

Notes

Funerals and Memorials



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

Swansboro United Methodist Church

Dear Friends,

We know that planning the details of a funeral or memorial service can be overwhelming and we would like to assist you in any way we can. It is our hope that this information will be helpful to you.

Our ministers consider it a sacred privilege to come and pray with you during this difficult event. If time and circumstances allow, please call the church office (910-326-4822) and notify us of your situation. After hours, call the church parsonage (910-326-4373). One of our ministers will make every effort to come pray with you and your family.

Sincerely,

Pastor



Swansboro United Methodist Church

A Service of Death and Resurrection

Please indicate your presence by completing this card and leaving it in the pew. Consider adding a note on the back. Following the service, the cards will be delivered to the family so that they will know of your presence and care.

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

As we gather for worship, please turn off electronic devices. Thank you.

Martha's Mission

A meal either before or after the service is to be a gesture of Christian kindness that the church provides equally to all its members. Someone from the Martha's Mission Committee will contact the family to discuss the wishes of the family and menu options.

Cost & Fees

There are no building usage fees for services held at Swansboro United Methodist Church. In addition, there are no fees for the clergy or the organist.

If additional vocalists or instrumentalists (anyone outside our full-time music staff) are contracted by the church, the family will be responsible for an honorarium on the day of the service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to the Family	2
Table of Contents	3
The Christian Funeral as a Service of Worship	4 - 5
Planning the Service	6
Order of Worship	7
Music & Scripture	8
Flowers, Pall, Memorial Candle	9
Martha's Mission	10
Cost and Fees	10
Pew Card Sample	11

updated 5/7/2014

The Christian Funeral as a Service of Worship

The central moment in any worship service, including funeral or memorial service, is the proclamation of the Word of God. It is the proclamation of a resurrection faith in a sermon or meditation.

Our worship is in part an expression of praise and thanksgiving to God for the life of the deceased, and the rendering of tribute to our loved one.

The funeral provides the opportunity to respond to God upon the occasion of death, according to the Church's faith, based on Scripture. It is an event when we hear the Gospel interpreted so that we might once again re-affirm our faith in God, just as we do in all worship services.

The Gospel proclaimed is not the goodness of the people, but the sovereignty and faithfulness of God. In this there is real comfort for the bereaved.

The funeral conducted by a minister of the Church is a service of Christian Worship. Therefore the service of worship should follow the order of worship as established and followed by the United Methodist Church on page 870 in the United Methodist Hymnal.

The Pastor is in charge of the service. While the Pastor, family and funeral director work together, details of the funeral service should be planned through consultation with the Pastor.

Flowers

The flower is a symbol of the resurrection of our Lord and is an appropriate way to honor a loved one. Arrangements may also be displayed in the Narthex or the Fellowship Hall. The use of flowers is appropriate, but not necessary.

The funeral home or family is responsible for the removal of all flowers upon the completion of the service.

Pall

The church offers, to those who may desire its use, a pall to cover the casket. It is placed over the casket before it enters the sanctuary or chapel and remains on the casket during the service. The pall symbolizes the common humanity we share in death. It is a witness that everyone is equal for the table of the Lord. No flowers are placed upon the pall.

Memorial Candle

If the family wishes a memorial candle can be placed on the altar and lighted by one or more than one family member at the appropriate time during the service.

Music

If the service is to be in the sanctuary and music is requested, the minister will contact the music director and make arrangements.

Funerals and memorial services are occasions to sing the great music of the church that witness to the Lord of life. Secular music is not appropriate for a worship setting.

The pastor, organist, and director of music will help you determine if a song is appropriate for this service of worship.

Congregational singing is encouraged as it involves everyone and gives expression to the faith we hold. It is usually wise to select one or two hymns that are more commonly known.

The music may represent:

Adoration and Thanksgiving to God – Example: *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

Comfort to the living – Example: *A Mighty Fortress is our God*

Death and Eternal Life – Example: *Hymn of Promise*

Hope and Trust – Example: *Be Thou My Vision*

Note that an index of suggested music is found beginning on page 941 in the United Methodist Hymnal

Scripture

The scriptures are a rich resource for the funeral service. Passages which have special meaning to the family or which were special to the deceased may be chosen in consultation with the pastor. A suggested list can be found on pages 145-148 in the *Methodist Book of Worship*.

The services of the Pastor are a part of pastoral duties representative of the Church and there is no financial obligation.

Should the family desire a minister in addition to the church's Pastor to participate in the funeral service, the family should make such wishes known to the church's Pastor, who in turn will contact the other minister and make arrangements with him/her for participation in the funeral service. Of course, arrangements should be made to reimburse the guest minister's expenses.

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.

While friends and extended family certainly wish to help at the time of death, the staff will prepare, execute, and conclude the worship service.

Ushers and greeters for the service will be provided by the church. Sunday morning class members, neighbors, and friends will better serve in other ways.

Reserve seating will be arranged for the family according to their wishes.

Planning the Service

An important early step in planning the service is to gather your family together at home or the church to visit with the minister leading the service. This is a valuable time to share stories and favorite memories of your loved one. Many families comment that this type of gathering proves to be very helpful and comforting. It is easier for the minister to have one person who speaks for the family with regard to decisions made about the service.

Important things to consider:

What type of service do you desire?

- A graveside service followed by a memorial service
- A traditional funeral service followed by a graveside service
- A memorial service only (in this type of service the body is not present.)
- A graveside service only
- Military or fraternal services will be held in places other than the church.

Where will the service be held?

- In the sanctuary
- At a funeral home
- At the cemetery

Will there be visitation before the service or a reception after the service?

- Home
- Church
- Funeral Home

Order of Service

Prelude

Greeting/Opening Prayer

Call to Worship

Hymn

Reflections (optional)

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Scripture

Meditation (by the Minister officiating the service)

Hymn

Closing Prayer

Postlude