

Memorial Service Guidelines

Developed by Rev. Elizabeth Harding

Congregational Information:

The caring committee should keep a record of deaths, births, marriages in the congregation and make that book available upon request. Information shall include the deceased's name, date of birth, date of death, children's names, and address of the person. The caring committee can also request that this information be kept up by the Office Administrator and reminders sent electronically to the caring committee member. The book should be kept in the church office and kept up to date by members of the caring committee in conjunction with the minister.

Procedures Regarding Loss in the Congregation:

Once there is a death or some kind of significant loss in the congregation, a member of the family or a member of the caring committee should notify the minister as soon as possible. The caring committee can then talk with the family regarding arrangements.

Arrangements: Logistical Planning Questions:

- 1) Will the service be held in the Barn? (If so, please give the family member the phone number of the Barn liaison or have the family member contact Stan directly about renting the Barn.) The family member should be encouraged to **directly** contact the Barn liaison or Stan. **The caring committee liaison should encourage the family to make arrangements for payment of services individually with the Barn's management and with the minister. The caring committee liaison and the minister should contact the Director of Religious Education (DRE) when there is a child in the family experiencing the loss so the DRE can work with the minister to provide appropriate support. The caring committee will need to follow up with the family member regarding this phone call because the family member may not contact the caring committee again due to grief.**

- a. Reception Planning

The caring committee member can ask the family members questions about reception planning.

How many people are you expecting for this service?

How long are you planning the reception to be?

(Usually 1.5-2 hours)

How would you like to handle food and drinks? Would you like the caring committee to be responsible for that?

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If the caring committee is going to be responsible for food and drinks, then the caring comte liaison should then contact the Office Administrator to email the congregation as appropriate for potluck donations.

- 2) If the service will not be held in the Barn, the caring committee member should distribute information about the service location and time to the Office Administrator and the Webmaster so that information can be properly posted to the members and friends of PCUUC. **It is important that the caring committee get some kind of feedback from the Office Administrator and Webmaster, either an email, in person or phone confirmation that this information was received and followed up on.**
 - a. If the service is not at the Barn, the caring committee member can ask the family if they are planning a reception at the different location or if they would like a separate location for the reception.
- 3) The caring committee should provide a name and contact information to the family member of one individual from the Worship Committee who is willing to be a liaison between the family and any service planning that might be required.
- 4) After the service is over, the worship committee liaisons, board liaison, caring committee member, and minister may meet to debrief about the process and change any of these guidelines as needed or requested.

Worship Committee Liaison: Service Planning Questions :

- 1) The worship committee liaison should develop a list of musicians who would make themselves available to the congregation in times of loss.
- 2) The worship committee member should distribute to the family a list of musicians who may be available for the service.
- 3) **The worship committee liaison should contact the family after a few days to see if the family member has contacted these musicians because the family member may not be able to reconnect due to grief.**
- 4) The worship committee liaison should then contact the minister and have a conversation about putting together an order of service, service set-up, clean-up, and childcare. Together, they should be able to identify help within the congregation and be able to connect tasks with willing volunteers. **It may help to set up a regular list of people who are willing to be called upon in times of crisis; the caring committee and worship committee chairs may want to brainstorm about people from which to develop this list.**

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Minister's Responsibilities:

- 1) The minister should contact the family immediately and provide pastoral care as needed or requested.
- 2) The minister should talk about a service and service planning with the family and contact the worship committee liaison so that they can plan the service logistics and develop an order of service.
- 3) The minister will contact the office administrator for OOS preparation and then remain in contact with the family, worship liaison, and caring committee liaison.
- 4) The minister will be available to the caring committee and worship liaison for any questions or special issues that come up in ministering to the family and the congregation.

Grief Work Follow-up:

- 1) Members of the caring committee shall divvy up the responsibilities of communication after a loss.
 - a. Cards should be sent at time of death, the 6 mo., 1 year, and first birthday anniversaries after the death of the deceased to the family by a caring committee member.
 - b. If the card is returned, due to a move or change of location, the minister & Office Administrator should be contacted and they should work to update the family's information.
 - c. Members of the deceased family should be invited to a grief support workshop, given every other year, by the minister. Workshops and support groups will be run at the minister's discretion and dependent on space availability.
 - d. **Once every two years, the worship committee chair, the caring committee chair, and the minister should meet to review these guidelines and discuss any changes.**