

Plan Your Own Memorial (or Funeral)

By The Rev. Eileen Gebbie & Ms. Sunny Stewart
Ames United Church of Christ
2018 Version

Name(s): _____

Date of Birth: _____

Birthplace: _____

Attach a favorite photo here or make note of where it will be stored for use in your obituary and/or service program.

You

1. How would you like to list your family of origin (if at all) in an obituary?

2. Is there anyone else you would like to list as your survivors?

3. Sometimes families place obituaries in newspapers in multiple cities or in other publications like alumni magazines. Please list your preferences here:

4. Did you attend a high school, college, or university that you would like mentioned? List it here and say why it mattered to you:

5. What was your primary/most meaningful occupation (paid or unpaid, as with a stay at home parent)? Why? How long did you do it for?

6. Are there any professional, military, social, or service organizations that you would like noted? Why were you a member of it/them?

7. What three words best describe your life or how you hope to describe your life, in the end? Why?

Your Body

8. What would you like to have happen to your body?

- a. Cremation
- b. Embalming
- c. Donation to science

9. If cremation, how would you like your cremains to be disposed of?

a. Burial at _____

b. Scattering at _____

c. Other _____

10. If embalming,

a. Where would you like to be buried? _____

b. Do you have a preferred set of clothing and/or jewelry? _____

- c. Would you like a
 - i. headstone
 - ii. plaque

11. What should it read? _____

Your Service

12. Would you like a

- Funeral with open casket visitation the night before
- Funeral with visitation the night before and an open casket at the service
- Funeral with visitation the night before but a closed casket at the service
- Memorial service with cremains
- Memorial service without cremains

13. Where would you like the service to be?

- Ames UCC
- The church I have most recently attended immediately before my death.
- Another specific church: _____
- Another specific location: _____

Please review the templates for secular and religious services and common readings. Please mark them up with your preferences.

14. Would you like your survivors to hold a reception? What type? In any particular location?

15. Often survivors like to display photos and objects from their loved ones' lives. Do you have any preferences or suggestions in that regard?

16. Would you like your survivors to invite gifts to be made in your memory to your church or another charitable organization?

Template for a Secular Service

PRELUDE

GREETINGS

Leader: Peace be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Friends, we gather here in the protective shelter of healing love. We are free to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness, and know that love endures. We gather here as one people, conscious of others who have died and of the frailty of our own existence on earth. We come to comfort and to support one another in our common loss. We gather to hear a word of hope that can drive away our despair and move us to offer all of creation our praise. We gather to commend to creation with thanksgiving the life of _____ as we celebrate the cycles of life.

People: I will walk in the presence of love.

INVOCATION

Come among us Life,
You who cast the planets into space,
and cradle the sparrow in her nest.

Come among us Peace,
You who bless the poor and the broken,
and stand by the sad and the strong.

Come among us Love,
You who dance in the silence,
and shine in the darkness.

HYMN OR RECORDED MUSIC OR OTHER PERFORMANCE

READINGS (2-3)

HYMN OR RECORDED MUSIC OR OTHER PERFORMANCE

LIVING MEMORIES (2-3 people)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING John O'Donohue , modified

Now is the time to free the heart,
Let all intentions and worries stop,
Free the joy inside the self,
Awaken to the wonder of this life.

Open our eyes to see the friends
Whose heart recognize our faces as kin,
Those whose kindness watchful and near,
Encourages us to live everything here.

See the gifts the years have given,
Things our efforts could never earn,
The health to enjoy who we want to be
And the mind to mirror such mystery.

COMMENDATION

Leader: We are all, through blood and breath ever wading in the waters of life eternal.
Today we commend _____ to the ancient and mysterious well of that living water.
Receive him/her with care. Allow him/her to flourish in ways we cannot imagine.
Let him/her yet find ways to yet live in our hearts.

All: Amen.

HYMN OR RECORDED MUSIC OR OTHER PERFORMANCE

BENEDICTION

For all who seek Love,
May Love go with you
For all who embrace Life,
May Life return your affection.
For all who seek a right path
May a way be found
And the courage to take it,
Step by step.

Amen.

Template for a Christian Service

PRELUDE

GREETINGS

One: The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

One: Friends, we gather here in the protective shelter of God's healing love. We are free to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness, and know that God cares. We gather here as God's people, conscious of others who have died and of the frailty of our own existence on earth. We come to comfort and to support one another in our common loss. We gather to hear God's word of hope that can drive away our despair and move us to offer God our praise. We gather to commend to God with thanksgiving the life of _____ as we celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection.

Many: I will walk in the presence of the loving God.

PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

All: Holy God, grant that your Holy Spirit may intercede for us with sighs too deep for human words. Heal our wounded hearts made heavy by our sorrow. Through the veil of our tears and the silence of our emptiness, assure us again that ear has not heard, nor eye seen, nor human imagination envisioned, what you have prepared for those who love you; through Jesus Christ, amen.

HYMN OF CELEBRATION

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH Based on Romans 8

One: Let us say what we believe.

All: We know that in everything God works for good with those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. We are sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE (one to three readings – scripture and/or other readings)

HYMN OF REFLECTION

LIVING MEMORIES AND/OR EULOGY

HOLY COMMUNION?

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION

One: Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for your word; it is a lamp for our feet, a light for our path. We thank you especially that in the night of our grief and in the shadows of our sorrow, we are not left to ourselves. We have the light of your promises to sustain and comfort us. Through our tears, give us vision to see in faith the consolation you intend for us. In your mercy, grant us the unfailing guidance of your saving Word, both in life and in death; through Jesus Christ the lover of all.

Many: Amen.

One: We thank you that for ____ all sickness and sorrow are ended, and death itself is past and that she has entered the home where all your people gather in peace. Keep us all in communion with your faithful people in every time and place, that at last we may rejoice together in the heavenly family where Jesus Christ reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Many: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN OF SENDING

COMMENDATION

One: Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant _____. Acknowledge, we humbly pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, and a child of your own redeeming. Receive her/him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the company of the saints in light.

Many: Amen.

BENEDICTION

One: May God bless you and keep you. May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God look upon you with kindness and give you peace.

Many: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Favorite Scripture and Readings

Psalm 16:5-9

God is my chosen portion and my cup, you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places, I have a goodly heritage. I bless God who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep God always before me; because God is at hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;
 he makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;
 he restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
 thy rod and thy staff,
 they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil,
 my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
 for ever.

Psalm 98:4-9

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
Sing praises to God with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before God.
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of God,
for God is coming to judge the earth.
God will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

Isaiah 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 43:1-3a

But now thus says the LORD,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-9

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.
What gain have the workers from their toil?

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 25: 31–46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’

And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’

Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Luke 18:15-17

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”

John 14:1-3, 25-27

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going...I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 15:1-11

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand; To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive; Pardoning that we are pardoned;
Dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Favorite Hymns

General

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

Beautiful Jesus (*fairest Lord Jesus) 44

Borning cry 351

Bring many names 11

For the beauty of the earth 28

God of our life 366

God reigns o'er all the earth 21

Love divine, all loves excelling 43

The church's one foundation 386

I Am the Light of the World 584

On a Hill Far Away (The Old Rugged Cross)

195

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Eagle's wings (you who dwell...shelter of the Lord)

787

How great thou art 856

You who dwell...shelter of the Lord (eagle's wings)

787

Glory to God Hymnal

Fairest Lord Jesus (*beautiful Jesus) 630

Assurance, comfort & hope

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

Amazing grace 547

Blessed assurance 473

Great is thy faithfulness 733

Great is your faithfulness 423

Jesus love me 327

I Come to the Garden Alone (In the Garden) 237

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me 10

How small our span of life 636

Communion (short songs)

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

Be known to us in breaking bread 342

Come, my way, my truth, my life 331

I come with you to meet my Lord 349

Sing! Prayer and Praise Songbook

Come to the table of grace 112

Gospel/folk

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

I'll fly away 595

Precious Lord, take my hand 472

Shall we gather at the river 597

What a covenant (leaning...everlasting arms) 471

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

What a fellowship (leaning...everlasting arms) 774

Glory to God Hymnal

Just a closer walk with thee 835

Prayer/healing

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

How deep the silence of the soul 509

Softly & tenderly 449

Sweet hour of prayer 505

What a friend we have in Jesus 506

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Healer of our every ill 612

I heard the voice of Jesus say (tune: kingsfold) 611

Glory to God Hymnal

There is a place of quiet rest (near...heart of God)

824

Nature & “colors”

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

All things bright & beautiful 31
Colorful creator 30
De colores 402
God of the sparrow 32
Heaven & earth, & sea & air 566
In the bulb there is a flower 433
Let us with a joyful mind 16
Now the green blade rises 238

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Morning has broken 556

Patriotic

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

For all the saints 299 & gg 326
How beautiful, our spacious skies 594

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Eternal father, strong to save 756
O beautiful, for spacious skies evangelical 888

Glory to God Hymnal

My country, 'tis of thee 337
O beautiful, for spacious skies evangelical 338

Psalms & psalm references

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

Ps. 20 rejoice, you pure in heart 55
Ps. 23 God is my shepherd 479
Ps. 23 my shepherd is the living God 247

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Ps. 23 my shepherd, you supply my need 782
Ps. 23 the king of love my shepherd is 502
Ps. 37 be still, my soul 488
Ps. 42 as pants the hart for cooling streams 481

Ps. 46 my life flows on in endless song (how can I keep from singing) 476--(v. 1, 2 & 4)
Ps. 68/105 sing praise to God (*praise to the Lord) 22
Ps. 84 praise to the living God 8
Ps. 90 o God, our help in ages past 25
Ps. 104 we worship you, o God 26
Ps. 144 jerusalem, my happy home 378--(v. 1, 3, 4 & 6)
Ps. 145 joyful, joyful, we adore you 4

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Ps. 68/105 praise to the Lord (*sing praise to God) 858

Responses

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

And God will raise you up (eagle's wings) 775
Let it breathe on me 288
Spirit of the living God 283
Sweet, sweet spirit 293

Sing! Prayer and Praise Songbook

Be still and know 111

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Come and fill our hearts our hearts (confitemini domino) 528

Sending

New Century Hymnal (UCC)

Be now my vision 451
Blessed be the tie that binds 393
Go, my children, with my blessing 82
God be with you 'til we meet again--(v. 1-3) 81
Lord, dismiss us with your blessing 77

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal

Be thou my vision 793