

Funerals and Memorial Services: Policies and Information

First United Church of Christ
300 Union Street, Northfield, MN 55057

About First UCC

First United Church of Christ is a progressive Christian voice in Northfield. We are bound together by a covenant and a common purpose, not by uniformity of belief or doctrine. And we are part of the United Church of Christ, a dynamic Protestant denomination that has often been a leader in extending the Good News of the Gospel to all people.

The sanctuary in our historic building seats 300 people, with the possibility of an additional 50 folding chairs if needed. The pews are arranged in a semi-circle with a center aisle and several side aisles. We have a magnificent pipe organ and a state-of-the-art sound system.

An elevator serves all levels of the building, and the main floor rest rooms are handicapped accessible. Our cheerful, well-equipped nursery is available for childcare if needed.

Planning the Service

Traditionally, *funerals* have the casket or urn present in the sanctuary, and *memorial services* do not. Family members and/or friends are invited to meet with the minister to plan the service. While some arrangements are typically made through a funeral director, the memorial service or funeral itself is a worship service, under the direction of the minister.

The following information will be helpful in planning the service:

- Important facts about the decedent, including dates and places of birth and death, names of spouse, children and other survivors, and information about career and hobbies.
- Ideas for hymns and/or other music. The music staff will be glad to provide suggestions.
- Ideas for scripture readings or other passages meaningful to the decedent or to family members. The minister will be glad to provide suggestions.
- Names of family members and/or friends who might be included as readers, speakers or musicians.
- The names of charities to which memorial gifts might be directed.
- Other preferences or ideas about the service.

If there are young children in the family, or otherwise especially touched by this death, the minister may suggest a "Children's Time" as part of the service.

Pictures and Mementos

We provide tables on which you can display pictures or other mementos. Generally these are placed in the Assembly Room where people can enjoy them during the fellowship time after the service. If you have any large or unusual items, please let us know ahead of time.

Graveside Services

If the casket or urn is present, the service at the church is often followed by a brief graveside service of committal. If you prefer, the graveside service can precede the church service, or it can be held privately at another time.

The Memorial Garden

The church maintains a small courtyard memorial garden in which the cremated remains of members and friends may be scattered. Individual sites are not marked; a memorial plaque inside the church names all who are interred in the garden. Further information is available from the church office.

A Note About Funeral Directors

Some families choose not to work with a funeral home, especially if their loved one is being cremated. For memorial services held without the assistance of a funeral director, we have prepared a checklist to help make sure all bases are covered. Please ask at the office for a copy of this document.

Other Arrangements

There is normally a **printed bulletin** for the service. We ask the family to provide a photo for the cover.

We generally make an **audio recording** of the service, which we give to the family.

If you expect **flowers** to be delivered to the church, please make arrangements for the church to be open when they are delivered. Please plan to take the flowers with you after the service. In some cases, a few arrangements may stay for Sunday worship or decoration in the Assembly Room. Please consult with the minister.

Refreshments

The church's Special Functions Committee is pleased to provide and serve food for a time of refreshment and fellowship following the service.

Typically, cakes, bars, and/or cookies accompanied by hot and cold beverages are made available in our Assembly Room. A representative of the Special Functions committee will be in contact with a designated family member to decide about menu choices.

If you would like to have more substantial fare (sandwiches, fruit or vegetable trays, salads, catered

items, etc.), the committee is very willing to prepare and serve this; however, we ask that the family cover the actual cost of these additional items (more details below).

Financial Matters

There is no charge for the use of the church for a funeral or memorial service.

The Special Functions Committee and the church community offer beverages and cookies as part of our ministry to you, your family, and friends. Donations are not expected, but would be very welcome for supplies and kitchen equipment.

If you have requested sandwiches or other refreshments, please reimburse the Committee for the actual cost of the groceries. The church office can provide you with the correct amount after the service. You may leave a check in the church office made out to First UCC with "[decedent's name] reception" in the memo, or ask the funeral director to take care of this for you.

The funeral director generally arranges for the musicians, sound technician, and the minister(s) to receive honoraria for their participation. If no funeral director is involved, or if you have any questions or concerns, please ask the minister.

A Final Word

We consider it an honor to conduct funeral and memorial services, and we will do our best to be sensitive to a variety of theological beliefs and customs. Please let us know of any special circumstances that require our attention.

The minister is available for grief counseling with those who are affected by the death and will make referrals to other helping professionals as appropriate.

We also extend our invitation to worship with us at 10:30 am on Sunday mornings.

Other Notes