

# Memorial Services and Funerals

## A PLANNING GUIDE

DEAR **HNW** FAMILY...

*Houston Northwest Church serves our church family in a number of ways, not the least of which is care before, during, and after the loss of a loved one. We hope this information will provide you with a path to guide you during this significant time.*

*The inherent belief in the risen Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian service (either a funeral or memorial). Christ is our hope for eternal life and we offer this hope to the surviving family and friends that their beloved is now in God's eternal charge.*

*Planning a service can be a blessing to those in grief. A time to laugh and to cry as the stories are shared and retold. It is our pleasure to help you and your family.*

*For questions regarding Funeral or Memorial planning please call the church Office at 281.469.3389.*

Sincerely,

Alan Bugg  
Executive Pastor

## PLANNING THE SERVICE

### BEFORE DEATH OCCURS

Contact the Program Director of the funeral home of your choice and they will be happy to visit with you and provide a planning document.

### WHEN DEATH IS IMMINENT OR WHEN DEATH OCCURS

When a death is imminent our pastors are honored to come and pray with you. If there is time, please call the church office at 281.469.3389. We will make every effort to have someone come to you.

If this is after-hours, please call the church office and leave a message. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

### DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF SERVICE

If you wish for one of our pastors to conduct the funeral for your loved one, please visit with him before you schedule. If you prefer to use a non- HNW Pastor, contact us for further information.

Depending on the number of guests expected and facility availability, we will work with you to select an appropriate room.

# music

Music is an integral part of any worship service here at **Houston Northwest Church**. So often music can speak volumes when we are unable to speak ourselves. There is wonderful church music available in the traditional or contemporary styles. Your pastor will help you choose appropriate music for the service.

**Prelude:** The pianist will play for 20 minutes prior to the service. This will include requested hymns or a selection of the musician's choice.

**Processional:** The family will walk into the **service area** with the pastor and be seated.

**Solos and congregational hymns:** These complement the service and will be interspersed at the discretion of the pastor.

**Recessional:** The casket (if applicable), pastor and family exit the **service area** to this music usually played in an uplifting tempo.

**Postlude:** The pianist will play until the guests have left the **room**.

## TYPE OF SERVICE

There are several types of services to consider:

1. A traditional funeral (where the casket is present), graveside to follow
2. A memorial service (where there is no casket)
3. A graveside service only
4. A graveside service prior to the memorial service

Additionally, a visitation can be scheduled before the service on the service day or the evening before. Often, the family provides a video tribute. The video must be in DVD format, ready to play. Receptions can be held in one of the hospitality rooms either before or after the service.

## MAKING SERVICE PLANS

Following the selection of the date, time, place and type of service the **pastor** will arrange to gather the family. This meeting can either be at the family home or at the church. This will be a time to **gather information**, select favorite scripture and discuss musical choices.

The Funeral Program Director works behind the scenes to handle all logistics. She visits with the family and often the funeral home to make sure all details are covered. She contacts the musicians and soloists, as well as the custodial services and sound technician necessary to present a proper and fitting tribute. She will ask about the number of guests you might expect and discuss processional procedure and seating of the family and honored guests.

## FEES

There are no fees for funerals or memorials held at **HNW**. If outside musicians or vocalists are invited, the family will be responsible for those participants. If asked, the Funeral Program Director will provide a list of suggested **honorarium**, which is only a guideline.

## FLOWERS

Floral offerings are a wonderful way to pay tribute to a loved one. The beautiful plants and blooms honor God's creation of life.

Removal of the arrangements is the responsibility of the family or the funeral home.

# scripture

Scripture is another way to enhance the funeral/memorial experience. We encourage you to make your personal favorites known to your pastor.

## **Psalm 16: 9, 11**

Therefore my heart is glad

## **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd

## **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry to the Lord

## **Isaiah 40: 28-31**

Do you not know?

## **Ecclesiastes 3: 1-15**

There is a time for everything

## **Matthew 5: 1-12**

The Beatitudes

## **Matthew 18: 3-4, 10, 14**

I tell you the truth

## **Matthew 19:14**

Let the little children come to me

## **Matthew 25: 42-45**

I was hungry, I was thirsty

## **John 3:16**

God so loved the world

## **John 11:25**

I am the resurrection and the life

## **John 14: 1-4, 18-19, 25-27**

Do not let your hearts be troubled

## **Romans 8: 31b-32, 35-39**

If God is for us

## **1 Corinthians 13: 1-13**

If I speak in the tongues

## **1 Corinthians 15: 51-57**

Listen, I tell you a mystery

## **Revelation 21: 1-5**

Then I saw a new heaven

## **The Lord's Prayer**

## MEMORABILIA

Frequently, family members set up a memory table(s) in the entry area with photos, albums, awards or certificates of achievement, hobby examples or other personal items relating to their loved one. We provide the table(s) and cloth(s) for these displays.

## FUNERAL HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

These are a few of the things you should rely on the funeral home to provide or give guidance:

- Casket or urn
- Cemetery choice — plot or niche space
- Flowers
- Processional to cemetery
- Visitation, if held at the funeral home
- Obituary in the local newspaper
- Guest book

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorial gifts provide a meaningful way for individuals, families and groups to witness their thanksgiving for the life of a loved one. To give a gift in another's memory is a faithful expression of respect and love that goes beyond death. Your gift to the **HNW** Memorial Fund will enable our church to provide special items or ministries.

The Memorial Committee will maintain a list of needs in the church which are not funded in the church budget and which would be very suitable as a memorial gift. Items for memorial gifts would include — but not be limited to — items of a durable nature which:

- enhance the worship of God
- enhance the spiritual growth for all ages
- enhance the fellowship of the church
- provide facility needs for ministry of our church
- support church and denominational mission projects
- promote the mandates of the great commission and our church vision (Matthew 28:19-20)

# order of worship

This is a guide for a typical service at Resurrection.

- Prelude
- Family entrance
- Greeting
- **Prayer**
- **Eulogy**
- Congregational Hymn or other Music
- Scripture
- Special Music
- **Message,**
- Prayer
- Congregational Hymn or other music
- Dismissal and Blessing
- Family Recessional

For more information on memorial gifts please contact **Marilyn Maddox** (281.469.3389, [marilyn@hnw.org](mailto:marilyn@hnw.org)).

*The Funeral Ministry Staff will also assist with gifts offered to organizations such as the American Cancer Society, Boy Scouts, Hospice House or others of your choice.*

## FUNERAL HOMES, CREMATION FACILITIES AND CEMETERIES

There are many excellent providers in the **Houston** metro area. The church does not endorse specific providers. This is a very personal service and we suggest you interview and consult to make your decision.

## AFTER CARE

Your church does not want you to feel you are alone following your loss. We send grief booklets through the first year which offer words of hope and encouragement.

For information regarding current **GriefShare** groups, please contact the **church offices**.

---

### Houston Northwest Church

19911 State Hwy 249, Houston, TX 77070