

Understanding the Christian Funeral

OLMSTED COMMUNITY CHURCH

The Christian Funeral

A Christian funeral is a gathering of the faith community for the worship of God. Its purpose is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to minister to those who mourn, commending to God the life and faith of the one who died. In a time of loss, we seek the presence of God so that God may act in our lives to bring comfort and peace. In turn, we find strength to live our lives more faithfully in serving God. Our church offers such a service to any family requesting it, whether or not the deceased was a member of this or any other congregation. With Jesus, we affirm our church as “a house of prayer for all people.”

What We Believe about Death

As Christians—followers of the risen Christ—we believe that death is not the end of human existence. It is the end of life upon earth as we know it, but it is also the beginning of a new kind of life in closer company with God; a life worth celebrating. It is our belief that we live and move and have our being in God. Our bodies are the vehicles through which our personhood is carried. They are instruments which suffer damage and wear out over time. The Biblical promise of eternal life allows us to have hope beyond this mortal existence.

The Role of the Pastor

When a family member dies, you are urged to call our minister right away. If previous arrangements have not been made, the experience of a pastor is indispensable when making crucial decisions. The pastor is available to be a

spiritual guide for matters that need immediate attention and to offer pastoral care to those who mourn.

The Place for the Service

A regular worship setting is the most appropriate place to hold a service as it represents the spiritual home of its congregation. Our Sanctuary and Chapel are open and free of charge for all persons—save for a small custodial fee—regardless of church membership or life status. You may wish to have the church musicians participate in the funeral. A fee is requested for such services.

Forms of Service

There are two options available: a *funeral* or a *memorial* service. The funeral service, with a casket present, usually concludes with a brief committal at the graveside. The memorial service, without the presence of the casket, allows for burial before or after the service.

The Service as Celebration

Every service is a celebration of the life and faith of the one who died and a public witness to the comfort God offers in times of loss. The traditions of our church and the wider Christian fellowship include readings from the Bible and prayers of thanksgiving. In addition, hymn singing, selections of secular readings, testimonials and personal remembrances may be shared.

Final Plans

Our Christian hope for resurrection and eternal life depends on God's miraculous grace alone and not on the physical presence of a body. Both cremation and earth burial are acceptable, as are options for donating one's body for research, green burials, and memorial services without burial. Cremation may occur after a funeral service, or before or after a memorial service.

Reception after the Service

If we can accommodate a gathering, our church offers the use of Fellowship and the Fireside Room with no rental fee. Custodial charges will be requested.

Four Essential Documents

Every person is urged to plan ahead with the following documents:

- A will
- A funeral plan or checklist (with a copy filed in the church office)
- Healthcare power of attorney / living will
- Financial power of attorney

These documents are the best way to notify and share your desires with those who are carrying out your wishes. We hope they will help you start a conversation about these issues with those you love.

Flowers and Memorial Gifts

Giving flowers is a traditional way through which friends and family may express sympathy. We recommend maintaining the simple dignity of the Sanctuary or Chapel with a limited number of floral pieces.

In lieu of flowers, many families ask friends to contribute memorial gifts to the church or favorite charity of the deceased. The Memorial and Endowments Committee of Olmsted Community Church welcomes your contributions in support of the church's ministries and can provide envelopes for ease in making gifts.

Three Ways to Give through Your Will

These sample bequest forms are suggestions only. Legal documents should always be reviewed by your own attorney.

Giving by Percentage: "I give, devise and bequeath to Olmsted Community Church, of Olmsted Falls, Ohio ___% of my adjusted gross estate to be used by its governing board in carrying out its corporate objectives and purposes."

Giving a Specific Amount: “I give, devise and bequeath to Olmsted Community Church, of Olmsted Falls, Ohio the sum of \$_____ to be used by its governing board in carrying out its corporate objectives and purposes.”

Giving What’s Leftover: “All the residue of my estate, including real and personal property, I give, devise and bequeath to Olmsted Community Church, of Olmsted Falls, Ohio. This devise and bequest is unrestricted and the governing body may use and expend the same for the benefit of Olmsted Community Church in any manner it deems appropriate.”

Other Gifts

Endowment Fund, Use of Income Only: “I give the sum of \$_____ to the Endowment Fund of Olmsted Community Church of Olmsted Falls, Ohio, in perpetuity, the income therefrom to be annually appropriated, expended and used solely for the charitable purposes of said institution.”

Where Not Survived by Descendants: “Provided finally, that if I am not survived by any lineal descendant or descendants, I give the remainder of all my property to Olmsted Community Church, of Olmsted Falls, Ohio, to be used by its governing board in carrying out its corporate objectives and purposes.”

Olmsted Community Church

7853 Main Street

Olmsted Falls, Ohio 44138

OlmstedCommunityChurch.org

Scripture Suggestions

Comfort, Assurance & Hope

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd.

Psalm 27 The Lord is my light and salvation.

Job 19:25-27 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.

Ecclesiastes 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.

Isaiah 25:6-9 The Lord will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 40:1-11 Comfort, comfort my people.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted...

John 5:24-27 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

John 14:1-4 Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. 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, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.

1 Corinthians 15:56-57 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God Cares for Us

Psalms 23 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...

Psalms 61:1-3 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I...

Psalms 94:19 When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.

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 41:10, 13 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand ... For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

God Has a Great Plan for All

Psalms 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 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...

1 Corinthians 15:53-58 For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Romans 14:7-9 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Philippians 1:21-23 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Suggested Hymns

We recommend selecting one or two hymns for congregational singing and using one or two others for pre-service music or solo vocal music. Hymns chosen should reflect the grace and goodness of God and bring comfort to the mourners. Please discuss other hymn selections with the pastor.

For All the Saints

Amazing Grace

How Great Thou Art

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Lead On, O King Eternal

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Lift High the Cross

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

For the Beauty of the Earth

Rock of Ages

Now Thank We All Our God

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

How Firm a Foundation

Fairest Lord Jesus

Be Thou My Vision

I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

Hymn of Promise

Olmsted Community Church

7853 Main Street

Olmsted Falls, Ohio 44138

OlmstedCommunityChurch.org