

# Funeral Handbook

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At Bethany Church, we believe that a Christian funeral, burial, or memorial service is a service of worship “in which glory is given to God for His care of the bereaved, for His trustworthy providence, and for the hope God’s people have in Jesus Christ. The focus of the burial service is God who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and given believers an earnest appreciation of their own resurrection. It is a time for the reaffirmation of the Church’s faith and a time for expressing joy in the assurance of eternal life.” (EPC Book of Worship, §6-1).

We hope that this information will help in making the days ahead as simple and as clear as they can be. We ask that God would give you His comfort and strength during this most difficult time.

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# 7 Steps for a Funeral or Memorial Service

## Step 1: Contact a Funeral Home

The first step in the process when you have lost a loved one is to contact a funeral home or mortuary. You are welcome to contact any funeral home that you would like. When you call, feel free to inquire about any costs and fees they may have before making your decision.

Ordinarily, a funeral home will be involved with all funeral or memorial services at Bethany Church; however, exceptions to this may be discussed and communicated through the officiating Bethany Church pastor. The church office normally prepares and provides bulletins, while the funeral home ensures the distribution of the bulletins, the proper placement of floral arrangements, and handles ushering needs during the service.

Once you have decided on a funeral home, it will be helpful to schedule a time to meet at the funeral home where you can sit down and discuss decisions pertaining to an obituary, burial or cremation, and service preferences. It is not necessary, but you are welcome to invite the pastor to join you when you meet with the funeral home.

## Step 2: Contact the Church

Please let Bethany Church know about your loss as soon as possible by contacting or having the funeral home or mortuary you've selected call the church office (610.789.2486). If no one is able to immediately take your call, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Bethany Church hosts funeral services for members, visitors, and members of the community at no charge. We will make every effort to accommodate your desired date and time.

The service will normally be conducted in the Sanctuary, which can accommodate 200-225 people. Weekend services may be held, but there may be some additional constraints due to staffing considerations and previously scheduled weddings and activities. Services are normally held in the morning at 10 or 10:30 a.m. or in the afternoon at 2, 2:30, or 3 p.m. You are welcome to request that the officiating Bethany Church pastor invite outside pastors and guests to participate in various aspects of the service.

## **Step 3: Meet with a Pastor**

Bethany Church will provide a space for you to meet with the pastor or you are free to have the pastor come and meet with you at your home. Typically, this meeting is for immediate family, although it is not inappropriate to invite anyone who you may want to participate in the service to this meeting. All participants in a service of worship at Bethany Church come at the invitation of the officiating Bethany Church pastor. At this meeting, the pastor will walk you through all of the various elements of the service, including preferences regarding musicians, vocalists, and any video recordings you may desire.

### **Musicians and Vocalists**

Music before, during, and after the service will be appropriate for a service of worship. Bethany Church can put you in contact with a number of talented musicians and vocalists who may be available for hire for the service. Outside musicians and vocalists may be made in consultation with the pastor. Outside organists must be approved by the Bethany organist.

### **Tech/Audio and Video**

A Bethany Church Tech/AV technician is required for each service in order to monitor the sound board, manage slides, videos, and cd-music, and operate the LiveStream equipment. Videos or photograph slideshows may be shown in the Sanctuary before, during, or after the service with approval from the pastor. Families are encouraged to bring in and have any videos or slideshows tested on the Bethany Church equipment by noon on the business day before the service. Anything brought in after this time may not be able to be shown at Bethany Church. If the family would like, a LiveStream video of the service will be made available free of charge. Please let the pastor know if you would like for the LiveStream video to be made public or private on the Bethany EPC YouTube channel ([youtube.bethanyepc.org](https://youtube.bethanyepc.org)).

## **Step 4: Visitation/Viewing**

The family will be provided with access to the church building for up to 2 hours before and after the service. A visitation/viewing time is normally held at least 1 hour before the scheduled service time. Approximately 10-15 minutes before the service begins, the pastor will come to answer any last minute questions, pray with the family, and lead the family into the place of worship.

### **Photograph & Memorabilia Table**

Photographs, memorabilia, videos and photograph slideshows may be displayed in the narthex or Wanamaker Room. Folding tables, chairs, and a flat screen television on a rolling stand will be made available free of charge upon request.

## Step 5: The Service

A typical service will include the reading of appropriate passages of Scripture from both the Old and New Testament, an exposition of an appropriate passage of Scripture by the pastor, prayers of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, prayers of intercession for the bereaved, the singing of appropriate hymns and songs, a reminder to all of death for every person and judgment to come, and a solemn reminder that each must repent and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to gain eternal life.

### A Typical Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Prelude (Piano, Organ, CD)

Preparing Our Hearts (Piano, Organ, CD)

Greetings

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Music (Congregational Hymn, Special Music, CD)

Eulogy

Music (Congregational Hymn, Special Music, CD)

OT Scripture Reading

NT Scripture Reading

Proclamation of the Word

Music (Congregational Hymn, Special Music, CD)

Benediction

Postlude (Organ, Piano, CD)

Appropriate military rites may be included in the service, but it is not appropriate to include a civic or fraternal rite in the service. If such is desired, it should be conducted at another time and place. The body or ashes of the deceased may be present, but it is not necessary for either to be present. If a casket is present, it should not be open. Casket burial, cremation, and donation for scientific purposes are all appropriate forms of Christian burial.

## Step 6: The Committal

A typical burial or service of committal is a brief worship service conducted at the place of burial. “Ordinarily the committal should be reserved for the immediate family and close friends. It may be performed either before or after the worship service. It should consist of a few selected passages of Scripture, a brief prayer of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, a committing of the body to its place of rest, and a committing of the soul to God, concluding all with a benediction.” (EPC Book of Worship, §6-5).

While the service of committal typically lasts less than 5 minutes, families are welcome to remain at the place of burial as long as they feel comfortable. Typically, the casket or cremated remains will not be lowered into the grave or placed into the final resting place until after everyone leaves the gravesite. If you wish to remain for this, simply let the funeral director on site know your preference.

### A Typical Service of Committal

Words of Gathering

Sentences of Scripture

Pastoral Prayer

Brief Message or Devotional

Words of Committal

Sentences of Scripture

Closing Prayer

Lord’s Prayer

## Step 7: Reception

Families typically choose to have a more private time of reception with family and close friends, but it is not inappropriate to have a time of reception for all those invited to the service. Most receptions are held at an area restaurant capable of serving the number of guests you are expecting.

Bethany Church is willing to provide space within the church building or on the church property. All receptions are subject to an additional fee for set up, tear down, and cleaning and all linens and tableware, delivery, preparation, serving, and clean up for the catered meal will be the responsibility of the caterer and/or the family. Special arrangements must be made for the caterer to utilize the church kitchen. Family and guests are invited to remain at a reception for up to 3 hours.

# Helpful Scriptures

## Old Testament

### **Job 19:25-26**

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.  
26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,

### **Psalms 23:1-6**

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.  
3 He restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.

### **Psalms 61:1-2**

1 Hear my cry, O God,  
listen to my prayer;  
2 from the end of the earth I call to you  
when my heart is faint.  
Lead me to the rock  
that is higher than I,  
3 for you have been my refuge,  
a strong tower against the enemy.

4 Let me dwell in your tent forever!  
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your  
wings!

### **Psalms 94:19**

19 When the cares of my heart are many,  
your consolations cheer my soul.

### **Psalms 116:15**

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord  
is the death of his saints.

### **Psalms 119:50**

50 This is my comfort in my affliction,  
that your promise gives me life.

**Psalm 121**

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills.  
From where does my help come?  
2 My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
4 Behold, he who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.  
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
8 The Lord will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a, 4**

1 For everything there is a season, and a time  
for every matter under heaven:  
2 a time to be born, and a time to die;  
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

**Ecclesiastes 7:1**

1 A good name is better than precious  
ointment,  
and the day of death than the day of birth.

**Isaiah 25:6-9**

6 On this mountain the Lord of hosts will  
make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a  
feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of  
marrow, of aged wine well refined.

7 And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples, the  
veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death forever; and the  
Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take  
away from all the earth, for the Lord has  
spoken.

9 It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is  
our God; we have waited for him, that he  
might save us. This is the Lord; we have  
waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in  
his salvation."

**Isaiah 40:28-31**

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of  
the ends of the earth. He does not faint or  
grow weary; his understanding is  
unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he increases  
strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be  
weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31  
but they who wait for the Lord shall renew  
their strength; they shall mount up with  
wings like eagles; they shall run and not be  
weary; they shall walk and not faint.



**Isaiah 41:8-10, 13**

8 But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;  
9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, "You are my servant,  
I have chosen you and not cast you off";  
10 fear not, for I am with you;  
be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my righteous right  
hand.

13 For I, the Lord your God,  
hold your right hand;  
it is I who say to you, "Fear not,  
I am the one who helps you."

**Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33**

22 The steadfast love of the Lord never  
ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;  
23 they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul,  
"therefore I will hope in him."

25 The Lord is good to those who wait for  
him,  
to the soul who seeks him.  
26 It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the Lord.

31 For the Lord will not  
cast off forever,  
32 but, though he cause grief, he will have  
compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast  
love;  
33 for he does not afflict from his heart  
or grieve the children of men.

## New Testament

### **Matthew 5:4**

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

### **Mark 10:13-16**

13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

### **John 5:24-27**

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

### **John 6:35-40**

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

### **John 11:25-26**

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

### **John 14:1-4**

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."

**Romans 6:3-4, 8-9**

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

**Romans 8:31-37**

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor

things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 14:7-9**

7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-57**

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

55 “O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

## **2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

## **Philippians 1:21-23**

18 Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

## **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

### **1 John 3:1-2**

1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

### **Revelation 21:2-4**

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

# Appropriate Hymns

This list of hymns is not intended to be all inclusive, but is provided for your convenience. If you have a hymn or song that you would like to be included in a service, requests may be made in consultation with the pastor.

Abide with Me (402)  
Amazing Grace (460)  
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (92)  
Be Still, My Soul (689)  
Be Thou My Vision (642)  
Come unto Me, Ye Weary (482)  
Come, Ye Disconsolate (615)  
For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest (358)  
From Every Stormy Wind That Blows (631)  
God Will Take Care of You (134)  
Great Is Thy Faithfulness (32)  
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (598)  
He Leadeth Me! O Blessed Thought! (600)  
How Firm a Foundation (94)  
How Great Thou Art (44)  
I Know that My Redeemer Lives (690)  
In the Garden\*

In the Hour of Trial (568)  
It Is Well with My Soul (691)  
Jesus Is All the World to Me (653)  
Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me (601)  
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms (616)  
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (529)  
Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned (185)  
My Faith Looks Up to Thee (528)  
My Jesus, As Thou Wilt (685)  
Now I Belong to Jesus (709)  
O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go (708)  
Old Rugged Cross\*  
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past (30)  
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me (499, 500)  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (184)  
Thine Be the Glory (274)  
What a Friend We Have in Jesus (629)  
When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder (541)

# The Cost

## Honoraria

### Bethany Church Pastor

Bethany Church pastors do not charge for pastoral services, yet families often desire to know what is commonly given as an honorarium to the pastor. Pastor Paul has previously received between \$0 and \$1,000 for conducting services. Most often he receives an honorarium between \$300 to \$500. Arrangements for giving an honorarium are normally made through the mortuary or funeral home, but the family is welcome to give an honorarium directly to the pastor on the day of the service.

## Required Fees

### Sanctuary Tech/AV Technician: \$75

- Managing the sound board and operating the video screen slides during the service
- LiveStreaming the service on the Bethany EPC YouTube Channel

### Janitor: \$75

- Setting up & tearing down tables and chairs in the Wanamaker Room
- Clean up of the Sanctuary, Wanamaker Room, and bathrooms

## Optional Fees

### Musicians and Vocalists

Costs vary widely, but you can expect to pay between \$100 and \$200 for each musician and vocalist, depending on how many songs you select and their level of experience.

### Catered Reception: \$300

- Set up and tear down of tables and chairs in the Gym or Wanamaker Room
- Janitorial fees

**SPECIAL NOTE:** All linens and tableware, delivery, preparation, serving, and clean up for the catered meal will be the responsibility of the caterer and/or the family.

### Use of the Kitchen: \$200

- The Bethany Fellowship Committee must approve the caterer prior to utilization of the church kitchen.

**Bethany Church**  
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN

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