

## Mountain Brook Baptist Church Funeral Preplanning Document

We live in a world marked by death all around us, and yet it can make us uncomfortable to think about or talk about death, either our own death or the death of someone we love. Yet we are also reminded of the inevitability of death; unless Christ returns first, one day we will all die. This truth is sobering. Death was not a part of God's original design or good purposes for his creation, but came into the world as a result of the fall, because of the brokenness of the world due to sin (Genesis 3). Even Jesus wept in the face of death at the tomb of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35).

Yet in that same story, Jesus also told Mary, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25 NIV). Because of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, we have confidence that he has defeated death, that those in Christ are in his eternal presence, and that one day we too will be raised to life immortal. We grieve, but we grieve as those with hope.

Funeral and memorial services are services of Christian worship. These services provide space for mourners to grieve and remember the person they love who has passed away. Such a service is a helpful part of the grieving process for those who mourn. These services are also occasions to proclaim the hope of the gospel, to remind each other of the certainty that one day, our faith will be made sight and we will experience resurrection, and to remember the promise that one day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

If you've picked up a copy of this resource, you may be in a stage where you are thinking about your own death and in the process of making arrangements, or perhaps you are helping a loved one make plans, or perhaps you are working through making arrangements for a loved one who has passed away. If you are working through this process and have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Amy Hirsch ([amy@mbbc.org](mailto:amy@mbbc.org)) or Wayne Splawn ([wayne@mbbc.org](mailto:wayne@mbbc.org)). Know that whatever season you may be in, our church is here to support you and to walk with you in the days to come.

## **Pre-Planning for the Service**

No one likes to think about their own death or funeral, much less plan it. But death is a part of life, and—until the Lord returns—something we will all experience. Along with death come decisions about final wishes, services, and wills, along with calling funeral homes, obtaining death certificates, and dealing with other administrative matters. It can be absolutely exhausting and paralyzing for someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one to have to make so many decisions so quickly, especially when they may not know what your desires would have been for songs in the service, speakers, or even the type of burial you'd like to have.

One of the gifts you can give your loved ones is documenting your final wishes. By taking time to consider these things and documenting your desires, you can help your loved ones to make decisions in their time of grief, knowing what you would have wanted.

This planning guide is designed to assist you in gathering your thoughts, pondering the choices that will be placed before your loved ones at your death, and conveying your recommendations to them at a time when that input is most needed. While your loved ones will ultimately be the ones responsible for making sure these choices are made, these suggestions will help guide them as they make decisions.

When you have completed the planning worksheets, return a copy of them to Amy Hirsch (amy@mbbc.org), and she will keep them on file for you. It is also recommended that you retain copies of these documents with your other important permanent records and inform the appropriate persons. If you bring your booklet to the church office, Amy can help you make copies so you can keep these on file.

## **Personal Preferences for Service**

Your Full Name:

Birth Date:

### Family Contact Information

Name and Relationship:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Name and Relationship:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Name and Relationship:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

## Types of Services

Memorial or Funeral Service | Committal or Graveside Service

- A Funeral Service is a service where the body is present in either a casket or an urn. Following the service, a Graveside Service or Committal Service takes place.
- A Memorial Service is a service where the body is not present. The internment of the remains has either already happened (either in a Graveside Service or Committal Service) or may be scheduled for another time.

Some choose to have small, private Graveside Services or Committal Services, where only family and close friends are invited to attend.

Please mark your preference below:

- Funeral Service  
 Memorial Service  
 Graveside Service Only  
 Committal Service Only

## Location of Service

The first decision in your planning should focus on where to hold the service, and often this depends on whether or not you are being buried or cremated. This will require providing a location for the ashes to be placed. You have the option of reserving a spot in the church's columbarium for your ashes.

Some people opt to have the visitation and service at a funeral home, which is an option. You may also choose to have the service at the church, either in the Sanctuary (seating capacity 650) or Chapel (seating capacity 120). If you plan to be buried, a Graveside Service could be performed before or after your service. If you are being cremated, a Committal Service for your ashes could be performed before or after your service.

Please mark your preference below:

- Funeral Home (please list location) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sanctuary  
 Chapel

## Preferences for Final Arrangements for Your Body

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation to Science

\_\_\_\_\_ Burial

\_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery (please list location) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Cremation

\_\_\_\_\_ Cremation and internment in columbarium (please list location) \_\_\_\_\_

### Note:

Mountain Brook Baptist Church has a columbarium with niche spaces available for members. The Reservation Fee for each niche is \$2,000. Additionally, the Committal Fee of \$400 per niche (i.e., \$200 per inurnment) provides for the opening/closing and engraving of the cover of the reserved niche. For more information or to reserve a space, contact Debbie Hix ([debbie@mbbc.org](mailto:debbie@mbbc.org))

## Planning the Service

### Scripture Requests

The Scriptures are a rich source of comfort and assurance in times of grief. We welcome suggestions of passages with particular meaning for the family of the deceased.

Old Testament Passages:

New Testament Passages:

### Music Requests

The Minister of Music or Associate Minister of Music will lead the congregation in song for the service. The church's organist or pianist will accompany unless other instrumentalists are requested.

Songs Requested:

Special Vocalists/Solo Requests:

### Additional Participants

The purposes of such services of worship are to glorify God, affirm our belief in the resurrection and everlasting life, and comfort those who grieve. The Senior Minister (unless otherwise requested) will lead the service, but family members and friends may offer personal reflections as well. (For the sake of time, it is recommended that no more than three people speak briefly.)

Additional Participants:

Note for Funeral Services (if applicable):

Pallbearers are needed when there is a casket or coffin involved. The usual number is six, but honorary pallbearers may number more.

Pallbearers:

### **Memorials and Flowers**

Do you wish for friends to send flowers to the church/cemetery/funeral home in your memory? If not, you may want to specify where memorials can be sent. Your friends will immediately want to know about memorials and/or flowers and will usually call the church for information. Unless specified, memorial gifts received by the church will be directed to the operating budget in memory of the deceased.

### **Pall or Flag**

A pall (a beautiful cloth with Christian symbols that covers the coffin or casket) or the American flag is appropriate to cover the casket. For memorial services, the church has a pall used to cover the urn while present in the Sanctuary or Chapel.

If you have served in the United States Military, then the American flag is an appropriate tribute to your service.

As an alternative, a blanket of flowers may be placed on the coffin or casket.

### **Legacy Giving**

As you are making this important step in pre-planning for your service, it is also an opportunity to evaluate and update several critical elements of your overall estate planning. This includes such documents as:

- Last Will and Testament
- Living Wills
- Organ Donation directives
- Powers of Attorney
- Burial of the Body or Cremation decisions

- Beneficiaries on bank accounts, life insurance policies, pension accounts, investment accounts, wills, and other estate planning documents
- Deeds to cemetery plots or columbarium niche (Plus funds to open grave and monuments and other burial expenses, even for cremation.)

Clearly, there are many estate planning considerations for you and your advisors to ponder, including viewing this process as a unique opportunity to reflect a statement of your faith and beliefs.

Including the church as a major part of your financial legacy provides a means to positively impact the spiritual lives of many future generations at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Individuals, at any point in their lives, can create a legacy gift to the church through the Mountain Brook Baptist Church/James D. Moebes Foundation. For more information, visit <https://mbbc.org/mbbc-james-d-moebes-foundation>.