

When A Loved One Dies.....

Planning a Memorial or Funeral Service



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Forward

When a loved one dies, a family is suddenly confronted with a multitude of decisions which must be made quickly and with care. Many of these decisions relate to the planning of a Christian Service of Worship to mark the passing of the deceased. To help families with some of these decisions, we offer this booklet.

Some may wish to discuss the contents of this booklet with their families well in advance. Others may refer to this booklet after the death of a loved one, and prior to meeting with the Pastor at Sanbornton Congregational Church to discuss service arrangements.

In their time of grief, some families will prefer the pastor select the hymns and Scripture passages for the Worship Service. Others will prefer to make a few, or all, of their own selections. For the latter, we have included in this booklet lists of some suitable hymns and Scripture readings.

In all such planning, it should be recognized that there is no single “right” way to conduct a meaningful Funeral or Memorial Service. Circumstances, customs, and personal preferences can vary widely. Such services should be planned to reflect the special needs and interests of individuals and their families.

Both church members and non-church members are welcome to have their services conducted at the Sanbornton Congregational Church, UCC. Services of all sizes are held in our Sanctuary. When planning services, please remember that grieving families tend to underestimate the number of people who will attend a public service to express support and “pay their respects.”

Types of Services

Funeral Service – takes place with the embalmed or cremated remains of the deceased present. Such services are usually held in the Sanctuary, at the grave, or at the funeral home. When the service is conducted at Sanbornton Congregational Church, it is requested that the casket remain closed.

Memorial Service – takes place without the remains of the deceased present. Such services are almost always held at Sanbornton UCC. Except for providing a guest registry, funeral home involvement must be confirmed regarding ushers and parking attendants.

Committal Service – takes place in conjunction with the interment of the embalmed or cremated remains of the deceased. This brief service may be combined with either of the above services, or held at a time totally separate from them.

Location & Timing of Service

Local Funeral Service – The service is conducted locally, immediately after which the remains are taken to a local cemetery where either a public or private Committal Service is conducted.

Local Memorial Service – The service is generally conducted in the Sanctuary. A Committal Service may be held before or after the Memorial Service, or on a different day.

Non-Local Committal Services – When a non-local interment is required in conjunction with a local service, the funeral home will arrange for an on-site clergy person to conduct an appropriate Committal Service. In

such cases, the words of Committal can also be included in the local Memorial service – to provide a sense of “completeness” for those not attending the interment.

Scheduling

Following a death, the funeral home will contact the pastor of the Sanbornton Congregational Church on behalf of the grieving family to set a date, time, and location of the service. Usually this is done as soon as possible, to meet newspaper and other deadlines.

For services held in the Sanctuary at Sanbornton Congregational Church, we will, upon request by the family, secure the services of the church organist. The regular organist of Sanbornton UCC has the right of first refusal to supply music and would be available to discuss music of your choice, for the occasion.

Following the initial contact, the pastor will consult with the family to minister to their needs at this difficult time, including planning the service. If the primary funeral service occurs out of the area, it is usually the family that contacts the pastor directly to arrange for a Memorial Service at a later time.

Alternate and Guest Clergy

At times when a pastor is not available, such as during vacations, Sanbornton UCC will provide names of alternate clergy, authorized to conduct Funeral and Memorial services in our Sanctuary. For services not held at Sanbornton Congregational Church, the funeral home can provide the names of additional clergy.

If requested by the family, other clergy are welcome to assist the Sanbornton Congregational Church pastor in conducting the service. When other clergy

have known the deceased well, we are quite willing to have them present the “Remembrance” portion of the service.

After Service Gathering

Depending upon its availability, the Undercroft at Sanbornton Congregational Church may be used to host a reception following any Funeral or Memorial Service held at the church. Please consult with the pastor about the number of people that the Undercroft can accommodate.

The Board of Hospitality is pleased to provide food for receptions, and a member will contact the family regarding the food served. If the Board is asked to provide food and supplies, there is a \$100 fee, made payable to the church (see section on Honoraria). If the family prefers to contract with a caterer, the Board Chair will provide information about the use of church linens, etc. Please note that alcoholic beverages of any kind and smoking are prohibited in the church building or on the premises. There is no additional fee for the set-up and clean-up of the Undercroft.

Flowers

Please let the pastor or sexton know the time for delivery of flowers at the church. If you care to leave any flower arrangements at the altar, they may be used for the next Sunday service, as a memorial, or donated to a local nursing facility. Please advise the pastor so that the sexton may care for them properly. Otherwise, it is expected that flowers will be removed following the Funeral or Memorial Service.

Animals

Only service animals are allowed in the church building.

Parking/Handicapped Accessibility

Our church parking lot is available at the opposite side of Town Hall. Handicap parking is as marked. A wheelchair is available, as is a walker, for use in the building and is located near the handicap entrance.

Honoraria

Sanctuary: As part of its ministry to grieving families, Sanbornton Congregational Church provides the use of the Sanctuary without charge.

Clergy: The honorarium is \$200 for our pastor to meet with family members, plan and lead Funeral or Memorial Services. This may include a Committal Service at a cemetery. For a graveside Committal Service only, the honorarium is \$150. Families are asked to consult with our pastor when there is guest clergy conducting or assisting with the services.

Organist: The honorarium for the professional services of Sanbornton Congregational Church's organist is set at \$150.

Sexton: When a Funeral or Memorial Service is held in the Sanctuary, an honorarium of \$50 is required for the church sexton.

- If a funeral reception is held in the Undercroft, with the Board of Hospitality providing food and supplies, there is a fee of \$100, made payable to the church. If the reception is catered, there is no fee.

Purposes of a Christian Service

The Christian faith triumphantly proclaims the passage from death to eternal life in God's peace. It also bears witness to the redemptive love of God who stands with us, and cries with us, when we who are left behind must face the painful partings and tragedies of this earthly life.

Through appropriate Bible passages, prayers, and hymns, a Christian Funeral or Memorial Service can help grieving families and friends get in touch with these vital truths of our faith – and derive hope and comfort from them.

Through a Christian Service, we express thanks to God for the earthly life of the deceased and thanksgiving for everything that person has meant over the years to family and friends. Individual persons are both unique and precious to God. As such, in death as in life, it is important that we honor them and give thanks for their lives.

Finally, as Christians, we seek to help a family commend their loved one into God's keeping. We hope that the Funeral or Memorial Service will help them find a sense of peace, as they shift their focus from the earthly to the eternal spirit of their loved one.

Service Content

This page outlines a basic Order of Worship often used at Sanbornton Congregational Church for Funeral or Memorial Services.

Certainly, this order is open to modification to suit personal preferences.

With hymns, and without additional speakers, this service lasts 25-30 minutes. The Committal service, which usually includes prayers and Scripture, lasts about 5-10 minutes.

Services at Sanbornton UCC often include hymns. (Hymns may also be used at the funeral home or a gravesite, according to the family's wishes.)

Soloists are also available upon request.

Suggested Format for a Memorial or Funeral Service

(In the Sanctuary)

GATHERING

GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

*HYMN

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

*PSALM 23 (unison)

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE and MEDITATION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMENDATION

* HYMN

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

Suggested Hymns

New Century Hymnal

For the Beauty of the Earth (#28)

All Things Bright and Beautiful (#31)

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (#43)

On A Hill Far Away (#195)

The Strife is O'er (#242)

I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry (#351)

In the Bulb There Is a Flower (#433)

Precious Lord, Take My Hand (#472)

God Is My Shepherd (#479)

Be Still My Soul (#488)
What A Friend We Have in Jesus (#506)
Amazing Grace (#547)
Shall We Gather at the River (#597)

Suggested Scripture

Old Testament

Psalm 23
Psalm 25: 1-2, 4-10
Psalm 27: 1,4-9,13,14
Psalm 46:1-5, 10 1
Psalm 84
Psalm 90
Psalm 95:1-7
Psalm 100
Psalm 121
Isaiah 25:1,4,8-9,26-27a
Deuteronomy 32:1-3,7,9-12;33:26-27a
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

New Testament

Philippians 4:4-9
John 14
Romans 8: 9-11, 31-39
Corinthians 13: 4-7,13
John 6: 35-40
Thessalonians 4: 13-18
Revelation 21: 1-7

Additional readings and poems appropriate for Memorial Services are also available from the pastor.