

Funerals and Memorial Services

A Guide for Preparation and Planning

This booklet is designed to encourage each of our members to participate in personal funeral planning as much as possible. Provisions are made by the pastors to assist in this planning process.

Not only is the information likely to be of great help to the pastors and to families, but it allows individuals the opportunity of making crucial decisions about their own funeral plans. Pre-planning can relieve the burden of family members at the time of the death of a loved one. Pre-planning can also allow members to have the option of leaving clear instructions for family members and can also allow the member to select their favorite scriptures, hymns, music, etc.

Copies of this booklet are available in the church office. If you have questions, please contact one of our pastors at 205-879-1737.

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In the Event of Death

When death is near or has occurred, the clergy should be notified immediately in order that they may help those grieving. If the death occurs after hours or on the weekend, a family member may call the “minister on call.” This name and number is always listed in the weekly newsletter, Tidings. Lisa Elliott at Lelliott@trinitybirmingham.com may also be notified and she can notify one of the ministers.

If the death occurs during a week day, a family member should call the church office at 205-879-1737 and someone will be able to assist the caller.

The pastors of the church seek to know of those in our church family who are dying and in need of comfort and counsel. In situations of death or impending death, the pastors, by being involved early, can help with the difficult transition decisions regarding funeral homes, disposition of the body, and funeral or memorial service arrangements.

Funerals and Memorial Services

Location of Service

The church is the appropriate place for a Christian funeral or memorial service. We worship in the church on Sundays; we baptize our children in the church; celebrate marriage in the church and gather at the Lord's Table. We are surrounded by symbols of our faith in the church. The building itself provides a reminder that we are surrounded by a "cloud of witnesses." (Hebrews 12:1)

Our main sanctuary and Mouat Chapel (for small services) are both available for services. Our pastors are also available to conduct the service at the funeral home or graveside.

Visitation and Service

If the service is to be held at the church, visitation may be scheduled for the evening before the service or on the day of the service. Visitation will take place in the Large Parlor. Trinity's Joseph Ministers will be on hand to guide and direct those who attend the visitation and the service.

For clarification, a memorial service has no remains present; a funeral has remains present.

Funerals and Memorial Services

The Funeral Is a Worship Service

The service will be under the direction of one of our pastors with others properly invited to participate as requested. Burial of the casket or urn or inurnment in the Trinity Columbarium may take place before or after the service, or can be done at a later date. Arrangements for purchasing a niche in the Trinity United Methodist Church columbarium are made through the church administrator, Laura Ellis, at 205-879-1737.

The funeral or memorial service is called a service of worship because it is a liturgical service to glorify God and to console the living. Although thankfulness is to be expressed to God for the life and witness of the deceased, the focus of worship is always upon God. The pastors will provide a basic outline for the service to help you in the planning of the service.

Our Director of Music Ministry will also be available to help with the planning of music for the service and also to help procure musicians.

Typically, we ask that the family come in to plan the service at least a day or two before the service. This enables our church staff to make plans for our Joseph Ministers, the printing of bulletins and the procurement of musicians.

Funerals and Memorial Services

Placement of Casket or Urn

The casket will be placed in the front of the sanctuary. Should a family so desire, the pall that belongs to the church may be used as a covering. A "pall" is a large cloth covering. The pall is a symbol of the fact that in Christ we are "clothed" in grace. In Christ, we put off the old self and put on a new creation.

Some families choose to order flowers to be placed on the casket. This is acceptable, also.

If an urn is used, a small table will be placed in the front of the sanctuary. The urn may remain uncovered or we have a small pall that may be used to cover the urn.

One appropriate flower arrangement may be placed on the altar. If the funeral/memorial service is on a Monday, the flowers from Sunday worship may often be used. Other flower arrangements will be placed in the narthex and/or in the parlor.

Interment/Inurnment

One of our pastors will accompany the family to the cemetery or columbarium for a brief service of committal.

Bulletins

It is a privilege for our church staff to provide the worship bulletin for services held at the church or at the funeral home. Bulletins are not provided for graveside only services. During the planning process, our ministers will gather the information from the family regarding hymn selections, special music, those presenting a witness, etc. We offer one standard bulletin cover and you may choose the one you like. We offer bulletins printed on a fine quality paper.

Funerals and Memorial Services

Fees

The clergy staff at Trinity United Methodist Church considers it an honor and a privilege to be a part of the funeral/memorial service. Should a family desire to give an honorarium, they may do so. There is also no charge for the use of the sanctuary or Mouat Chapel.

These are the fees:

Organist	\$125 - \$350
Sound Technician	\$125 (if on Friday or Saturday – no services on Sunday)
Special Musicians	\$125 - \$350 per musician
Maintenance	\$100 (if on Saturday – no services on Sunday)
Valet parking	\$50 (per occasion – only if available)

These fees may be paid to Trinity United Methodist Church and will be disbursed to the correct individuals.