

# Memorial Planning Guide



Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Jesus said, I am the resurrection and I am life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of hell and death. Because I live, you shall live also.*

These words of Jesus from the Holy Gospel according to John appear at the very beginning of our United Methodist liturgy for death and resurrection to remind us that although this is challenging and painful time, God has opened the door to eternal life for us and for those we love. As you begin to grieve the loss of your loved one, I invite you to hold the space for grief and sadness, but also hope in our resurrection to everlasting life with God our Creator and those we love.

As a community of faith, Grace UMC is here for you and your family during this time. This memorial planning guide serves as a road map for some of the logistical things as we move through the remembrance and the burial of your loved one. In this resource, we are providing information about planning funeral and memorial services, receptions, internment in our Columbarium, and possible ways to remember and honor your loved one through financial gifts.

Please feel free at any time in this process to contact me by email ([pastor@grace4denver.org](mailto:pastor@grace4denver.org)) or phone (office- 303-756-1595; cell- 720-432-7627) with other questions.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seth" followed by a small cross symbol.

**The Rev. Seth O'Kegley, MM, OSL** (*he/him/his*)  
Lead Pastor, Grace United Methodist Church

# Memorial Planning Checklist

In the immediate wake of your loved one's death, here is a checklist to follow for planning services through Grace United Methodist Church. Please note that depending on what funeral home you work with, some of these services may be covered by their offerings.

- Notify church office of death.
- Speak with Pastor Stacy or Pastor Seth (they will call you).
- Review family calendars and call church office to schedule service.
- Speak with Pat Moore about the reception (she will call you).
- Speak with Julie Tipton about internment if you plan on using Grace's Columbarium.
- Meet with the pastor who is overseeing the service in person or on Zoom to plan memorial service.

On the day of the service:

- Arrive approximately 20-25 minutes before the service/visitation.
- Bring guest book for guests to sign.
- Deliver honorarium checks to Pastor Seth for distribution.

Contact Information:

**The Rev. Stacy Collins, Pastor of Congregational Care**

scollins@grace4denver.org (303) 587-1960

**The Rev. Seth O'Kegley, Lead Pastor**

sokegley@grace4denver.org (720) 432-7627

**Jan Teves, Church Secretary**

office@grace4denver.org (303) 756-1595

**Pat Moore, Reception Coordinator**

ropmoore@msn.com (303) 799-4840

**Julie Tipton, Columbarium Team Lead**

jtpathway@comcast.net (720-314-0207)

# Standard Worship Service

Below is the standard United Methodist Service of Death and Resurrection followed by a sample bulletin. While various parts may be altered (scripture, prayers, music) the service will follow this generic outline. Before meeting to plan the service with Pastor Seth, please review this general outline and the sample bulletins and prepare any scripture or music that is significant to you or your loved one.

Entrance and Gathering

Hymn

Prayer

Witness to a Faithful Life

*Family or friends may share memories or stories of the deceased.*

Scripture Lessons

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:1-8; Isaiah 40:28-31; Exodus 14:5-14, 19-31; Isaiah 43:1-3a, 5-7, 13, 15, 18-19, 25, 44:6, 8a; Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13; or others.

Psalm: 23, 130, or others.

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 15:1-2a, 12, 16-18, 20, 35-38 a, 42b -44, 54-55, 57; Revelation 21:1-7; Romans 8:1-2, 11, 14, 17-18, 28, 31-32, 35-39; 2 Corinthians 4:5 -18; Ephesians 1:15 -23; 2:1-10; 1 Peter 1:3 -9, 13, 21-25; Revelation 7:2 -3, 9-17; John 14:1-4, 18-19, 25-27; Luke 24:13-35; John 11:1-4, 20-27, 32-35, 38-44; or others.

Sermon

*The preacher speaks to the life of the deceased and the story of God's love through Jesus Christ.*

Hymn or Special Music

Prayers of Commendation and Thanksgiving

Hymn

Holy Communion

*The celebration of Holy Communion is optional but always encouraged.*

Dismissal with Benediction

## Hymn

*"Hymn of Promise"*

UM Hymnal #707

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;  
there's a dawn in every darkness bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;  
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.

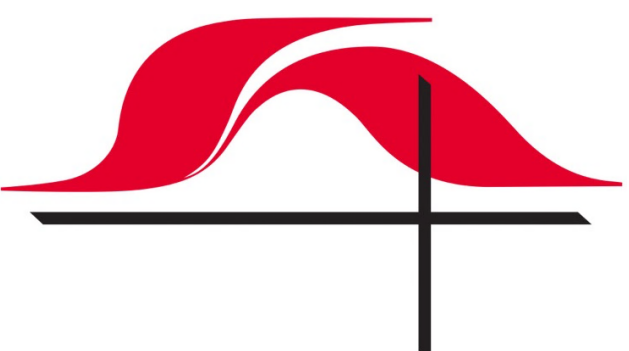
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

## Dismissal with Blessing

### Worship Leaders

*The Rev. Seth O'Keefe-Gibson, OSI, presiding*

*Amita Lockwood, pianist*



**MAXINE YVONNE SPODEN**

**August 23, 1927 - June 20, 2023**

**A Service of Death  
and Resurrection**

**August 12, 2023  
11:00 am**



## Welcome and Greeting

The Rev. Seth O'Keegley-Gibson

## Hymn

"*How Great Thou Art*"

UM Hymnal #77

O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the worlds thy hand have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed.

### Refrain:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
how great thou art, how great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee;  
how great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur  
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze; *Refrain.*

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away my sin; *Refrain.*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim, my God, how great thou art! *Refrain.*

## Opening Prayer

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our sister +Maxine. We thank you for giving her to us, her family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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 mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

## Witness to a Faithful Life

Jessica Tower, Mary Spoden, Madaline Spoden

## Scripture Reading

John 14:1-4. 18-19, 25-27

Jesus said, "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 will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 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."

## Eulogy

### Special Music

"*Previous Lord, Take My Hand*" by Thomas A. Dorsey

### Commendation

#### Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of love, we thank you for all with which you have blessed us even to this day: for the gift of joy in days of health and strength and for the gifts of your abiding presence and promise in days of pain and grief. We praise you for home and friends, and for our baptism and place in your Church with all who have faithfully lived and died. Above all else we thank you for Jesus, who knew our griefs, who died our death and rose for our sake, and who lives and prays for us.

#### 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

# Suggested Honorarium Donations

We seek to be as cost efficient as possible when planning services for your loved one. Please find below a schedule of suggested honorarium donations for various services. While these are our set fees, please know we are open to conversations if these fees are challenging for you and your family.

Pastor \$200.00

*Please check with the pastor who is assisting you to see how checks should be made.*

Organist \$150.00

*Please make checks payable to Anita Lockwood or the organist that is playing.*

Soloist, if used \$75.00

*Please make checks payable to soloist.*

Sound Technician, if used \$40.00

*Please make checks payable to sound technician (name to be provided by church).*

Custodian \$100.00 (\$50 for service, \$50 for reception)

*Please make checks payable to Nathan Teves.*

Reception \$150.00

(more information on the next page)

*Please make checks payable to United Methodist Women.*

## Receptions

Receptions that follow funerals or memorial services are provided by the Grace Unit of the United Women in Faith (UWF; formerly the United Methodist Women). They women take care of the planning, purchasing, preparation, serving, clean-up of the reception to make the day as easy as possible for you and your family.

The UWF provides the following for your reception:

- Napkins, plates, cups, utensils
- Table coverings
- Punch, coffee, tea, water
- Fruit
- Cookies

If you would like other items, you are welcome to provide those, but the UWF is limited to the above items. Grace UMC does not allow alcohol on the premises, but beverages other than those listed above are allowed if you provide them. Pat Moore is the contact person for the UWF and receptions. She will reach out to you once you have reserved a date for the service. There is no need to contact her.

# Columbarium

The Grace United Methodist Church Columbarium is a sacred place to inter loved ones and a place for quiet worship and meditation. It is called the Memorial Circle of Life, as a celebration of all life. It includes 105 crypts under grass, radiating out from the center sculpture. Granite pavers, engraved with names and birth and death dates, surround the grass circle. In addition to the underground interment location, we have a wall with individual bricks honoring people who are buried elsewhere.

Many people feel comforted with the location within Grace grounds, as a small, sacred place with an uplifting sculpture of doves and a place to sit on benches and honor their loved ones.

In 1989 a small group selected by the Reverend Glen Chambers met the challenge to find a place on Grace church grounds to inter the cremains of Grace members. Don Combs, architect and member of Grace United Methodist Church, designed the Memorial Circle of Life Columbarium and the sculpture in the center.

Members report that:

- "It solved our choice of a place to be interred and it was close to our church and friends. It gave us a sense of peace."
- "Our decision to be placed in the Columbarium at Grace was two-fold. This will help avoid last minute emotional decisions for us and our family, and it's comforting to know we can still be a part of Grace."
- "I can't figure a more pleasant place for my ashes to rest."

Some living Grace members have chosen the Columbarium already. Some family members choose it after their loved ones pass on. The Columbarium Committee explains the setup, the requirements, the fees for Right to Use in no-pressure discussions. You are welcome to explore this possibility by reaching out to Julie Tipton, the Co-Lead of the Columbarium Team at [jtpathway@comcast.net](mailto:jtpathway@comcast.net) or (720-314-0207).

# Memorial Giving

**The Gifts and Memorials** fund at Grace United Methodist Church exists as an opportunity for people to honor living friends and family with a gift made in their name or a memorial for a loved one who has passed. These monies remain in an account until a request for disbursement is made by the family for a certain item or to a certain area of the church or a request is made by a committee in the church for funds to meet a need not covered in the budget. Examples of the former would be monies designated to the choir account for music or to the youth group. Examples of the latter would be when we raised funds for solar panels or to replace the boiler or purchased new paraments for the altar or new advent candles. Whenever possible, the chairperson tries to contact the family to explain a fund request and places an acknowledgment in church publications letting the congregation know that funds from a certain person's account have been used. Thus, use of the account is a joint agreement between the Gifts and Memorials committee, the family, and the pastor.

Options for giving include giving a check or cash in the offering plate on Sunday mornings, mailing a check to Grace United Methodist Church at 4905 E Yale Ave., Denver, CO 80222, or giving online at [grace4denver.org](http://grace4denver.org). Please include the person's name and address making the gift or memorial so proper acknowledgement can be made and the name of the person being honored. We do let the family know that a gift or memorial has been made in their loved one's name.

Grace United Methodist Church is thankful for the financial support from these gifts and memorials to help us carry out our ministry to our members and the community.



# Finding Hope in the Darkness of Grief

## Remember a few scriptural truths

When you are dealing with grief your emotions race and your thoughts are scattered. In the middle of this confusing and hard time, you need to remember a few simple truths from the Bible. God will use them to help you understand what you are experiencing and to give you hooks on which to hang your emotions. You can't prepare for the death of a loved one. Whether death results from a sudden accident or a long illness, it always catches us unprepared. Death is so deeply emotional and stunningly final that there is nothing you can do ahead of time that will help you sail through your moment of loss. Those who knew that death was coming and those who were taken completely by surprise will go through many of the same things. The Bible includes many poignant stories that mirror our experience. The story of the death of David's son, Absalom, gives us a picture of a grieving parent. Absalom plotted to take David's place as king of Israel. When his rebellion was crushed, he was killed, even though David had ordered his soldiers to take him alive. David knew that Absalom's actions might lead to his death, but that didn't lessen his grief. 2 Samuel 18:33 tells us, "and the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

## Death shakes us to the core

David's cry is the cry of every grieving parent. Whether it is unexpected or predictable, death shakes us to the core. The pain is inescapable. Don't feel guilty or embarrassed if you feel unprepared to face it. There's no way to be ready for what you are going through. Death was not part of God's original plan. One reason death is so hard to accept and understand is that it's completely out of step with the life God planned for this world. The apostle Paul calls death our "enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). Death is the enemy of everything good and beautiful about life. It should make you sad and angry. Death reminds us that we live in a world that is terribly broken; it's not functioning according to God's original design, where life was meant to give way to life, on into eternity. It's okay to treat death as sad and unnatural. God encourages you to mourn. Death was never meant to be. When you recognize this, you will hunger for a final restoration of all things. You will long to live in a place where death has been defeated.

## It's normal to feel alone

You are never alone in the darkness. Death is one of the loneliest experiences of human existence. The circumstances you are dealing with are individual and unique. It's normal to feel as if no one has been through what you're experiencing. It's normal to feel all alone, even when you are surrounded with people. But the death of a loved one is a universal experience, and a company of mourners surrounds you. Yet there is an even more powerful way in which you are not alone. Our Savior Jesus Christ has taken another name, Emmanuel, or "God with us." This name reminds you that, as you came to know and love Jesus, you literally became the place where God dwells. You have a powerful Brother, Savior, Counselor, and Friend who not only stands beside you, but lives within you. Jesus' presence makes it impossible for you to be alone in this moment of pain (John 14:15-20).

# Things to Try

## 1. Be honest about your emotions.

Being a Christian does not mean being a stoic. God doesn't want you to hide your emotions or wear a happy face mask. God wants you to live in complete honesty. In the Psalms, God invites us to bring our honest grief to him. Psalm 34:15 depicts God as a loving father, watching over his children and listening for their cries. Psalms 13, 22, 42, and 73 picture God's people running to him in grief and confusion. Don't hide your emotions; when you are struggling, run to the one who knows you completely and loves you faithfully. As Peter says, "Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

## 2. Run to where comfort can be found.

When he was suffering, Saint Paul said an amazing thing about the Lord. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort..." (2 Corinthians 1:3). All real, lasting comfort has its source in the Lord, because God is the source of compassion and comfort. God exercises loving power on earth so that comfort will be available. Whenever anyone, anytime, anywhere experiences real comfort, it is because God, the source of all true comfort, has made it happen.

## 4. Open yourself up to God's helpers.

God designed life to be a community project. We need the help of others in our lives to become the people God created us to be (See Ephesians 4:1-16 and 1 Corinthians 13). When your heart is breaking and your eyes are blinded by grief, you need the help of others more than ever. The godly friends that Jesus has put in your life can help you see things you would not see by yourself. They can help you remember God's goodness when you are tempted to forget. They will exercise faith for you when your faith is weak. When you are in despair, they will bring the comfort of Christ to you. And they will gently warn you when you are tempted to get off track. Don't try to go through your sadness alone. God has placed helpers in your life. Look for them and be patient with them. Since no human comforter is perfect, their comfort will not be perfect either.

## 5. Be thankful.

Even in the darkest of moments, you can find clear signs of God's presence and love. The apostle Paul says it this way. "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Notice the little preposition "in" in the middle of the verse. We are called to be thankful in every situation. This doesn't mean that you will always be thankful for what you are going through, but it does mean that you can be thankful for what God is giving you to sustain you in your grief. In your darkness, there are always little lights of God's grace and love to be found. Search for those lights. Pay attention to the good things God is doing, even in this dark moment, so your grief can be mixed with heartfelt gratitude.



*Divine Darkness, when the night of grief swallows our feeble light, help us to feel you lovingly wrap us in that very darkness.*

*Hidden God, we are angry. Where are you? Show yourself. Explain yourself. Feel the heat of our frustration and fear we share only with you.*

*Burden-lifting God, our grief weighs us down. It feels as if our backs will break along with our hearts. We are smothered by the weight. When it feels as if we can bear no more, Loving Shepherd, bear us forward.*

*O, Answer to all Mysteries, we have unanswerable questions. We struggle with "If only ..." and "What if?" and "Why?" Give us grace to live the questions in the confidence that we don't have to have all the answers.*

*Our Beginning and Our End, you have taught us about life; now teach us about death. Comforting Mother, let us lay our wearied selves next to you, to sense your breath, to feel your warmth, to hear you tenderly call our name.*

*Prayer by R. Preston Price*