

# Planning a Funeral

at First United Methodist  
Church Midland



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# Regarding Funerals at First United Methodist Church

Christians believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them hope and cause for thanksgiving in the face of death. In this faith, we entrust those who have died to the infinite mercy and love of God.

—The Methodist Worship Book, England

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. As one of our creeds declares, “In life, in death, in life beyond death, we are not alone. Thanks be to God!”

A service where the body of the deceased is present is called a funeral. A memorial service is appropriate when the body of the deceased is not present. (Interment follows the funeral service; in the case of a memorial service, interment or inurnment occurs prior to the service.) Most of the services at First United Methodist Church are called A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance.

It is the commitment of the clergy and music leadership of First United Methodist Church to claim and present a properly balanced and theologically sound experience for all who see God through worship at the time of death. To this end, the following are guidelines and suggestions that we offer to assist those who mourn, and those who look to tomorrow.

# To the Family

At the time of death, please contact one of our ministers and/or the Congregational Care Ministry office at 432-682-3701; during non-business hours the answering service will locate a pastor for you. Conversations between the family and the minister will then proceed to define details about the funeral or memorial service. While it will be the minister who guides you and your family through this important time, there are a few things that only the family of the deceased can do:

- We need **one** person who speaks for the family with regard to decisions about the funeral. It will be the minister's responsibility to decide who this person is, in consultation with the family.
- While friends and extended family certainly wish to help at the time of death, the staff will prepare, execute, and conclude the worship service.
- If there is a desire to have a reception at the church following the service, the minister or assistant will see to it that space for such a reception is scheduled. If friends or a Sunday School class wish to help at the reception or provide some kind of food service, it is best to coordinate this with Lori Miller our volunteer hostess for receptions.
- Music for the service, both choral and instrumental, must follow the same guidelines as for Sunday worship. Selections should be scriptural in nature and primarily focus on God, God's attributes, and giving thanks to God. Love songs, show tunes, school songs, etc. are certainly appropriate at the reception. The minister will consult with the Worship Arts director to arrange desired selections.
- The central moment in any worship service, including funeral and memorial services, is the proclamation of the Word of God: It is the proclamation of a resurrection faith in a sermon or meditation. There are moments in a funeral for specific remembrances and thanksgivings by family and friends. Experience teaches us that two speakers with a combined length of 10 minutes is sufficient. We request that the personal words reflect the goodness and Christian virtues of the person.
- We reserve the right to intervene should the content or language be unbecoming of a Christian service. The minister will be free to monitor and implement time limits should a speaker step outside the boundaries.

# General Policies

1. Funerals are conducted Monday–Saturday, with Sunday reserved for worship only. On Mondays funerals are scheduled after 1:00 pm. Funerals on Fridays are scheduled in the morning and early afternoon.
2. When considering a worship venue, The Glass Chapel seats approximately 100 and the Sanctuary approximately 600.
3. Reserved seating will be arranged for the family according to the funeral directors.
4. Should you wish to have a vocal or musical soloist; the music department can provide names of recommended individuals. Special choral or instrumental music may be arranged, with fees not determined by the church. Any costs associated with a reception are determined by the caterer and the family. A fee schedule for all services will be provided prior to the service.
5. The church is not prepared for the showing of videos. Appropriate videos may be played at the reception.
6. Flowers are not a requirement for a service. If family and friends wish to have flowers, they will work directly with their chosen florist. Family and friends are urged to take arrangements with them when possible. We are unable to deliver them to hospitals or care facilities.
7. Guest clergy from other churches will be hosted by one of our clergy, who will also participate in the service.
8. The church is closed or has limited availability for scheduling funerals on the following days, as noted:

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| <p><b>New Year's Day</b></p> <p><b>Martin Luther King Day</b></p> <p><b>President's Day</b></p> <p><b>Memorial Day</b></p> <p><b>Fourth of July</b></p> <p><b>Labor Day</b></p> <p><b>Columbus Day</b></p> <p><b>Veteran's Day</b></p> | <p><b>The church is closed on the "observed" holiday duration, usually meaning a three-day weekend; funerals will not be scheduled before 1:00 pm on a Tuesday following such a weekend – i.e. a funeral following Memorial Day weekend would be scheduled no earlier than 1:00 pm on Tuesday.</b></p> |
| <p><b>Holy Week/Easter</b></p>   | <p><b>The Thursday and Friday prior to Easter Sunday provide limited availability for funeral services, the facility is closed on the Saturday before and the Monday following Easter Sunday.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Thanksgiving Day Weekend</b></p>   | <p><b>The church is closed on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Day and remains closed through the Saturday following.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Christmas Holidays</b></p>   | <p><b>Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and January 1, are not available for funerals, as are several days between December 26 and January 1. Please call to schedule an appropriate time.</b></p>  |