

Funeral Ministry Guidelines

The Lord is my

shepherd;

I shall not want . . .

. . . and I will

dwell

in the house

of the

Lord

forever.

—Psalm 23:1,6



Brentwood United Methodist Church
Brentwood, Tennessee

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PLANNING AHEAD

Brentwood United Methodist Church is a faith-filled, caring congregation. Our Christian commitment is to be present with one another in every phase of life's journey. When faced with death, we come together as a community to praise God and to witness to our resurrection faith. This booklet is designed to encourage people to participate in personal funeral planning as much as possible. Not only is the information likely to be of great help to families, but it allows individuals the opportunity to make important decisions about funeral preferences prior to the crisis of death. Such pre-planning can relieve the burden of family members at the time of death. Because it is difficult to plan during times of emotional stress, we encourage you to review this booklet and discuss personal preferences with your pastor, family and/or friends.

If you so desire, you may file a copy of your final wishes with the church. A member of the Caring Ministries staff will be happy to meet with you to help record your final wishes and to preplan your service. To meet with a pastor, please call the Caring Ministries department at 615-373-3663.

IN THE EVENT OF DEATH or PENDING DEATH

In the event of death or if death is impending, contact one of the Caring Ministries pastors at 615-373-3663 so they may offer support and help guide the planning process. The pastors are available to walk with you during this sacred and difficult time.

Should death occur at night or on the weekends, call the after-hours emergency number at 615-969-3086 to notify the church. The pastor-on-call will not answer immediately, but if you leave a message they will return your call as soon as possible.

Grief care is available through our Caring Ministries department. Contact Caring Ministries at 615-373-3663 to learn about options. You may also request a Stephen Minister, a layperson trained to provide confidential, one-on-one care by calling the referral hotline at 615-577-4881.

DISPOSITION OF THE BODY

Burial, cremation, and donation for medical purposes are all appropriate disposition options within the Christian tradition.

LOCATION and PLANNING OF THE SERVICE

It is appropriate for the funeral or memorial service of any person to be held in the Sanctuary or Chapel of the church. The service shall be under the direction of the BUMC pastors with others properly invited to participate as requested. Military or fraternal services will be held in places other than the Sanctuary.

BURIAL

Burial of ashes may take place prior to, or after, the service or at a later time. If the casket or urn is present at the service, they may not be left in the church overnight and removal is the responsibility of the funeral director or the family. The casket is to remain closed during the visitation and funeral service if it is held at the church. For information about purchasing a niche in the BUMC columbarium, please contact the Director of Facilities at 615-373-3663, ext. 1309.

VISITATION

Hours of visitation are to be determined by the pastor and the family. Visitations are typically held 1-2 hours prior to the service in the Sanctuary narthex. Visitations on days other than the day of the service may be held in the Sanctuary narthex or Haney Hall, depending on availability. During visitations, the church will designate a place for guests to register; the funeral director or family will provide the registration book. As mentioned, our policy calls for a closed casket for visitations and services.

A funeral team of volunteers from the church will be on hand to facilitate the visitation and provide hospitality to the family and guests. The funeral team will provide water during the visitation. Arrangements may be made for the family to have a meal or snacks before visitation or after the service. Any such gatherings held at BUMC are the responsibility of the sponsoring person, group or Sunday School and must be scheduled through the church.

Tables and easels will be made available by the church to display pictures, if desired. The church will provide a TV for DVDs to be shown during visitation but will not be shown during the service. DVDs must contain appropriate photos and music.

THE WORSHIP SERVICE

The funeral is a worship service to glorify God, who promises eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, and should be conducted with dignity, simplicity and reverence. Through our worship of God we also hope to console those who grieve and to honor the person's life and witness. No photographs may be taken during the worship service.

CASKET & PALL

Because the proper object of the service is the worship of God and the consolation of the living, it follows that the body of the deceased is not necessary to the service. The casket, if present during the service, shall be closed at all times and will be placed perpendicular to the altar. If the body has been cremated and the family wishes to have the remains present during the service, the urn or a cremains box provided by the church shall be placed on an appropriate stand in full view of the congregation. The casket or urn will be covered with a solid white pall during the service in order that the attention of those present may be directed toward God. If the family chooses to use a flower pall on the casket during the visitation, it will be replaced by the cloth pall when the casket enters the Sanctuary or Chapel. Following the benediction, as the casket is taken from the sanctuary, the flower pall will again be placed on the casket. The purpose of the cloth pall is to symbolize that in Christ we are "clothed" in grace. In Christ, we put off the old self and put on a new creation. The pall symbolically expresses the Christian's conviction that all persons are equal in the eyes of God.

FLOWERS

In an effort to encourage simplicity and worshipfulness flowers in the Sanctuary should be limited to no more than three arrangements. Although not necessary, the family of the deceased may want to furnish altar flowers for the service. If there are more than three arrangements, they will be placed in appropriate locations other than the Sanctuary.

PASCHAL CANDLE

The Paschal candle stands at the head of the casket, urn or cremains box during the service. The candle, symbolic of God's gift of grace bestowed upon us in baptism, has been used since ancient times to remind God's people that we, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are delivered from darkness and into the light of God's eternal love. Physical death marks the final and complete baptism in which, by the power of God, we are delivered into God's eternal kingdom.

SERVICE ELEMENTS AND ORDER

There is a standard United Methodist liturgy followed at BUMC for funerals. The service is always placed in the context of worship. The procession into the service is led by the clergy, or by a crucifer when requested, followed by the casket or urn, pall bearers (if applicable) and the family. Seats are reserved for the family and pall bearers at the front of the sanctuary. The casket is put in place by the funeral director as previously described. If there is an urn for ashes, often a family member will carry the remains into the service and place them on a stand.

During the worship service, emphasis is placed upon the readings of scriptures for the declaration of Christian hope. Any further readings or music are carefully examined to assure that they are consistent with the Biblical affirmation of God's power over death. Passages which have special meaning to the family or which were special to the deceased may be chosen in consultation with the pastor.

Music chosen should point the congregation to God, celebrate the life of the deceased, and offer consolation to those who grieve. Because we believe that worship is our authentic offering to God, the church uses only live musicians for music offered in worship. Therefore, recorded music and accompaniment tracks are not permitted in any of our worship services. As an expression of our common faith, it is appropriate that those assembled join in the singing of songs or hymns which declare belief in the life everlasting.

The church organist or pianist is available for funeral services. They will provide suitable sacred music, including music selected by the family in consultation with the pastor. A soloist will be provided if requested by the family. Other employed or guest instrumentalists may be employed or invited through the Director of Worship and Arts. The family would be expected to cover the cost of any external paid musicians enlisted to be a part of the funeral service.

Credo's have served the Church for generations as a powerful means of reaffirming the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. It is entirely appropriate to include the use of traditional credo's in the funeral or memorial service. The Apostles' Creed is one of the most commonly used. We also encourage the use of the Lord's Prayer and other congregational readings based on scripture.

A brief homily, praising God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of a resurrection for all Christians will be included in the service, if the pastor and family desire. The homily can also include a eulogy and words of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased. In addition, if the family desires, Holy Communion may be served during the service.

There will be a recessional at the conclusion of the service. The recessional is led by the crucifer, if being used, otherwise is led by the pastor(s), followed by the casket or urn, pall bearers and immediate family members.

FACILITY USAGE

There are no fees for members and regular attendees of BUMC. We do not offer our facility as a funeral venue for people not connected to our church.

COLUMBARIUM

BUMC has burial niches available for purchase near the Chad Welch Prayer Garden. Contact the Director of Facilities at 615-373-3663 to get more information on the contract, cost, availability and location.

HONORARIUMS

Honorariums are not required but may be given at your discretion for those who participate in leading the funeral service. Suggested honorariums are:

- \$200 - \$300 for lead pastor or Bishop
- \$100 - \$150 for assisting pastor, worship leader, organist/pianist and other musicians.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A SERVICE

As decisions need to be made, a pastor will assist you. At your request, we can provide a list of recommended hymns and scriptures to facilitate your choices.

- Burial/cremation preference
- Location and time of visitation
- Location and time of service
- Minister(s) involved in the service
- Family and friends to speak
- Scriptures
- Musical selections
- Memorial contributions
- Pallbearers
- Military/fraternal rites
- Favorite scripture or quote, songs, childhood memory, adult moment, proudest moment, accomplishments

AFTER THE SERVICE

All Saints' Day

All Saints' Day is November 1 and is celebrated at BUMC on the first Sunday of November. On this day, we remember and commemorate the communion of saints, known and unknown, and the cloud of witnesses to the faith with whom God has surrounded us (Hebrews 12:1). We remember especially our beloved church family members and friends who are no longer with us, and who gave their love to us, the Church, and the world.

We invite you and your family to be a part of our next All Saints' services. Your loved ones name will be called, a bell will toll, and a white rose will be placed in the vase for all who have graduated to the church eternal since the last All Saints' Day. You are invited to take the rose home with you. We also invite you to visit our memorial colonnade and plaques in the Chad Welch Memorial Prayer Garden. On the plaques will be a name plate to memorialize each person who was a member of BUMC at the time of their death.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions or would like more information, please call the church office (615-373-3663) and ask to speak to one of the Caring Ministries pastors.