

## The Church's Ministry at Death

The Belle Meade church family extends its love and sympathy for you and your loved ones. We are here to lift and carry you as you journey through this time.

As the church embraces us in our baptism and throughout our Christian life, it also embraces us in our dying and death. Belle Meade Church believes that the life of your loved one was a gift from God. We will have a service that honors this belief and attests to the eternal presence of God through your love one. This service will give glory and honor to God and thanksgiving for the life of your loved one.

This booklet is intended to assist in the arrangements for a Christian Service of Death and Resurrection. The following items are covered:

- Contacting the Church
- Location of the Service
- Visitation
- Disposition of the Body
- A Service of Worship
- Flowers
- The Casket and Pall
- The Order of Worship
- Practical Matters
- Service Worksheet

### **Contacting the Church**

If the death of a loved one is imminent and a pastor's presence is desired, please do not hesitate to call the church at 352-6210. If a pastor is not available, ask for an administrative assistant to reach a pastor.

When the death of the beloved has occurred, please call the church so that we can be in ministry to you during this time.

To make arrangements for the Service of Death and Resurrection, call the church at 352-6210 and ask to speak with a pastor or the administrative assistant. The church will be eager to offer a ministry of consolation by helping you plan the service and by sharing words and acts of kindness and faith. The pastors will want to schedule a time to meet with your family members to plan the service.

### **Location of the Service**

Church members are encouraged to hold the Service of Death and Resurrection in the sanctuary or chapel where corporate Sunday worship occurs. The church is where the significant events and transitions in life are held. It is where the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion are received. It is where confirmation and marriage are celebrated. There we are surrounded by the symbols of our faith. The church reminds us of the "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrew 12:1) that has gone before us and surrounds us.

## **Service Options**

1. A service held soon after death in the sanctuary or chapel with the casket or urn present, preceded or followed by a burial graveside service.
2. A memorial service held after a period of time has passed.
3. A service held in the chapel of a funeral home.
4. A graveside service.

## **Visitation**

It is part of our ministry to welcome your family and friends for visitation in our church parlor before and/or after the Service of Death and Resurrection in the sanctuary or chapel.

You may wish to display photographs and other objects of remembrance during visitation in the parlor. These objects may help your visitors and family members as they reminisce. Our staff will assist you with a table for this purpose if you so desire. We believe that visitation, rather than the worship service, is the appropriate time and place for this display.

## **Disposition of the Body**

Burial, cremation, and donation of the body to medical science are all appropriate options for Christians.

## **A Service of Worship**

The service will be The Christian service of Death and Resurrection, which is a witness to God's love that sustains us in our sorrow and extends beyond this life. It is a testimony to God's promises in Jesus Christ, who has gone before us through death into new life. His resurrection gives us reason for hope. We are able to be grateful even in the midst of our sense of loss.

Our ministers will conduct your service as a ministry of this body of believers at Belle Meade United Methodist Church. If you want another minister to participate in the service, please inform our senior pastor. We welcome the addition of those who have been important to you and your loved one; however, one of our pastors will officiate during the service.

We will give balanced attention to appropriate rituals of both the church and the nation or secular life of the loved one. The Service of Death and Resurrection is a worship service. God is the focus. The beloved and our grief are set within the context of the faith, hope, and love that God's grace makes available to us.

We recognize that our loved ones have served out their faith in their community and nation. We honor this service. Special ceremonies to honor the national or community contributions of the deceased may be included at the gravesite or columbarium as an appropriate remembrance. This may be the case for veterans where a color guard or musician from the armed services is requested.

## **Flowers**

Our altar guild provides the flower arrangement for the altar as a ministry and gift to the family. If you wish to provide flowers for the altar from a florist, please tell the minister. Flowers in the sanctuary or chapel are limited to one arrangement as in Sunday worship. **No other flowers will be placed in the sanctuary.** The sanctuary will be prepared appropriately for worship by the altar guild. Flower sprays, baskets, and other arrangements will be received for display in the church parlor during visitation.

If you do not wish to take the flowers in the parlor to your home, we encourage you to call **Perenity**, a service that takes flowers to Hospice and Meals on Wheels. They may be contacted at 429-5810. You may wish to designate friends to transport the flowers to them.

## **The Casket and the Pall**

During the service when the casket is present, it will be covered with the church "pall". The pall is a large cloth covering that symbolizes our belief that in Christ we are "clothed" with grace. It reminds us of our baptismal covenant where we are made a new creation in Christ.

The church pall will cover the casket in the sanctuary. If a flag or flower pall is used on the casket for visitation in the church parlor, it will be removed in the narthex of the church and replaced with the church pall as the casket enters the sanctuary. After the service, the church pall will be removed and the flower pall or flag will cover the casket again. The church pall never leaves the church.

## **The Urn**

If you would like the cremation urn to be present with a pall during the service, please tell the minister when planning the service.

## **Order of Worship**

The service is designed by our church ministers and the director of music/worship. A meeting with the family of the deceased will assist them in planning a service that honors the deceased child of God. The family's input is invited in choosing hymns and scripture readings. The United Methodist Church outlines the following elements to be included in the funeral or memorial service.

## **Prayers**

The Lord's Prayer

## **Scripture Readings**

The family may specify passages that were meaningful to the beloved and are a source of comfort and hope for the family and community of faith. These may include readings from the Old Testament, Psalter, the Epistles, and the Gospel. The pastor can give you a list from which you may choose or suggest some appropriate passages if desired.

## **Hymns**

Again, the family may suggest specific hymns in consultation with the pastor and Director of Music and Worship. The pastor can give you a list of appropriate hymns from which you may choose, or you can rely on the Director of Music and Worship to select hymns that would be appropriate and meaningful for the service.

## **Music – Vocal and Instrumental**

The Director of Music and Worship is available to play for your service. This is a service provided by the church as a ministry, and no fee is required. If you wish to have a solo singer or instrument other than the organ or piano, you will arrange this in consultation with the music minister. There will be a charge for these extra services since those musicians are not on our regular staff.

## **Witnesses**

Persons may be invited to express thanksgiving for the beloved. The family should talk with the ministers about who should speak and to discuss guidelines for their participation. If you wish to have people share in the service, we suggest that a maximum of two persons speak. It is important that their remarks be type written and no more than one half a page in length. Our experience tells us that people who may not be used to speaking in public can easily lose track of how long they are speaking and may find it emotionally difficult. These guidelines will help them honor the loved one more effectively.

## **Homily**

The Service of Death and Resurrection has two purposes:

- 1) To express thanksgiving to God for the life that has loved and been loved
- 2) To affirm the faith, hope, and love of our Christian faith.

The pastor seeks to honor these purposes in a homily or sermon.

## **Creeds**

It is appropriate to use one of the Church's traditional creeds that affirm the faith of Christians. These may be chosen from Numbers 880-889 in The United Methodist Hymnal.

## **Holy Communion (Optional)**

The Christian community gathers around the table of Christ to feed on that life which is abundant and eternal.

## **Order of Worship**

The following are elements of a typical service order:

Prelude  
Opening Words before the Processional  
Greeting  
Hymn of Adoration and Praise  
Old Testament (Psalter recited by the congregation, usually Psalm 23)  
Hymn of Assurance and Comfort or Solo voice or instrument  
Witness  
Scripture (Epistle and/or Gospel)  
Homily  
Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Creed (optional)  
Holy Communion (optional)  
Closing Hymn of Triumph and Resurrection  
Benediction  
Postlude

## **Practical Matters**

### **Charges**

No remuneration is expected by the pastors, organist, custodian, altar guild (flowers), congregational care committee (food), or the church itself.

### **Food Ministry**

Your church community cares about you and would like to support you in this time of loss. Our bereavement committee offers food to the family either during visitation, after the service, or at your home. A member of the committee will contact you about options for this meal.

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