

# Funeral Planning Guide & Worksheet



**United Methodist Church**  
OF GENEVA

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# Funeral Planning Guide

*Jesus said: "I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." –John 14:3*

Thank you for picking up our Funeral Planning Guide and Worksheet. This material is designed to provide a tool for planning for the future when your life on this earth ends and to support and guide families making plans upon the death of a loved one.

In the first days following a loved one's death, the family makes an average of 200 decisions. During such an emotional, stressful and demanding time, plans that have been made earlier lighten the load after death.

If you've not made advance plans, this guide will be helpful to you as you make arrangements for services and burial of your loved one.

This guide will walk you through a series of questions. Your responses can be marked on the worksheet at the end. Your pastor is available to discuss any items with you. When you are finished, please share your worksheet with a family member or friend who will act on your behalf after your death. It would also be helpful to contact your pastor to share your worksheet and provide your church office with a copy so that it can be held in safekeeping for the future.

Please note that this guide also recommends and presumes that a family utilizes the services of a funeral home/director. A separate checklist and guide for families not using these professional services is available from the church office.

## The Goal of the Christian Funeral Service

The gathering of family and friends, who form a community of hope for a funeral or memorial service, is a rich opportunity to recall the promises of God through Christ. Because of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection to new life, each time we gather to worship upon the death of a loved one, we do so in the context of God's promise. Every funeral includes praising God in Christ who is our hope and our salvation, even as we remember the deceased and give thanks to God for the time shared with that person and their life and witness.

As Christians we believe in Jesus Christ whose bodily death and resurrection made possible life everlasting. Christians view death as another step in our life as children of God. Yet, Christians also experience death as a time of loss when sorrow, grief, and bereavement are both natural and appropriate. These two truths inform the Christian funeral service and guide the church in its ministry to those who have lost a loved one to death, affirming with both joy and tears the promise and hope of the Good News of Jesus.

A funeral or memorial service should be comforting to those who mourn as well as bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. The concern of gathered friends does minister to our grief but, above all else, a funeral is a service of worship to God being honest about the reality of death, but claiming our hope in the resurrection.

There, in God's presence together, we witness to our faith in the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life ever-lasting. In doing so, the assurance of God's love and salvation in Christ become a ministry, especially to the bereaved. Since a funeral is a service of worship, all that takes place should be consistent with this principle.

## Planning Faithfully, Choosing Wisely

### ***What is the difference between a funeral and memorial service?***

Simply put, at a funeral service the body of the deceased is present, whereas at a memorial service either the deceased's ashes or no remains are present. Both services provide an opportunity to proclaim God's death defeating acts in Christ as we remember all that God has given us in the life of our loved one.

### ***How does the Church view cremation?***

Cremation is an acceptable way for Christians to deal with one's earthly remains. The Scriptures tell us that we are formed "of the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7) and, after death, we shall return "again to dust." (Job 34:15)

### ***If I choose cremation, do I need to secure the services of a Funeral Director?***

It is highly recommend that families work with a Funeral Director. This professional will ease the strain upon family members by coordinating all the details and thus contributing to your wishes being carried out with dignity and honor. Even if cremation is your desire, a Funeral Director handles many details that are not taken care of by the church, the Pastor, or family members. Attempting to save money by not using a Funeral Director is likely to cause confusion and frustration at a time when you most need guidance and support.

### ***Should I make pre-arrangements with a Funeral Director?***

Making the decision to pre-arrange some aspects of your funeral and/or burial is helpful. An appointment with a Funeral Director in advance of death is a wise step to help you decide what you and your family need from the many services available. If you are a family member caring for a dying loved one, making an initial contact now with a Funeral Director can be very helpful and will lessen the decisions and demands you'll face upon death. Consult with family and friends about the selection of a Funeral Director if you are unsure of who to trust with these important details. They are likely to refer you to Funeral Directors they know well and hold in high regard.

### ***How soon after death does a funeral or memorial service take place?***

Funeral services are generally held within three to five days following death, thereby allowing appropriate time for family members and friends to gather for the service. Memorial services can be held at any time. However, waiting for weeks or even months after a death will have a bearing on finding a sense of closure, and this will impact the grief work that follows the death of a loved one. Therefore, it is recommended that a memorial service be held as soon after the death as possible.

If a funeral or memorial service is to be followed by a burial that same day, the schedule of the cemetery workers often dictates that burials be held during normal business hours. Surcharges may apply for weekend burials, and burials are not always available on holidays. It is also possible to have the burial before the service which allows for a late afternoon or evening funeral or memorial service.

Funeral or memorial services are scheduled in collaboration with the schedule of the funeral home, church and pastor availability, all in accordance with the wishes of the family and friends of the deceased.

### ***What fees are associated with a funeral or memorial service at UMCG?***

There are fees or honoraria for the people involved in providing the worship service as well as those who prepare and clean up following the service and reception. A current fee schedule is available from the church office. There is no building rental fee. Payment of these fees are typically coordinated through the Funeral Director.

### ***Who makes arrangements for the musician(s)?***

Church staff and funeral directors work together to secure musicians for your service. Often our regular church organist will play for services at the church. A vocalist may be selected by you or your family or the vocalist can be arranged by the Funeral Director or church.

### ***May we have a visitation at the church the before the service, or must that take place at a funeral home?***

A visitation may take place at UMCG the before the service if there are no other events already scheduled at the church. In addition, a visitation time is sometimes offered at the church prior to the service.

***Who is responsible for producing the order of worship and bulletin?***

After the service has been planned with the presiding Pastor, the church office will produce the bulletin at no cost to your family.

***Who is responsible for submitting the death notice and obituary to the newspaper?***

The Funeral Director will take care of this for you and inform you of associated costs.

***Who plans a reception following the funeral or memorial service?***

If using Fellowship Hall the church office staff will schedule the room and provide for the table and chair setup. Currently, we do not have in house catering or luncheon service. You are welcome to use a catering service of your choice or contact the church office for recommendations of caterers that have experience providing funeral receptions at UMCG.

***What if I desire to have memorials directed to UMCG or other organizations?***

This is an honorable thing to do. UMCG and any other organizations you choose are blessed when memorials are directed to support their ministries and missions. The Funeral Director will be happy to include any memorial designation(s) in the notices about the funeral service.

# FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

When planning your funeral, or a funeral for a loved one, there are many choices to make. Facing some of those choices now will make the process less demanding for your loved ones later. This Funeral Planning Worksheet will lead you through a variety of decisions. After death, your pastor will meet with family members and review your worksheet to form the funeral or memorial service.

This worksheet may be used by:

an individual making their advance plans known, or

a family planning the funeral of a loved one nearing death or recently deceased.

Please supply as much information as you wish to share on any parts of the worksheet. You are welcome to attach additional pages if necessary.

Guide for the Christian Funeral of:

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Full Name: First, Middle (Maiden), Last

Date Completed:

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Upon my death the following people should be contacted to enact these wishes: (Name(s) & Phone Number(s))

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## For the Person Making Advance Plans:

When you have completed this worksheet, please consider sharing it with your Pastor and providing your church with a copy. Your information can be kept in a confidential file available only to the Pastor. It will be used in consultation with your family or whomever you have directed to carry out these wishes upon your death.

Also, after completing the worksheet, consider telling someone you trust about it. You may wish to discuss with them what you have written to be certain that it is clear. Consider providing copies:

To your Family

Attached it to any other advance plans, will or trust plan

To a Funeral Director

Or simply give it to someone you trust with a note that says:

*I have recorded my desires regarding my death and burial. I keep this information in the following place: \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. on file at the church, with my will, etc.). At the time of my death, I ask that you use this information to provide guidance for my family and my church in making arrangements for the funeral I desire. Although this information is being left for safekeeping, I understand that it is not legally binding or enforceable. This worksheet does not make the church or anyone obligated or responsible for the execution of these instructions.*

*With gratitude,*

*Signature and Date*



## For Family Members Making Plans for the Funeral of a Loved One Nearing Death or Recently Deceased:

Please use this worksheet to assist with plans that will honor your loved one's expressed wishes or desires and will reflect his/her values. If you haven't already contacted a Funeral Director, please consider doing so now. The professional services, compassionate care, and guidance they provide will greatly assist you in the days ahead. Family, friends and pastors are available to refer you to Funeral Directors they know well and hold in high regard.

When death occurs, please contact the church office at (630) 232-7120. After-hours our Pastor can be contacted via cell-phone.

Pastor Rob Hamilton - (815) 290-0989

Area Funeral Directors also have personal contact information for your pastor and can contact them on your behalf.

## Visitation

A Visitation is an informal gathering for friends and family to express sympathy, view photographs/video tribute, etc. You are invited to consider UMCG for the visitation when you work with a professional Funeral Director.

### Will a Visitation be Held?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

### Location of Visitation

\_\_\_\_\_ At the Funeral Home  
\_\_\_\_\_ At United Methodist Church of Geneva  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Will the Remains be Present at the Visitation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Casket with Viewing of Body                      \_\_\_\_\_ Closed Casket  
\_\_\_\_\_ Urn with Photograph next to it                      \_\_\_\_\_ No Remains Present

### Time of the Visitation

\_\_\_\_\_ Day/Evening Prior to the Funeral or Memorial Service  
\_\_\_\_\_ Before the Funeral or Memorial Service Only  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Displays

\_\_\_\_\_ Photographic Displays  
\_\_\_\_\_ Mementos (Awards, Certificates, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Bible of the Deceased  
\_\_\_\_\_ Video Tribute (Usually Produced by the Funeral Home)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Christian Worship Service Plans

## Location of Service

United Methodist Church of Geneva  
 Funeral Home  
 Cemetery (Typcially Graveside Service Only)  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e. Care Facility Chapel, etc.)

## Time of the Worship Service

Morning  Afternoon  Evening

## Will the Remains be Present at the Worship Service?

Yes (Casket or Urn with Ashes)  No

## Bible Readings

The pastor who officiates may choose the readings.

My family will choose the readings.

I have chosen the readings as indicated below.

### *Old Testament*

Job 19:23-27  
Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31  
Isaiah 40:28-31  
Isaiah 65:17  
Psalm 23  
Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11  
Psalm 90:1-10, 12  
Psalm 121  
Psalm 130  
Psalm 139:1-12

### *Gospels*

Matthew 5:1-12a  
Luke 23:33, 39-43  
John 11:17-27  
John 14:1-4, 18-19, 25-27

### *New Testament*

Romans 8:14-23, 31-39  
Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12  
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 50, 53-58  
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25, 22:3-5  
Revelation 22:1-5

## Other Readings Selected:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Favorite Biblical Theme or Image**

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### **Readers**

\_\_\_\_\_ The Pastor who officiates will read.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like this/these person(s) to read at my service:

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### **Congregational Hymns**

\_\_\_\_\_ The pastor who officiates may choose the readings.

\_\_\_\_\_ My family will choose the readings.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have chosen the hymns as indicated below.

*Suggested Hymns :*

Hymn of Promise

He Leadeth Me

Love Divine All Loves Excelling

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

For All the Saints

Lift High the Cross

The Lord's My Shepherd

Precious Lord Take My Hand

Other Hymns Selected:

Abide With Me

My Faith Looks up to Thee

Because He Lives

Amazing Grace

How Great Thou Art

This Is My Father's World

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

My Life Flows On

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If possible, I would like this vocalist to sing:

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Vocal Solos Selected (Selection of solos must aim to reflect the spirit of Christian worship.)

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**Remembrances to be Shared During Worship by a Family Member or a Friend** (Please ask speakers to limit their remarks to 3 minutes.)

Yes  No

I would like this person to speak:

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**Will Holy Communion be Celebrated?** (Only available for services at UMCG)

Yes  No

**Desired Expressions of Sympathy**

Flowers

I desire Memorial Gifts in lieu of flowers

**Display Items to be On or Near the Casket/Urn**

Floral Spray and/or additional Flower Bouquets

Bible or Other Symbol of Faith: \_\_\_\_\_

Photograph

Cross

Flag

**Additional Comments Regarding Worship Service Plans:**

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**The officiating pastor has the final authority  
over all acts of Christian worship.**

## Reception Following Worship

**I would like a reception following the service for mutual conversation and consolation.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**I would like the Reception:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Immediately Following the Worship Service; Before Burial

\_\_\_\_\_ Following the Worship Service and After Burial

**Location for the Reception**

\_\_\_\_\_ United Methodist Church of Geneva

\_\_\_\_\_ Other Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Reception**

\_\_\_\_\_ Dessert and Coffee/Beverage

\_\_\_\_\_ Light Meal

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Meal

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments Regarding Reception Plans:**

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## Funeral Home

### Preferred Company

(Specific arrangements in advance at the funeral home of your choice are encouraged.)

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### Have Pre-Arrangements Been Made?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

### Disposition of the Body

\_\_\_\_\_ Embalm Body (Usually required if unrefrigerated over 24 hours before burial.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Cremate Body Shortly After Death

\_\_\_\_\_ Cremate Body After Visitation and/or Service

### Burial Wishes

\_\_\_\_\_ Public

\_\_\_\_\_ Private. Limited to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Bury Casket/Urn in Cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(This might include keeping ashes with a family member, spreading ashes at a favorite spot, etc)

### Bury Casket or Urn

\_\_\_\_\_ Before Visitation

\_\_\_\_\_ After Visitation but Before Funeral Service

\_\_\_\_\_ After Funeral Service but Before Luncheon Reception

\_\_\_\_\_ After Luncheon Reception

\_\_\_\_\_ At a Later Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grave Marker

I have made arrangements for a grave marker with this company:

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I would like the following to be included on the grave marker:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: (birth/death dates)

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Maiden name:

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Bible Verse:

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Graphic:

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Other:

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**Eligible for Military Honors**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Names of Pall Bearers** (Six Pall Bearers needed only when there is a coffin for burial.)

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**Cemetery**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have made arrangements for my burial.

Name of Cemetery

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Location of Cemetery

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\_\_\_\_\_ I do not have arrangements for my burial.

I suggest the following arrangements:

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I have arrangements for a memorial marker with the following company:

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# Obituary

Full Name (including Maiden Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date and Location

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Names (including Mother's Maiden Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Baptism Date, Church, and Location

\_\_\_\_\_  
Confirmation Date, Church, and Location

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status, Marriage Date, and Name of Spouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other Marriages/Divorces/Spouse(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Children

\_\_\_\_\_  
Additional Next of Kin

## Personal History

On the following blank pages, list additional information including place(s) of residence, special events, hobbies/interests, schools attended & degrees received, accomplishments, memberships, employment history, volunteer activities, military service, etc. Include as many full names, city of residence, birth and death dates, etc. as possible. All this information is important to your family. This information does not need to be prepared in paragraph form. Add pages, if necessary.

## Important Documents and Advisors

It is important that survivors be able to locate vital records and important documents. Before your death, you should have a current will/living trust and related health care directives which express your wishes on important personal, financial, medical, and charitable issues for your survivors. If you need information regarding estate planning, planned giving, and/or the inclusion of a Christian preamble for your will, please consult your legal or financial advisor.

Location and Date of Will/Living Trust

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Location of my Five Wishes Document or Living Will

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Attorney/Will Preparer

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Power of Attorney/Financial

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Power of Attorney for Health Care

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Executor of Will/Estate

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Guardian (for Minor Children)

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Additional Comments:

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