



COMMUNITY
CONGREGATIONAL
C H U R C H

Planning a Memorial Service

Memorial Services and Memorial Garden Interments
at Community Congregational Church, Short Hills

Whether you are reading this in the wake of a loved one's passing, or in preparation for your own personal memorial events, we hope that the information presented here can be both helpful and comforting.

May you be aware of God's presence with you during this time, and may you feel the support and care of the church community. We encourage you to reach out to one or both of the Ministers at Community Congregational Church so that they may help guide you and your family through the process of grief and mourning. In addition to their experience in consulting and counseling, they are also available to help plan any memorial events that suitably observe the passing of your loved one, so that their life and memory may be celebrated and commemorated in dignity and respect.



*Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home!*

"Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Planning a Memorial Service

In the Christian community, death is a corporate experience that touches the life of the entire family of faith. When a death occurs, the immediate family is encouraged to notify the church as soon as possible and to share fully in planning a worship service in celebration of life. It is also appropriate to contact the clergy when a loved one's passing seems imminent.

Notifying the Pastors

Family members of the deceased are encouraged to contact the pastors directly and at their earliest convenience by calling (973) 379-5600 and selecting the appropriate extension.

Involving a Funeral Home

The family directly contacts the funeral home of their choice to make the necessary preparations, either at the time of or in anticipation of a loved one's death. An array of services are offered by the funeral home, and the family is asked to coordinate their preferences with our clergy.

SUITED TO YOUR NEEDS

Our clergy work closely with your family in designing and providing memorial events that are suited to your preferences and the wishes of the deceased.

Date & Time

The date and time of all services and events are made directly with the officiating clergy. Please coordinate with our clergy before finalizing your plans with the funeral home or your extended family.

Funeral or Memorial Service

The difference between a funeral and a memorial service is the presence or absence of the casket. This decision is based on the personal preferences of your family or the deceased.

Some people do not feel a sense of completion unless they have experienced a funeral in the church followed by a procession to the gravesite with a service of committal. The committal is often followed by a time of fellowship and refreshment at the church or at the home of a family member.

Others do not feel the need to have the casket present at the church. In these cases, the service of committal may take place before the memorial service at the church or cemetery, or at some later time. It is common for a time of fellowship and refreshment to take place at the church, a nearby restaurant, or a family member's home following the memorial service.

Service of Interment & Committal

The service of interment, when your loved one is laid in his or her final resting place, may be held prior to or following the funeral or memorial service. Sometimes, families opt to have this be the only time of service. Our clergy will preside over a service in a cemetery or in the Memorial Garden, if a plot has been purchased.

All caskets/urns containing the remains of your loved ones must be engraved with the following information: Name; date of birth; date of death. A certificate of cremation must accompany the urn or casket

Receptions

Rooms are available at the church for receptions following the service. Inquiries should be made through the church office as to availability and cost. The church does not provide catering, but a list of local caterers is available upon request.

VENUES

Sanctuary or Chapel

Community Congregational Church is blessed with two lovely settings for worship. Our Sanctuary has a seating capacity of approximately 450 people. The air-conditioned Welch Chapel can comfortably seat about 100 in the chapel itself, with room for additional chairs in the adjoining room and narthex. The decision regarding which worship setting to utilize can be made on the basis of personal preference or according to the number of people you expect might attend the service.

Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden at Community Congregational Church is available to members of the church and their families. Information regarding the assignment of plots for the burial of cremains is contained on the last page of this booklet. If you have further questions or would like to purchase a plot, please contact the church office.

Because of local and state laws, please adhere to the following guidelines when planning for the Memorial Garden.

- Urns may be not more than 6"x6"x7.5" in size in order to fit in a plot.
- The urn must be engraved with the name of the deceased and his or her date of birth and death.
- A certificate of cremation must accompany the cremains and will be kept on file in the church office.

Once all of the appropriate information has been collected (full name, date of birth and date of death), a bronze plaque will be ordered and installed on the board in the Memorial Garden.

The Service

The worship service recognizes the pain and the sorrow of the separation that accompanies death, as well as the hope and joy of the promises of God to those who die and are raised in Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to affirm once more the powerful, steadfast love of God from which people cannot be separated, even by death.

The service is an act of communal worship: God's word is read and proclaimed, hymns may be sung, and prayers are offered. The service also celebrates the life of the deceased, gives thanks for that person's life, and commends that life to God. It offers consolation to the bereaved by acknowledging their grief, anger, or guilt. It provides the Christian community and others an opportunity to support the bereaved with their presence.

PLANNING THE SERVICE

Our clergy work closely in planning the service with the family so that the family may also experience the support of the community of faith through the hope expressed in scripture, prayer, music, and corporate worship.

Both the Sanctuary and Chapel spaces offer the option of projection, at the family's discretion. Words to hymns, photos of the deceased, and scripture readings are some of the options to be projected before, during, and after the service. If no projection is used, a cross will be projected. Our clergy will guide you through the process of choosing what is right for your family.

ORDER OF THE SERVICE

A sample order of service for a funeral or memorial service might include some of the following components:

- Prelude
- Welcome & Greeting
- Opening Hymn
- Prayer of Invocation
- Readings
- Solo or Hymn
- Words of Remembrance
- Solo or Special Music
- Message
- Proclaiming Our Faith
- Hymn
- Prayer of Thanksgiving & the Lord's Prayer
- Commendation
- Closing Hymn
- Benediction
- Postlude

The order of worship can be adapted in any way that the family and Minister(s) feel is appropriate. For instance, it is possible to add or remove a hymn. If the family wishes to have a soloist, this can be arranged through the Director of Music Ministries.

SCRIPTURES

There are many readings from the scriptures which are commonly used for memorial services and funerals. There are numerous others not listed below that might be appropriate for such an event, including a passage or verse that were among the favorites of the deceased. Our pastors can assist you in identifying other texts that might meet your needs.

Old Testament Scriptures

- Psalm 23 (*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...*)
- Psalm 46 (*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...*)
- Psalm 121 (*I lift up mine eyes to the hills; from whence does my help come...*)
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...with the option to end with an adaptation of verse 8: "A time to love and a time for peace."*)

New Testament Scriptures

- Matthew 6:25-34 (*Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...*)
- John 14:1-7 (*Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my house are many mansions...*)
- Romans 8:31-35, 37-29 (*What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life ... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*)
- I Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13 (*If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal... So faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*)
- Colossians 3:12-17 (*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience...*)
- Revelation 21:1-4 (*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...he will wipe 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.*)

Other Writings

If the deceased was fond of a particular poet or devoted to a special literary piece, it may be appropriate to include secular poetry or readings in the service, at the discretion of the clergy.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE & EULOGY

A funeral or memorial service is a time of worship, faith, and hope. It is also an opportunity to remember the love shared by the deceased and the impact that he or she has made in the lives of others. A "time of remembrance" or

eulogy gives those gathered an occasion to reflect on his or her life and personality. This is usually presented by a family member or friend. If offered by one of the Ministers, he or she will want to spend some time with family members to capture their thoughts, memories, and reflections. If family members or friends are invited to speak, they should be aware of the challenge of speaking when one has experienced the loss of a loved one.

Music

The church requires that our Director of Music Ministries coordinate all services where music is desired.

The church office will contact the Director of Music Ministries as soon as a date and time have been confirmed. All musical requests should be made by the family directly with the clergy, who will then work with the Director of Music Ministries to make any necessary arrangements. Our church's professional soloists are often available for funerals or memorial services.

Hymns

Hymns commonly used for funerals or memorial services include:

- *Amazing Grace*
- *Be Still My Soul*
- *For All the Saints*
- *Abide with Me*
- *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*
- *The Lord's My Shepherd*
- *For the Beauty of the Earth*
- *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*
- *Morning Has Broken*

There are numerous other hymns that are appropriate for a funeral or memorial service. The clergy or Director of Music Ministries can assist you in identifying hymns that might meet your needs.

Anthems/Solos

Sacred music of various genres may be used in the service.

Instrumental Music

Musical accompaniment and/or instrumental music may be used in the service, as discussed with and coordinated by the Director of Music Ministries.

PARTICIPANTS

It is assumed that one or both of the pastors will participate in the service. If there is another clergy person with whom the family is close, it is appropriate to confirm that person's participation with the presiding pastor.

If members of the family wish to speak or have a close friend involved by reading an appropriate text or sharing a word of remembrance, this should be

confirmed with the clergy. The number of participants should be limited to avoid confusion and distraction during the service.

FLOWERS

Both of our worship settings possess a simple style and beauty. If you would like to provide flowers for the service it is appropriate and sufficient to order one arrangement to be placed on the altar. If family and friends send flowers to the service they will be placed in the front of the Sanctuary or Chapel or in the Narthex at the discretion of the clergy, sexton or Funeral Director.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Occasionally, families choose to have memorial gifts made to Community Congregational Church or another charitable organization in lieu of flowers sent by friends and acquaintances. If your family makes this decision, it should be discussed with the Funeral Director and included in the newspaper obituary. It may also be included in the service bulletin. Our Financial Director will be happy to share the church's guidelines regarding the acknowledgment and distribution of memorial gifts.

BULLETIN

Once the service has been planned, the church office publishes a bulletin for use during the service, which, along with the order of worship, may contain items such as:

- A photograph of the deceased
- Names of worship participants
- An invitation to the reception
- Directions to an off-site reception
- "In lieu of flowers" information



Memorial Garden Interment

Plots are available in the Community Congregational Church Memorial Garden. Please inquire with the Financial Director about cost and availability.

Interment ceremonies are typically private events, to which all attendees are invited at the discretion of the family. The date and time are arranged directly with the clergy, and may or may not occur on the same day as the memorial service, if one is scheduled.

An interment service is typically very brief and follows this outline:

- Greeting
- Sentences
- Committal
- The Lord's Prayer
- Prayers
- Benediction



Contact Us

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*Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.*

"Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"





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