

Funeral and Memorial Services @ St. Andrew's

The death of a loved one, whether sudden or expected, can leave us feeling vulnerable, confused and filled with anxiety – not knowing where to go, what to do and who to turn to for assistance. We at St. Andrew's want to alleviate some of this stress by making known our policy regarding funerals.

We are honoured to participate in the funerals and memorial services for people of the Guelph community. The time surrounding the loss of a loved one is difficult, and it is our desire to help people through this time. There are many feelings and concerns for families at this time and the faith community can be a special support during this period of grief and loss. We are reminded that we are not alone and that we have companions with us on this journey.

God's love is extended to everyone and we believe that as a faith community we can be instruments of love, compassion, support and healing during times of loss and grief. Requests for a funeral (body or cremated remains present) or a memorial service, both of which also are known as celebrations of life, can be made by contacting the Church Office or through the Minister.

Where do we start?

Typically, a family starts the journey of celebrating the life of their loved one by meeting with a funeral home. Funeral homes and their staff will facilitate a connection with a minister of your choosing or one known to your loved one through membership or affiliation with a faith community. A decision will need to be made as to whether the service takes place at the Funeral Chapel or at St. Andrew's. Once that decision and connection has been made, the Minister will reach out to the family to offer compassionate care and support. The Minister will confirm the availability of the Sanctuary and Church Hall (in the case of a reception to follow) for the desired date. The Minister will also set up a meeting with the family to discuss elements of the worship service (Scripture readings, hymns and music, tributes/eulogies).

When can the funeral/memorial service be held?

Sometimes funerals/memorials take place within days after death. Sometimes it may be weeks, or even months, before family and friends can gather. The Minister will work with you to find the most appropriate date and time for a service, given both your own needs and the scheduling possibilities for the minister and the

church. Funerals/memorials are not held on Sundays or on significant days in the life of the church, such as Christmas and Easter.

What is normally included in a funeral service?

The Minister will meet with your family to carefully plan together with you a service that both reflects and celebrates the life of your loved one and lifts up the compassion, thanksgiving and hope that lie at the heart of the Christian story. The service generally will include readings and prayers, an opportunity for sharing by family members/friends, music, and a reflection by the minister.

What about music?

The Director of Music is often available to provide musical accompaniment on the organ and piano for the service. Please note that St. Andrew's choir is not normally involved in funeral or memorial services. If there is a special relationship between the choir and the family, however, the choir may be requested through consultation with the Director of Music. Hymn selections and the use of special music can be discussed when meeting with the Minister.

Can we hold a visitation at the Church?

Your family may wish to have a visitation at the Church itself. This can be accommodated only for a visitation that is held immediately prior to the Service. It is our experience that this can be a challenge for a family as they are required to spend significant time prior to the Service meeting and greeting those who have come to pay their respects. If it is decided to do so, it is possible to have the casket or urn positioned in the Sanctuary for the visitation. The casket may be open or closed as your family wishes.

Can the Church create and print the bulletin and record the Service?

The Church Office is happy to produce the bulletin/order of service for your family upon request. An estimate of the number of attendees can be determined in consultation with the Minister. An audio recording of the service can also be accommodated if requested.

Are flowers required?

If desired, arrangements for floral decorations can be made through the florist of your choice. Please advise your florist to contact our Church Office prior to delivery to coordinate drop off.

Do you cater funeral receptions?

A reception following the service is a pleasant way of greeting and enjoying the fellowship of those who have come to share this time. St. Andrew's can provide the space for such a gathering in our Church Hall. Upon request, we can provide coffee and tea. We can also take care of the set up and clean up following a reception. We are no longer able to cater for receptions. You will need to arrange for an outside caterer. The funeral home can often provide some suggestions regarding local catering options.

Are there fees and honoraria?

Yes. The Minister will advise you as to the total cost for all services requested. Fees are to be paid as a single (1) payment payable to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Fees are due on the day of the service.