- 328 Surely the Presence of the Lord
- 395 Take Time to Be Holy
- 545 The Church's One Foundation (stanzas 1, 5)
- 383 This Is a Day of New Beginnings
- 98 To God Be the Glory
- 526 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

SERVICE WORKSHEET

Visitation Date, Time, & Location: _____

Funeral/Memorial Date, Time, & Location _____

If using a funeral home, which one: _____

Embalmed? or Cremated?

If there is a Casket or Coffin during visitation: Open? or Closed?

Burial Location: _____

Is there a committal service at graveside or columbarium: Yes or No

Presiding Pastor(s):

Musician(s): _____

Soloist(s): _____

Song(s) for Solo or Anthem:

Congregational Hymn(s):

Scripture(s):

Words of Remembrance Speaker(s) and relation to deceased:

Pallbearers (6, if needed):

Honorary Pallbearers:

Is there a charity or organization recommended in lieu of flowers? If so, what is it?
