

Regarding Funerals at St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church

Christians believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives them hope and cause for thanksgiving in the face of death. In this faith, we entrust those who have died to the infinite mercy and love of God.

—The Methodist Worship Book, England

A worship celebration following the death of a loved one does at least two things: It enables us to face the reality of our mortality, and comforts us in the celebration of another reality—life after death in God. As one of our creeds declares, *“In life, in death in life beyond death, we are not alone. Thanks be to God!”*

A service where the body of the deceased is present is referred to as the Homegoing Celebration/Funeral. A memorial service is appropriate when the body of the deceased is not present.

It is the commitment of the clergy and music leadership of St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church to claim and present a properly balanced and theologically sound experience for all who see God through worship at the time of death. To this end, the following are guidelines and suggestions that we offer to assist those who mourn, and those who look to tomorrow.

Bereavement Communication Flow

1. A call comes in for bereavement at the church, to a pastor, or on the emergency line.
2. The Congregational Care Pastor (CCP) is called if the call did not come directly to her/him.
3. The CCP notifies the pastoral staff through text or email message.
4. CCP or other clergy contacts the bereaved family to pray with them and offers assistance to the family with the process.
5. CCP notifies the Church secretary of death by phone, email, or text message.
6. Church secretary contacts family about a date for homegoing celebration/funeral and contacts Church administrator for space availability.
7. CCP makes 2nd call to the family for preliminary information and to set up a date to meet with the family and fill out Funeral Information sheet.
8. Church secretary sends out Bereavement Notice and coordinates repast (if applicable) with Celebration of Life Chair.

Planning a Homegoing Celebration/ Funeral at St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church



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To The Family

At the time of death, please contact one of our ministers and/or the Congregational Care Ministry office at 214.821.2970; during non-business hours the emergency phone, 214.563.0848, may be helpful. Conversations between the family and the minister will then proceed to define details about the homegoing or memorial service. While it will be the minister who guides you and your family through this important time, there are a few things that only the family of the deceased can do:

- There must be **one** person who speaks for the family with regard to decisions about the funeral. It will be the minister's responsibility to decide who this person is, in consultation with family.
- While friends and extended family certainly wish to help at the time of death, the staff will prepare, execute, and conclude the worship service and Wake if scheduled at the church. Ushers and greeters for the service will be provided by the church; ministry or other close church members, neighbors and friends will better serve in other ways.
- If there is a desire to have a repast at the church following the service, the minister will see to it that space is scheduled. If friends, or ministry or other close church members, or other small groups wish to help at the repast or provide some kind of food service, please discuss this with the minister.
- Music for the service, both choral and instrumental, must follow the same guidelines as for Sunday worship. Selections should be scriptural in nature and primarily focus on God, God's attributes, and giving thanks to God. The minister will consult with St. Luke's Music Ministry to arrange desired selections. **The family** may select a guest soloist in consultation with our Music Ministry leadership.

To The Family Cont.

- The contact minister will coordinate with the family any additional observances (i.e., Greek organizations rituals) and the timing of the ritual, whether before the Wake or before the Funeral if both the wake and funeral are held at the church.
- The central moment in any worship celebration, including homegoing celebrations and memorial services, is the proclamation of the Word of God: It is the proclamation of a resurrection faith in a sermon or meditation. There are moments in a homegoing celebration for specific remembrances and thanksgivings by family friends. We request that the personal words reflect the goodness and Christian virtues of the person.
- We reserve the right to intervene should the content or language be unbecoming of a Christian Service. The minister will be free to monitor and implement time limits should a speaker step outside the boundaries.

General Policies

1. Due to the size of our congregation, we are able to host member celebrations or for the member's immediate family. (spouse, children, parent, siblings)
2. Homegoing celebrations are not normally conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays. We recommend that the celebration be no longer than 2 hours.
3. If a wake is scheduled, it may be scheduled at St. Luke or at the funeral home. The family will work in consultation with the minister to determine if a wake will be scheduled and where.

General Policies Cont.

4. If St. Luke is to provide the repast, we will provide food for 75 people. If more than 75 people the cost will be \$125 per each increment of 25. Any additional requirements will need to be discussed with the Congregational Care pastor.
5. Expenses incurred for homegoings/funerals and memorials are as follows: No fee for members and their immediate family (as stated in #1). The fees for extended family of St. Luke members are: \$500 for the Sanctuary service and \$450 for the repast for 75 people . Please make your check payable to St. Luke "Community" UMC. An honorarium for the minister is at the family's discretion and is given directly to her/him.
6. Expenses incurred for homegoings/funerals, and memorials are as follows for Non-Members (those who are neither members nor extended family of St. Luke members):
\$1,000 for the Sanctuary service, \$300 for the DBH fellowship hall, and \$450 for St. Luke to provide food for the repast for 75 people.
7. Flowers are not a requirement for a homegoing celebration. If family and friends wish to have flowers, they will work directly with their chosen florist. The family should work with the funeral home to make proper distribution and/or disposal of flowers.
8. Resolutions: St. Luke will provide a Resolution for church members. The church secretary will send the Resolution to the church where the funeral will be held or funeral home, and to the family. If the funeral is held at St. Luke, the church will read the Resolution during the service and provide a copy to the family.