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FORT WALTON BEACH  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Connecting. Teaching. Living.

## “Living Fully, Dying Well”

*End of Life Giving | How to Prepare a Christian Funeral*

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# *Section One: Planning a Christian Funeral*

## A SERVICE OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

(Pgs. 139-141 UM Book of Worship)

This service is found in UMH 870-75. It is a service of Christian worship suitable for funerals and memorial services. It should be held in the church if at all possible and at a time when members of the congregation can be present. If the service is to be held in a church and led by anyone other than the pastor of that congregation, it should be done at the invitation of that pastor. This service is intended for use with the body of the deceased present, but it can be adapted for use at memorial services or other occasions.

Use of the term Service of Death and Resurrection is not intended to discourage use of the more familiar terms —funeral, burial of the dead, or memorial service. Funeral is appropriate for a service with the body of the deceased present. Burial of the Dead is appropriate for a service where the remains of the deceased are buried. Memorial Service is appropriate when the body of the deceased is not present. Service of Death and Resurrection was selected as being appropriate to any of the wide variety of situations in which this service might be used. It clearly expresses the twofold nature of what is done: the facts of death and bereavement are honestly faced, and the gospel of resurrection is celebrated in the context of God's Baptismal Covenant with us in Christ.

When circumstances make the service as it stands inappropriate, the pastor may make adaptations, using the Additional Resources for Services of Death and Resurrection and other available resources. Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the pastor. The organist or person in charge of the music should be consulted and work with the family in all decisions on music selection. Traditionally, pastors have not accepted an honorarium for this service when the deceased was a member of the parish.

The coffin may be covered with a pall (a large cloth with a cross and other Christian symbolism), an act whose meaning is declared by the words: "As in baptism Name put on Christ, so in Christ may Name be clothed with glory." The same pall is used in a congregation for all funerals and is a witness that everyone is equal before the table of the Lord. For each service the pall should be clean and free of wrinkles, and flowers should never be placed on top of it. Alternatively, the coffin may be covered with a flag, or flowers may be placed on it. The service itself should be seen as a part of the larger ministry of the Church at death. At several times during this ministry acts of worship are especially appropriate.

1. In ministry with the dying, prayers and other acts of worship are crucial. (See Ministry with the Dying and Ministry Immediately Following Death.)
2. The pastor should be notified immediately upon the death of a member or constituent of the congregation. Prayer and other acts of worship are crucial with the bereaved at the time of death (see Ministry Immediately Following Death). The pastor may have an important role in notifying others of the death.
3. Plans for the service and all other ministries following a death should be made in consultation with the family and subject to the approval of the pastor. If the family requests that there be military, fraternal, or other rites in addition to the Service of Death and Resurrection, the pastor should carefully plan the sequence and interrelationship of these services so that the service is not interrupted with other rites, and so that its integrity is supported and not compromised.
4. Facing the body of the deceased and closing the coffin bring home to the mourners the reality of death and are times when the support of pastor and Christian community is important. A variety of supportive ministries by church, family, friends, and other organizations may take place between the time of death and the time of the service; see A Family Hour or Wake. Children should be invited to be present at all these services.
5. The Service of Death and Resurrection itself, commonly called the funeral or memorial service, brings into focus the whole ministry of the Church at death. It presupposes that the encounter with the body of the deceased and the closing of the coffin have already taken place, and for this reason the coffin remains closed throughout the service and thereafter.
6. The committal service is not found in UMH because the congregation cannot be expected to carry hymnals to the graveside, but it is found here following the Service of Death and Resurrection. The committal may take place immediately following the funeral, or it may be a separate service at another time and place.
7. Reentry into the community by the chief mourners following the service takes time and can be facilitated by the supportive ministry of the Church. If the service itself does not include Holy Communion, it is sometimes helpful for the pastor to take communion to the family, perhaps at the first visit following the service.
8. Continuing support of representatives of the community, including ministries of prayer and worship as appropriate, is essential in the long-term process by which those who mourn find healing.
9. Recurring memorial acts and services are occasions both of healing and of celebration. Mourners are especially open to supportive ministries on such occasions as Christmas, holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries of marriage or of death. Celebration of All Saints and other annual memorial services can also be particularly helpful (see Memorial Day, For a Victim or Survivor of Crime or Oppression, and An Annual Conference Memorial Service).
10. It is essential that ongoing congregational life in its totality be centered in the Christian gospel, which is a message of death and resurrection. The way in which persons deal with all death—past, present, and future—will depend upon how central this gospel has become in their lives.

## WORSHIP PLANNING GUIDE

- A funeral is a service of Christian worship to glorify God and to celebrate our faith in the resurrection. Funeral worship serves to comfort the bereaved and to give thanks to God for His unique creation in the person who has died.
- Any fraternal or military rites should be coordinated with the pastor who is officiating.
- Since Christian worship is a corporate, shared activity, the service should be planned to involve all persons present, including family members. (Hymns; Prayers; Affirmation of Faith; Doxology)
- A "Service of Death and Resurrection" is found on page 871 of The United Methodist Hymnal. Music for a Christian funeral should be selected in terms of its theological and musical appropriateness.

### Hymns

A Mighty Fortress is Our God	Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah
Abide with Me	He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	Hymn of Promise
Be Still, My Soul	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Be Thou My Vision	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

### Scriptures

Old Testament Lesson - One of the following lessons may be read:

Isaiah 40:1-8	Prepare the way for the LORD
Isaiah 40:28-31	Renew strength; wings like eagles
Exodus 14:5-14, 19-31	Israel's deliverance
Isaiah 43:1-31a, 5-7, 13, 15, 18-19, 25; 44:6, 8a	God will deliver
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	Hymn of Joy

New Testament Lesson – One of the following lessons may be read:

1 Corinthians 15:1-2a, 12, 16-18, 20, 35-38a, 42b-44, 54-55, 57	Resurrection; spiritual body; death swallowed up in victory
Revelation 21:1-7	New heaven and new earth
Romans 8:1-2, 11, 14, 17-18, 28, 31-32, 35-39	Resurrection: If God is for us, who can be against us?
2 Corinthians 4:5-18	Glory in God
Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:1-10	Alive in Christ
1 Peter 1:3-9, 13, 21-25	Blessed by God

Psalm, Canticle or Hymn:

Psalm 42	As a deer longs for flowing streams
Psalm 43	You are the God in whom I take refuge.
Psalm 46	God is our refuge and strength.
Psalm 90	From everlasting to everlasting
Psalm 91	My God in whom I trust.
Psalm 103	Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Psalm 116	I will lift up the cup of salvation.
Psalm 121	I lift up my eyes to the hills.
Psalm 139	O Lord, you have searched me.
Psalm 145	The Lord is gracious and merciful.
Psalm 146	Praise the Lord, O my soul.
Canticle of Hope (UMH 734)	God shall wipe away all our tears.
Canticle of Remembrance (UMH 652)	The souls of the righteous

And, of course, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm!

Gospel Lesson – One of the following lessons may be read:

John 14:1-4, 18-19, 25-27	Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Luke 24:13-35	Jesus at Emmaus
John 11:1-4, 20-27, 32-35, 38-44	The raising of Lazarus

Favorite Poem or Quotations of Deceased or Family Members are Appropriate.

- Tennyson’s “Crossing the Bar”
- Bryant’s “Thanatopsis”
- Kipling’s “L’Envol”

The United Methodist Hymnal states in the "Service of Death and Resurrection on page 874," A (brief) sermon may be preached, proclaiming the gospel in the face of death. It may lead into or include the following.

- Naming: The life and death of the deceased may be gathered up by the reading of a memorial or appropriate statement, or in other ways; by the pastor or others.
- Witness: Family, friends, and members of the congregation may briefly voice their thankfulness to God for the grace they have received in the life of the deceased and their Christian faith and joy. Signs of faith, hope, and love may be exchanged.

## LOCATION AND LOGISTICS PLANS

There are many issues that face us today, but there is no issue more relevant to all of us than the issue of making advance plans for our own funerals, as well as for our loved ones. The cost of a funeral for the average American today is the third most expensive thing in a lifetime, next to the cost of a home and automobile. The funeral home industry in America today is a \$15,000,000,000 business.

- The average cost of a cremation and urn is around \$5,500 in the state of Florida.
- The average cost of a traditional funeral (burial/plot/funeral home/marker) is around \$10,700.

The starting place for planning any Christian funeral is in the realm of spiritual preparation. However, there are several decisions regarding practical matters that could save our loved one's countless hours of stress in grief situations if we would simply make some specific plans with clear instructions. Too often, we forget that many major decisions about a funeral are made within a few minutes or hours following the death of a loved one, simply because these decisions cannot be postponed. Individuals in a state of shock or grief are in no condition to make important decisions on a moment's notice. Considering this, there are several practical decisions that need to be made in advance. If not, families will waste thousands of dollars that could have easily been avoided.

- Choice of funeral home:
  - Emerald Coast, McLaughlin Mortuary, Davis-Watkins, and Gainer-Pollard Memorial.
  - Following a death, one simple telephone call to the funeral home, even in advance of a family's first visit, can reserve for you a time of your choice for the funeral service. However, the funeral home must still coordinate the chosen time with the cemetery or the church.
- Choice of cemetery:
  - Beal Memorial or others in the area
- Choice of cremation:
  - Almost 70% of Floridians choose cremation. Some families choose to have the cremains in an urn placed within an engraved niche within a columbarium. Some families want the ashes scattered at a favorite spot in the life of the deceased and the name of the deceased.
- Choice of casket and vault:
  - The emphasis for Christian families is on the resurrection, not on the preservation of earthly remains.
  - If you choose a casket or a vault, you don't have to spend a lot of money. Something simple will honor them just as well.



- Choice of donation of body or organs to medical science:
  - The Joshua Abbott Organ and Tissue Donor Registry allows individuals to register their authorization to donate specific or all organs and tissues upon their death. If you are under the age of 18, you can register, but your parents or legal guardian will make the final decision about donation at the appropriate time. You should tell your parents or legal guardian your decision to enroll on the registry. <https://register.donatelifeflorida.org/register/?lang=en>
  - In addition to online registrations, you may enroll on Florida's organ and tissue donor registry when you apply for or renew your driver license or ID card at your local driver license office or tax collector's office. If you are unable to enroll online or via the driver license or tax collector's office, you can contact Donate Life Florida, and we will mail a registration form to you.
  - For more information contact Donate Life Florida at P.O. Box 1685 Sebring, FL 33871, 941-308-1019 and email at [contactus@donatelifeflorida.org](mailto:contactus@donatelifeflorida.org)
  - Consent must be given by the legal next of kin for organs to be donated.
- Choice of place:
  - Church; Chapel of Funeral Home; Graveside; Columbarium. Will interment be private? Will it precede the service? Will the casket be closed? Graveside services in extreme heat, or rain should never exceed 5 minutes. If the family members want a longer service, the service should be moved inside.
- Choice of designated memorials or flowers:
  - Church; Local Charities; Colleges and Universities; Scholarships
- Choice of pallbearers
  - Selection of pallbearers, both active and honorary, do not have to be printed in the obituary. Honorary pallbearers often include organizations and clubs that were very special to the deceased.
- Choice of obituary:
  - All obituaries must be channeled through the funeral home. Most newspapers charge per line with an online fee per day. A photo is extra.
- Choice of visitation:
  - Where will the visitation be held? If there are specific hours set for the visitation, it is wise not to exceed two hours. Receiving lines for a grieving family, following the tragic loss of a loved one, should be limited to only a very small number. If not, it will be impossible for everyone to have an opportunity to speak to the family at the visitation.
  - In olden days, most families chose to have a visitation at the funeral home in the evening before the service on the following day. However, there is a movement now towards having visitation one hour before at the site where the service will be held.
  - Families may have an escorted processional from the site of the service to the site of the burial.
- Practical things to remember:
  - Leave clear, specific instructions with an updated will. Note the key and place of a safe-deposit box. Complete "Love Letter to the Family." Seek the advice of professional attorneys, CPA's, bankers, financial planners. Seek to be reconciled to God and others.

# FUNERAL PLANNING SHEET

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

Funeral Home:

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Funeral (church or funeral home): \_\_\_\_\_

Method of interment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and location of interment: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional clergy: \_\_\_\_\_

Pallbearers (names and telephone numbers)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Scriptures: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Hymns/Songs: \_\_\_\_\_

Other music suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Memorial giving (individual or family desires): \_\_\_\_\_

## Section Two: A Love Letter to my Family

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MY FAMILY

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Family,

To make things easier, I have written this letter to provide you with information that will be necessary for when the time arises.

- My Social Security No. is: \_\_\_\_\_
- My Driver's License No. is: \_\_\_\_\_
- My Passport No. is: \_\_\_\_\_
  - My passport can be found at: \_\_\_\_\_

### Important Funeral Information

Funeral Home:	Prepaid Plan:
Name:	Cemetery:
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Plot/Drawer #:
Email:	Information can be found:

I am an organ donor. My donor information is located: \_\_\_\_\_

I do want to be cremated. Crematory: \_\_\_\_\_

I do not want to be cremated.

Minister/Rabbi to perform the service: \_\_\_\_\_

Pall bearers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Special Requests

Obituary reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Tombstone engraving: \_\_\_\_\_

Organs for donation: \_\_\_\_\_

In lieu flowers, please ask for donations to: \_\_\_\_\_

Other special requests: \_\_\_\_\_

## FAMILY HISTORY

I was born in \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

My parents were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

My maternal grandparents were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

My paternal grandparents were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

My children are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ . Born \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Born \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Born \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . Born \_\_\_\_\_.

I have no children.

I have detailed information on my family's history. It is located at \_\_\_\_\_.

It is my desire that the persons having the above powers of attorney act on my behalf rather than a guardian being appointed, unless my family believes guardianship is necessary.

I have attached a list of the people I want to receive my personal property when I die.

My medical directive states that in the event of my incapacity I do want to be kept home as long as possible, considering the cost.

I have a divorce decree which may require that certain payments be made after I am disabled, or my death. The document is located \_\_\_\_\_.

## INSURANCE INFORMATION

I have the following Life Insurance policies. Please check with each company and determines:

- If the policy allows for pre-payment of death benefits in case of disability
- If the policy allows you to stop making premium payments in the case of disability.

Type	Owner	Beneficiary	Face Amount	Company	Phone	Location of policy

I have the following (other) insurance policies.

Type of Insurance	Company	Policy #	Location of Policy
Disability			
Long Term Care			
Health Insurance			
Umbrella			
Homeowners			
Auto			
Other			

## GENERAL DOCUMENTS

I have executed each of the following documents and you can find them where noted:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Date Signed</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Will</b>		
<b>Medical Power of Attorney</b>		
<b>Medical Directive</b>		
<b>General Power of Attorney</b>		
<b>Living Trust</b>		
<b>Insurance Trust</b>		
<b>Charitable Trust</b>		
<b>Minor's Trust</b>		
<b>Pre-Nuptial Agreement</b>		
<b>Post-Nuptial Agreement</b>		
<b>Citizenship Papers</b>		
<b>Retirement Plan Beneficiary Designation</b>		

I have appointed (in the above documents) the following persons to act on my behalf if I become disabled.

<b>Power of Attorney of by Assets</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>
<b>Power of Attorney for Medical Decisions</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>
<b>Guardian over my property</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>
<b>Guardian over my person</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>

## ASSETS

Here is a list of all my investment accounts.

<b>Custodian</b>	<b>Account #</b>	<b>Title of Account</b>	<b>Custodian Phone</b>	<b>Location</b>

Here is a list of other investments I own.

<b>Investment</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Location</b>

## INCOME

I work at:

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>

I have the following benefits where I worked:

<b>Deferred Compensation</b>	<b>Stock Ownership</b>	<b>Stock Options</b>	<b>Cafeteria Plan</b>	<b>Other</b>

I am an owner of the following business:

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Ownership Percentage</b>	<b>Partners (with phone #)</b>

I have the following benefits through my business:

<b>Deferred Compensation</b>	<b>Buy/Sell Agreements</b>	<b>Stock Ownership</b>	<b>Stock Options</b>	<b>Cafeteria Plan</b>	<b>Other</b>

I am retired and have the following pension income:

<b>Company</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Survivor Benefit</b>

I receive monthly income from the following annuity(s):

<b>Company</b>	<b>Policy #</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Phone</b>

Other Income:

<b>Source</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>



I am entitled to Veterans benefits due to the following military service:

Description of Military Service	Years of Service	Veterans Administration Contact Information

## LIABILITIES

Here is a list of our liabilities, including a contact and phone number of each, as well as the location of any related documents.

Liability	Contact	Phone	Location of Documents

I presently carry the following credit cards:

Company Name	Card #

## WHOM TO CONTACT

If I am in critical condition or if I pass away, please notify the people on this list. This list could include friends with whom you have close relationships that your family may not know.

Name	Phone	Email	Relationship

This is a great place to list important health care professionals with whom you have relationships and accounts. You could also list your pet's veterinarian's information here, if applicable.

Health Care Provider	Address	Phone	Name
(General Care Doctor)			
(Dentist)			
(Eye Doctor)			

Some of the people you may need to contact are:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Attorney</b>				
<b>Insurance Agent</b>				
<b>Accountant</b>				
<b>Mortgage Holder</b>				
<b>Financial Planner</b>				
<b>Other</b>				

This is a good place to list account such as cell & home phone provider, internet provider, utilities accounts, car make/model & VIN#, car payment info, email login, insurance, bank account and other important accounts that your family would need to access in case of emergency.

**\*\*Note that if important login credentials are shared here, this binder should be kept under lock & key\*\***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Account</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Login</b>

## DESIRES FOR MY FAMILY

When I am gone, I hope my family will learn from my experiences:

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I believe that the most important things in life are:

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The most important thing I have done in my life is:

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It is my hope that my family will use its inheritance from me to accomplish the following goals in their lives:

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How I would like to be remembered:

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I have signed this Family Love Letter this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

This document is not intended to replace my will or other estate planning documents signed by me. However, it is my express desire that each family member, Power Holder, Executor, Trustee and Guardian will use this Family Love Letter and the other documents signed by me in making any discretionary decisions for me and my family.