



*Northern Hills United Methodist Church
And
Ministry Center*

Funeral Guidelines

Northern Hills United Methodist Church & Ministry Center Funeral Policy

Funeral Services

Even for Christians, the death of a loved one is a difficult experience. We grieve the loss of one who has been close, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregation in their time of need. It is through the Word of God that we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (Romans 15: 4). This policy is provided to assist our families in planning and providing a Christian funeral.

Although funeral services may be held in funeral homes, the best place for conducting a funeral service upon the death of a Christian is in the church to which he or she belonged. By having the service at the church, all who attend will be reminded of our hope and assurance in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of Northern Hills are encouraged to use the church building for funeral services. The church is also offered for the funeral services of Christians whose membership is in another church.

There can be alternative methods for the conducting of services at the time of death. These could include a private graveside service for family members as soon after death as possible and/or a public service of worship (a memorial service) conducted at the church later. The pastor will meet with the family to plan any funeral worship arrangements.

Date and Time of Funerals

Dates and times for funerals at Northern Hills are to be arranged in consultation with the pastor based on availability and the preferences of the deceased's family. In general, we ask for 3 to 5 advance business days to prepare for a funeral, realizing there may be times for exceptions. The pastor must approve all funeral arrangements at Northern Hills United Methodist Church. Decisions concerning areas outside the scope of this funeral policy shall be decided at the discretion of the pastor.

Funeral services will need to be planned around already scheduled events.

Who Will Officiate?

Pastoral ethics require that a Northern Hills' pastor conduct all funeral services held at Northern Hills, unless by agreement with another pastor, he/she is invited to share in the funeral or act on behalf of the pastor of Northern Hills. Any requests for another pastor or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by Northern Hills' senior pastor.

Other Personnel:

The church will provide media, music and custodial personnel as needed/requested.

Structure of the Funeral Service

A funeral service held in the church is a service of worship, celebrating the deceased's life and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Consequently, all parts of the service are to be consistent with the present worship practices of the church. Generally, the outline for the funeral and burial service will take on a traditional form. The family may suggest other items to be included in the service, with the approval of the pastor. The standard structure is as follows:

Gathering

Greeting

Scripture Reading

Prayer

Music/Solo (if desired)

Witness

Music/Solo (if desired)

Message

Prayer

Recessional

Please provide the Obituary in MS Word format and a picture (JPEG), if desired, to the church office. This should be emailed to nhumc@nhumc.org

Once the order of service is set, Northern Hills will provide and print the Funeral Bulletins.

Funerals for Non-members and Inactive Members

Conducting funerals for people who are non-members is a normal part of the ministerial obligation. However, it is up to the discretion of the pastor to allow the use of church facilities.

Funeral Music

Only music appropriate to a worship service shall be used. Please remember that time and date may affect the availability of our musicians. As with weddings, a funeral is a service of Christian worship. Therefore, sacred or Christian music is appropriate. Taped instrumental and accompaniment music, soloists and solos, anthems, and guest musicians must have the approval of the pastor. The use of congregational hymns or songs is encouraged and may be selected with the pastor in consultation with the family during the service planning process.

In cases where an outside organist/pianist is desired, permission must be secured from the pastor. Additional musicians or soloists may be utilized. Our Worship Director will be in contact with all outside musicians prior to the service.

Video Presentation

If a video is to be used during the service, it must be submitted to the church office no later than 48 business hours prior to the funeral service for review. All presentations should be in DVD or Power Point format, submitted on a flash drive, and should not exceed five minutes in length.

Decorations

Families may wish to display the deceased's remains, as well as certain mementos or photographs of the deceased and his/her family. The following guidelines would be applicable in these situations:

Any displays or pictures must be appropriate to a worship setting.

No nails, tacks, staples or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews.

All decorations must be removed within 2 hours of the conclusion of the service.

Northern Hills will provide the use of up to 4 easels (2 table top, 2 floor size), any more that are needed will be provided by the family.

No furniture shall be removed from the church building.

The family will provide the Registration Book.

Nursery

The church does not provide a nursery for funeral services.

Parking / Traffic Assistance

Parking assistance is generally provided by the funeral home. The church does not assist in traffic control.

Reception

For members the church will provide a reception before or after a funeral service if requested. The reception will be prepared under the direction of the church's Bereavement Team. Only members of the church and their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, siblings) will be eligible for this ministry. We offer two options depending on the need: Cookies, tea and coffee only or a light luncheon consisting of sandwiches, chips, veggie trays and cookies.

There is no fee charged for this meal ministry, nor is there any cost for preparation and serving; however, free will donations are accepted. Members of the church provide this service as a ministry in the spirit of Christian love. Their mission is to serve willingly and pleasingly, inspired and led by God.

Non-members may utilize our facility but are responsible for providing the food or refreshments, and the people to serve and clean up.

Memorials

In certain circumstances, the family might request a contribution to the church or a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. The church will not manage, receive or distribute designated funds for an outside institution. Undesignated funds and funds designated for an established project at Northern Hills will be received by the church.

Fees

There is no fee for the use of the facilities or the staff of Northern Hills United Methodist Church. The fees for the music and media personnel (church staff) are also covered by the church. The pastor(s) receives no fee. You may wish to give the pastor(s) an honorarium for their services. If you wish, you may make a contribution to Northern Hills' Funeral Fund.

Ministry Staff



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Celebration of Life Planning Sheet

Name of Deceased

Date of birth and location

Date of death and location

Funeral (casket present) or Memorial Service?

Name of Funeral Home and Funeral Director,
including all contact information.

Date desired for service

Family point of contact person. Please include
phone number and email.

Special music presentation? If so, please provide
name, phone and email of musician.

Scripture reader other than Pastor?

If so, please provide the name.

Regarding the *Time of Witness*; please list
all individuals participating.

Estimated number of people attending the service

Service Details

Song _____

Scripture _____

Song _____

Witness _____

Message _____

Song _____

Pallbearers (if applicable) _____

Post Service instructions: _____
