



# Memorial Services and Funerals: A Planning Guide

Prairie Avenue Christian Church—2201 E Prairie Ave, Decatur IL 62521—217-428-3327

DEAR PRAIRIE  
AVENUE FAMILY...

*Our faith community serves with care before, during, and after the loss of a loved one. We hope this information will provide you with a path to guide you during this significant time.*

*Planning a service can be a blessing to those in grief. A time to laugh and to cry as the stories are shared and retold. It is our please to help you and your family.*

*For questions regarding Funeral or Memorial planning please call the church office at 217-428-3327*

## PLANNING THE SERVICE

### BEFORE DEATH OCCURS

The Pastor will be happy to visit with you and provide a planning document. Once completed, a permanent file will be made and your data base record will reflect that you have pre-planned your service.

### WHEN DEATH IS IMMINENT OR WHEN DEATH OCCURS

When a death is imminent our pastor is honored to come and pray with you. If there is time, please call the church office at 217-428-3327. We will make every effort to have someone come to you.

If this is after-hours, please call the emergency number: 217-413-7904. The pastor will return your call as soon as possible.

### DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF SERVICE

If you wish for our pastor to conduct the funeral for your loved one, please visit with him or her before you schedule. To avoid personal and building conflicts the pastor will speak with funeral home or mortuary regarding requests. Funerals and memorials are often held in our sanctuary. It can seat 150 people. Services can also be held at local funeral homes and cemeteries. Whatever the choice, we try to accommodate your wishes.

### TYPE OF SERVICE

1. A traditional funeral (where the casket is present), graveside to follow
2. A memorial service (where there is no casket)
3. A graveside service only
4. A graveside service prior to the memorial service

Additionally, a visitation can be scheduled before the service on the service day or the evening before. Often, the family provides a video tribute. The video must be in DVD format, ready to play.

# music

Music is an integral part of any worship service here at Prairie Avenue. So often music can speak volumes when we are unable to speak ourselves. There is great and wonderful church music available in the traditional or contemporary styles. We have musicians and vocalists able to provide either. The pastor will help you choose appropriate music for the service. Secular music is not encouraged for a service but can be used during the visitation.

**Prelude:** The organist/pianist will play for 20 minutes prior to the service. This will include requested hymn or a selection of the musician's choice.

**Processional:** The family will walk into the sanctuary with the pastor and be seated.

**Solo and congregational hymns:** These complement the service and will be interspersed at the discretion of the pastor.

**Recessional:** The casket (if applicable), pastor and family exit the chapel to this music usually played in an uplifting tempo.

**Postlude:** the organist/pianist will play until the guests have left the sanctuary.

## MAKING SERVICE PLANS

Following the selection of the date, time, place and type of service the minister will arrange to gather the family and learn the stories. This meeting can either be at the family home or at the church. This will be a time to select favorite scripture and discuss musical choices as well.

The minister works behind the scenes to handle all logistics. They work with the family and often the funeral home to make sure all details are covered. They contact the musicians and soloists, as well as custodial services to present a proper and fitting tribute. They will ask about the number of guests you might expect and discuss processional procedure and seating of the family and honored guests.

## FEES

There are no fees for funerals or memorials held at Prairie Avenue Christian Church. If outside musicians or vocalists are invited, the family is responsible for those participants. If asked, the minister will provide a list of suggested honoraria, which is only a guideline.

## FLOWERS

Floral offerings are a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one. The beautiful plants and blooms honor God's creation of life. Removal of the arrangements is the responsibility of the family or the funeral home.

# scripture

Scripture is another way to enhance the funeral/memorial experience. We encourage you to make your personal favorites known to the pastor.

## **Psalm 16:9,11**

Therefore my heart is glad

## **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd

## **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry

## **Isaiah 40:28-31**

Do you not know?

## **Ecclesiastes 3:1-15**

There is a time for everything

## **Matthew 5:1-12**

The Beatitudes

## **Matthew 18:3-4,10,14**

I tell you the truth

## **Matthew 19:14**

Let the little children come

## **Matthew 25:42-45**

I was hungry, I was thirsty

## **John 3:16**

God so loved the world

## **John 11:25**

I am the resurrection

## **John 14:1-4,18-19, 25-27**

Do not let your hearts be troubled

## **Romans 8:31b-32, 35-39**

If God is for us

## **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

If I speak in the tongues

## **1 Corinthians 15:51-57**

Listen, I tell you a mystery

## **Revelation 21:1-5**

Then I saw a new heaven

## **The Lord's Prayer**

## MEMORABILIA

Frequently, family members set up a memory table in the entry area with photos, albums, awards or certificates of achievement, hobby examples or other personal items related to their loved one. We provide the table(s) and cloth(s) for these displays.

## FUNERAL HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

These are a few of the things you should rely on the funeral home to provide or give guidance:

- Casket or urn
- Cemetery choice—plot or niche space
- Flowers
- Processional to cemetery
- Visitation, if held at the funeral home
- Obituary in the local newspaper
- Guest book

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorial gifts provide a meaningful way for individuals, families and groups to witness their thanksgiving for the life of a loved one. To give a gift in another's memory is a faithful expression of respect and love that goes beyond death. Your gift to the Prairie Avenue Memorial Fund will enable our church to provide special items or ministries that benefit our church.

The church financial committee maintains a list of needs in the church which are not funded in the operations budget and which

# Order of worship

This is a guide for a typical service at Prairie Avenue

Prelude

Family entrance

Greeting

Word of Grace

Prayer

Congregational hymn or other music

Scripture

Special music

Homily, offered by the officiating pastor

Prayer, often with The Lord's Prayer in unison.

Congregational Hymn or other music

Commendation

Dismissal and Blessing

Family Recessional

would include — but not be limited to — items of a durable nature which:

- Enhance the worship of God
- Enhance the spiritual growth for all ages
- Enhance the fellowship of the church
- Provide facility needs for ministry of our church
- Support church or denominational mission projects
- Promotes the mandates of the great commission and our church vision (Matthew 28:19-20)

The church finance committee provide memorials in consultation with members of the deceased's family. On All Saints Sunday (first Sunday of November) our congregation receives a report on the gifts received the previous year.

For more information on memorial gifts please contact Sondra LeHew (217-433-9725).

## FUNERAL HOMES, CREMATION FACILITIES AND CEMETERIES

There are many excellent provides in the Decatur metro area. The church does not endorse specific providers. This is a very personal service and we suggest you interview and consult to make your decision.

## AFTER CARE

Your church does not want you to feel you are alone following your loss. We send grief booklets through the first year which offer words of hope and encouragement.

We hold a service of healing especially designed for those who have suffered loss near Christmas.

There is also the intentional provision of remembrance on the first Sunday in November as All Saints Sunday.

For information regarding current grief support groups, please call the church office: 217-428-3327