

# CELEBRATION OF LIFE Planning & Information Guide



**Fort Smith First**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Planning arrangements for: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

It is an honor and a privilege to help celebrate the lives of those we love, and it is a privilege our church takes very seriously. Included in these pages is a guide for planning a service that celebrates and honors your loved one's life. This Celebration of Life Planning and Information Guide helps through the planning process.

## **Scheduling a Funeral or Memorial Service on a Weekday**

At First United Methodist Church, we seek to provide a meaningful and caring space for families as they grieve and honor their loved ones. Funerals are typically scheduled on weekdays when our staff and volunteers are most available to provide care and support. Due to limitations in volunteer availability, church staffing, and coordination with funeral home services, we strongly discourage scheduling funerals on Saturdays. Our priority is to offer families the fullest support possible, which is best achieved on weekdays when our team can be fully present to serve. Additionally, funerals are not scheduled on Sundays or certain Holy Days, such as Good Friday, to honor the rhythms of worship and sacred observances. We appreciate your understanding and are committed to walking with you through this time with grace and care.

## **Church Contacts**

Church Phone: 479-782-5068

Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford, Lead Pastor, [bbradford@fsfumc.org](mailto:bbradford@fsfumc.org)

Rev. Abbey Maynard, Executive Associate Pastor, [amaynard@fsfumc.org](mailto:amaynard@fsfumc.org)

Rev. Janice Sudbrink, Deacon, [janice.sudbrink@arumc.org](mailto:janice.sudbrink@arumc.org)

Holly Preston, Administrative Assistant to the Lead Pastor, [hpreston@fsfumc.org](mailto:hpreston@fsfumc.org)

## **Reception or Family Meal**

The Dorothy Collier Network is a volunteer group of FUMC members who offer a reception or meal for the family and guests.

The contact is Rose Mary Ayers at 479-414-6881.

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# PLANNING FORM

## 1. NAME OF DECEASED: \_\_\_\_\_

FUMC Member:  Yes  No      Other Church : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. SURVIVING FAMILY:

Primary Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Member:  Yes  No | Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Family

Relationship	Member	Name
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____

## 3. CLERGY

FUMC Pastors:  Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford  Rev. Abbey Maynard  Rev. Janice Sudbrink

Retired Pastor in Residence at FUMC

Other Officiating Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Contact(s) # \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Other Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Contact(s) # \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. SERVICE LOGISTICS

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

*Funerals are typically scheduled on weekdays when our staff and volunteers are most available to provide care and support. Due to limitations in volunteer availability, church staffing, and coordination with funeral home services, we strongly discourage scheduling funerals on Saturdays. Our priority is to offer families the fullest support possible, which is best achieved on weekdays or select times when our team can be fully present to serve. We appreciate your understanding and are committed to walking with you through this time with grace and care.*

*Funerals may be held in any of our worship spaces: Sanctuary, Roebuck Chapel, or the Great Hall. There is no charge for the use of the facilities. If there is no membership connection in the family to First United Methodist Church, a donation to cover the building use and extra custodial care is appreciated.*

Type(s) of service:

- Church Service
- Funeral Home Service
- Graveside

Remains during the service:

- Casket Present
- Urn Present
- Memorial Service

Location:



- FUMC Sanctuary** - Seats 500 on the main floor (max 800 with Balcony), organ, piano, and other music available; sacred music only
- Roebuck Chapel** - Seats 50-150 (max 200), organ music available; sacred music only
- Great Hall** (Family Life Center/ Modern Service) - Seats 100-150 (max 500 with preparations), modern Christian music
- FUMC Columbarium** (Typically a simple service without music or livestreaming)

**Funeral Home:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offsite Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

Other Logistics:

- FUMC -provided Livestreaming Requested?  Yes  No
- Any Honors Requested? (Military, Masonic, Nurse Honor Guard, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of Family members for reserved seating: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of Pallbearers & Honorary Pallbearers reserved seating: \_\_\_\_\_
- Memory table:  Yes  No      Number of tables: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. OTHERS INVOLVED IN SERVICE:**

Eulogy(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Musicians: (if you have special musician requests). Musicians may need to be approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Others (Liturgists, scripture readers, Pallbearers):

**5. BURIAL/PLACEMENT OF THE ASHES:**

Burial date determined?  Yes  No

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

FUMC Columbarium Garden:  Niche purchased  Request Information about FUMC Columbarium

Offsite location: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. FUNERAL HOME:**

Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there a visitation?** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. GREETING OR RECEPTION:**

FUMC has a volunteer group called the Dorothy Collier Network, named after a beloved pastor, available to:

**Prepare and serve a luncheon for the family at the church,**

or

**Provide refreshments at a reception following the service (Usually in the welcome center narthex).**

The Dorothy Collier Network contact is Rose Mary Ayers at 479-414-6881.

You are invited to make a donation to “pay it forward” to provide this ministry of hospitality to grieving families.

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. BULLETIN

Print Obituary in Bulletin:  Yes  No

Print Picture on Cover of Bulletin:  Yes  No

Number of Bulletins to Print: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Family Bulletin Proofing:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_ phone# \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Will the family provide altar arrangements for the Sanctuary on the day of service?

Yes

No

What does the family wish to do with the flowers after the service?

Take Home

Leave at Church to be distributed to the homebound and nursing home residents

## 12. MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorials to the church are normally deposited in the Memorial Fund, which is used for various church ministries. If a family wants to designate memorials to a particular ministry, such as music, children, youth, missions, etc., that request will be honored. If memorials are received by FUMC, is there a specific place you would like them allocated?

- FUMC Memorial Fund (standard)
- FUMC Foundation Fund
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Send Notification of FUMC Memorials received to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Deceased \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Memorial Gifts: Organizations not related to FUMC:

Name(s) of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. WORSHIP PLANNING

*See the attached bulletins for an example of a Funeral/Memorial Service.*

### Music

*Typically a Church service includes 2-3 musical selections throughout the service. These can be musical specials or communal songs/hymns. See the appendix for suggestions.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Scripture

*Traditionally, a service will include a Psalter, Old Testament, Gospel, and Epistle Reading. However, you are invited to work with the pastor to include scriptures you believe to be particularly meaningful. See the last page for suggestions. If you know who is going to read which scripture, it is helpful to list them by the scripture*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# SUGGESTIONS FOR EULOGIES/ WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

It is an honor to be asked to participate in someone's funeral or memorial service. The Clergy and Staff of First United Methodist Church appreciate your willingness to share your personal insights in this way, and we welcome you to our church. As we seek to honor your loved one in this service of worship, please use these suggestions as you prepare your remarks:

- Please keep your remarks to 3- 5 minutes and no more than 3 minutes if there will be more than one personal witness.
- You have wonderful personal stories and experiences to share, and we are excited to hear those stories and experiences. It is not necessary to add devotional or biblical material since the officiating clergy will be preaching a sermon.
- If not sitting with the family, please sit near the aisle as close to the front as possible. One of the clergy will invite you to come to the lectern for your remarks.
- Since you will be speaking in the context of a worship service in the sanctuary, we ask that you be discreet with your language and subject matter.
- Please remember to honor the memory of the deceased; this service is not the time to include stories or information that would discredit the deceased in any way.
- If you have any questions, please contact the officiating pastor at 479.782.5068.

# SAMPLE ORDER OF WORSHIP

This is our typical Order of Worship, based on the UMC Hymnal and Book of Worship.

You are invited to choose music, scriptures, and a specific Affirmation of Faith.

If you would like the Pastor to select these service elements for you, we are happy to assist you in that way as well.

**PRELUDE** *(Please stand at the sounding of the chimes) NOTE- Family will enter at this time*

## WORDS OF GRACE AND GREETING

† **RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

† **HYMN** \_\_\_\_\_

† **STATEMENT OF FAITH** *(unison) Apostle's Creed or another creed such as the one below:*

We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God. We are called to be the church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.

† **GLORIA PATRI**

**SCRIPTURE READING(S)** \_\_\_\_\_  
*New/Old Testament* *Gospel*

## PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

**PSALTER READING** *(Usually Psalm 23 or 121, often as a responsive reading)* \_\_\_\_\_

**WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE (Eulogy)** Family or Friend \_\_\_\_\_

**SOLO or MUSIC**

**SCRIPTURE FOR SERMON**

**WORDS OF FAITH (Sermon)**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/COMMENDATION**

† **CLOSING HYMN** \_\_\_\_\_

† **BENEDICTION**

† **POSTLUDE**

# MUSIC AND SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS

## MUSIC

The pastors and music staff can work with you to make selections for your loved one, but here are several frequently used hymns/songs appropriate for these services.

378	Amazing Grace	103	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
110	A Mighty Fortress is Our God	314	In the Garden
557	Blest Be the Tie That Binds	504	The Old Rugged Cross
710	Faith of Our Fathers	451	Be Thou My Vision
707	Hymn Of Promise ( <i>In a bulb there is a flower</i> )	77	How Great Thou Art
698	God of the Ages	308	Thine Be the Glory
64	Holy, Holy, Holy	496	Sweet Hour of Prayer
377	It Is Well with My Soul	701	When We All Get to Heaven
89	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee ( <i>Ode to Joy</i> )	407	Close to Thee
702	Sing with all the Saints in Glory ( <i>Ode to Joy</i> )	133	Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
711	For All the Saints	474	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
117	O God, Our Help In Ages Past	526	What a Friend We Have in Jesus

## SCRIPTURE

The officiating pastor can work with you to make selections, but here are a few frequently used selections.

John 14 (Selected Verses) - Do not let your hearts be troubled...Many dwelling places

Matthew 6:19-21 - Treasures in Heaven

Matthew 25:31-40 - Just as you did it for one...

Luke 24:1-12 - The empty tomb; Jesus has risen

Luke 12:37-40 - The Master comes at an unexpected time

John 3:16-17 - For God so loved the world...

John 5:19-27 - The Son Gives Life

John 16:12-22,33 - From pain to joy; I am going to the Father

Luke 12:37-40 - The Master comes at an unexpected time

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 - Clay Jars

2 Timothy 4:6-8 - I have fought the good fight..

Romans 8 (Selected verses) - Nothing can separate us from the love of God

Revelation 7:9-17 - The Multitudes before the Throne; God will wipe away every tear

Revelation 21:1-7 - God will wipe away our tears; Making all things new

Hebrews 12:1-2 - Cloud of witnesses

1 Peter 1:3-7 - A new hope and resurrection through Christ

Psalms 23 - The Shepherd's Psalm

Psalms 121 - My help comes from the lord

Psalms 42 (selected verses) - A deer thirsts for God

Psalms 98 - Make a Joyful Noise

Psalms 84 - How lovely is your dwelling place.

Psalms 116: 1-9, 12-15 - Precious is the death of his saints

Lamentations 3:22-26 - The steadfast love of the Lord

Isaiah 25:6-9 - God will swallow up death; God will wipe away every tear

Isaiah 40:1-8, 28-31 - Comfort, O comfort my people; The Lord is an everlasting God...

Proverbs 31:10-31 - Ode to a faithful mother

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 - Seasons, a time for every matter under heaven

Job 19:23-27 - My Redeemer Lives

Isaiah 55: 6, 8-13 - Seeking the Lord

Zechariah 8:1-8 - Children at Play in God's City



# FUNERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

## Fort Smith First United Methodist Church

- When someone in your family dies, whether or not he or she is a member of First United Methodist Church, if you desire to have their services under the care of the church, contact one of the pastors through the church office (479-782-5068) or the pastoral on-call phone (479-242-4873). A meeting to plan the funeral or memorial service will be arranged.
- Contact your funeral home of choice. They will instruct you on their procedures.
- We seek to provide a meaningful and caring space for families as they grieve and honor their loved ones. Due to limitations in volunteer availability, church staffing, and coordination with funeral home services, we strongly discourage scheduling funerals on Saturdays. Our priority is to offer families the fullest support possible, which is best achieved on weekdays or select times when our team can be fully present to serve. Additionally, funerals are not scheduled on Sundays or certain Holy Days, such as Good Friday, to honor the rhythms of worship and sacred observances. We appreciate your understanding and are committed to walking with you through this time with grace and care.
- Cemetery plots, if not already purchased, can be arranged through the funeral home. If a niche in the columbarium at the church is desired, arrangements can be made at any time prior to or at the time of death with the church's business administrator.
- At the time of the service, if there is a casket present, it may be opened prior to the service for viewing. Before the family enters, out of consideration for the process of grief and in alignment with our theology of Resurrection, the casket will be closed and not re-opened at the end of the service. It is not recommended that the casket be opened at the cemetery.
- We have a volunteer group called the Dorothy Collier Network, named after a beloved pastor, available to (1) prepare and serve a luncheon for the family at the church, or (2) provide refreshments at a reception following the service. If the burial follows the service and the reception, the family should notify the funeral home so that transportation plans can be appropriately adjusted.
- Funerals may be held in any of our worship spaces: Sanctuary, Roebuck Chapel, or the Great Hall. There is no charge for the use of the facilities. If there is no family membership connection to First United Methodist Church, a donation to cover the building use and extra custodial care is appreciated.
- There is no charge for pastoral services at the time of death. If the family desires to make a gift of gratitude, it is acceptable. An honorarium is expected for the organist, any other musicians or soloists, and technical persons if needed. A gift to the Dorothy Collier Hospitality Ministry is also appreciated. Families may discuss honorariums with the pastor in the planning meeting. Should you desire a minister other than one presently serving our church to conduct your memorial service, your pastor will be glad to make contact with your family. This is the proper way to handle the invitation of another minister. The family will be responsible for paying the visiting minister's expenses.
- The family usually takes flower arrangements and live plants after the service. If the family wishes to leave some cut flower arrangements, they will be divided and delivered to our members in assisted living and nursing home facilities, as well as homebound and hospitalized members. If a funeral is on Friday, flower arrangements may be left for Sunday services if plans for flowers in the service weren't previously made.
- Memorials to the church are normally deposited in the Memorial Fund, which is used for various purposes of ministry at the church. If a family wants to designate memorials to a particular ministry, e.g., music, children, youth, missions, etc., that request will be honored.