

**Bereavement Support**  
**Southminster Presbyterian Church**  
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**The Christian Funeral**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes our attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death we affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. We do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. Southminster is here to help you in the trying days following the death of your family member. Whether you have walked the journey of grief before or are experiencing close loss for the first time, every death is difficult. It is often a time of uncertainty, confusion and disbelief. These feelings are normal and we are here to listen and help you make needed arrangements.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. Psalm 23: 1-2*

*I lift up my eyes to the hills From where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2*

**Funeral or Memorial service**

The Christian funeral service, before the committal of the body, or the memorial service, afterward, is a service of worship. The service is ordinarily held in the church sanctuary in order to join the service to the church is continuing life and witness to the resurrection. This service may be observed on any day. If the family so desires, the service may be held at the funeral home or graveside, or in some cases in another facility.

The service shall be under the direction of the pastor. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service, at the request of the family and at the discretion of the pastor. The pastor will ordinarily meet with the family of the deceased prior to the funeral to speak together of the life of the deceased, to discuss plans for the service, and to pray.

This service may be observed before or after the committal of the body. In order that attention in the service be directed to God, if a casket is present, it ordinarily is closed at the time of the service. The worship service is complete in itself. Civic or military rites shall be conducted separately, at the end of the service of worship.

Often, the funeral director furnishes ushers. If this is not the case or, if a funeral home is not used for the Memorial Service, the church will provide ushers.

For services held in the church, bulletins will be provided, upon the family's request.

### Music

Southminster has a staff of professional musicians who may be called upon to provide music during the service (i.e. organist, vocal soloist, etc). Recorded music may be played during the services, upon the discretion of the officiating pastor.

If you wish to utilize the music staff at Southminster, please let the officiating pastor know as soon as possible so that he or she may discuss options and costs.

The church organist will play for the funeral or memorial service at Southminster, or if unavailable, will find a replacement. Upon request, we may be able to arrange for a soloist to sing a special hymn or song. If you have a specific selection of music you would like to use, please let the officiating pastor know as soon as possible. Because we do not have full-time staff musicians, there is a cost for each musician used in a memorial service. The cost will be determined in consultation with the Director of Music Ministries and will depend upon the number of musicians required and the amount of music to be prepared and performed.

### Flowers

Flowers may be delivered to the church prior to the service. Please consider what you would like to have done with these flowers afterwards. You may leave some at the grave site, take others home, or leave a bouquet for worship to be acknowledged the following Sunday.

### Committal

Members and friends of the family of the one who has died will normally gather at the graveside or crematorium for a service of farewell, which is to be conducted with simplicity, dignity, and brevity. The service includes readings from Scripture, prayers, words of committal, and a blessing, reflecting the reality of death, entrusting the one who has died to the care of God, and bearing witness to faith in the resurrection from the dead.

A family who has chosen cremation may wish to inurn their loved ones' remains in the columbarium located in the chapel. To discuss this option, please talk to the officiating pastor.

### **Reception following the services**

The church offers a reception for those who attend services in the sanctuary. A cookies and coffee reception or light buffet luncheon will be provided as a ministry of our church. Families will be asked to estimate the number of guests expected.

### Dessert Buffet:

A variety of cookies, brownies, coffee, tea, lemonade, and water

### Light Luncheon:

Sandwiches (ham with cheese and turkey), chips, dessert, coffee, tea, lemonade, and water

For those seeking a fuller meal, catering services may be contracted with an outside provider, and the meal may be held at the church.

### **Fees**

There is a \$50 fee for services of building staff, if their presence is required (for receptions and services outside of customary hours and/or duties). No fees are charged by the pastoral staff for any aspect of the funeral or memorial service. It is customary, however, to offer an honorarium to Pastors involved in the service. There is a fee for each professional musician, including the organist, involved in the service (see Music, above).

### **Memorial Gifts**

Families may choose to honor a loved one through memorial gifts. Memorial gifts in the name of the deceased will be gratefully received by the church in accordance with the church's financial policies. Gifts received will be acknowledged to both the donor and the family of the deceased. Contributions not otherwise designated will be directed to general ministry areas of Southminster. The officiating pastor is available to aid families in this process.

### **Healing**

Healing from loss takes time. In the weeks and months ahead you may wish to consider the support of a Stephen Minister or a grief support group. Know you may contact one of the pastors at any time.

Southminster joins in your sorrow.  
You are in our prayers.

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if 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... Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:1-3; 27*

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Southminster Google Docs