

In Your Time of Grief

We wish to extend to you our heartfelt condolences and a promise of prayerful assistance in this challenging time. As a spiritual community of care, we know how overwhelming the death of a loved one can be. In the spirit of Jesus' compassion for others, we wish to walk with you in any way we can through this time of grief and thanksgiving, whatever your spiritual path or faith perspective. One of the ministers would be willing to meet with you and your family, at the earliest mutually convenient time, to support you and arrange for a memorial service or a funeral. Please contact the church office to make an appointment.

What is the difference between a funeral and a memorial service? At a funeral, the body is present, the cemetery committal follows the church service, it is held within a few days of the death and the funeral directors are involved. At a memorial service, the body is not present, having already been interred or cremated, therefore it is not necessary for the funeral directors to be involved in the service and it may be held at any time, even weeks or months later. There is no need for any remains to be present for a memorial to take place.



The Service

When a loved one dies our emotions can be mixed. We will have tears, sorrow and even relief while wanting to celebrate their lives. We trust in the mystery of God's love but can be reluctant to say good-bye. The funeral or memorial service acknowledges this tension, reflecting the need to proclaim two stories.

The memorial or funeral service celebrates the life of the person who has died, giving time to say good bye to your loved one as you support one another in this time of grief and receive support from the larger community.

In the service we also take time to be reminded of the story of God's love made known through Jesus and the meaning it gives life, death, and life beyond death. We ultimately commend the deceased into the care of God, the Author of Life.

The minister will work closely with you and your family to ensure that the service is carefully planned, reflects your faith and celebrates your loved one's life and love.

Services are normally held in the *sanctuary* which has a capacity of about 600. Our smaller *chapel* is available for services when 40 or fewer people are expected.

If your loved one has been cremated, the urn may be brought in to the sanctuary and placed on the communion table as part of an opening procession. Alternatively, it may be placed in the sanctuary prior to the service. A photo of the deceased may be placed on the communion table with the urn.

When a coffin is present for the service, you may arrange for pre-service viewing in the chapel. The coffin is usually not open during or after the service. If no funeral home is involved in the service, the family is responsible for providing ushers.



Remuneration

An all-inclusive fee is applied for a memorial or funeral service that supports our ministry at Robertson-Wesley United. This includes the use of the sanctuary, the services of our Music Director and an honorarium for the minister involved. There are additional fees for any soloist supplied by the church and any reception that is requested to be held in the church. Please speak to the Office Administrator for current amounts.

Reception after Service

It can be valuable for a grieving family to meet with other family members and caring friends and for family and friends to take time to refresh themselves before journeying on. If you wish to have a reception at Robertson-Wesley after a service, our Memorial Hall is a comfortable venue and our catering ministry is available to help you with arrangements. Our office administrator can give you the contact information for the catering group. When you call, the catering representative will discuss with you the expected number of guests, menu, and total cost based on the number of people attending the reception. We will invoice you the day of the service and you can pay by cash, *paypal* or a cheque made payable to *Robertson-Wesley United Church*.

A table can be provided for memorabilia, photographs, guest book, and the like. Flowers from the service may be placed on the buffet table and elsewhere in the hall. These flowers can be taken home by the family or you can make other pre-arrangements. Leftover food can be taken home or delivered to a social service agency like the Bissell Centre, Operation Friendship (for seniors), the Youth Emergency Shelter, or a men's or women's shelter if that is the preference. The committee needs permission from you for food to be brought to one of these agencies.

Memorial Garden

A family connected to Robertson-Wesley may choose to place the ashes of a loved one in our Memorial Garden. This is an area outside the church between the south-west entrance and the chapel wall. A small engraved plate (with the person's name, and years of birth and death) will be placed on a memorial plaque. A page will be created with your help in our Memorial Book. These are both kept in the chapel. The interment can take place immediately after a service here or somewhere else. It can also take place at a later date (in the winter months the ashes will be stored in the vault until spring). A formal agreement is signed by families choosing this option.

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Memorial and Funerals Services

Celebrations of Life at Robertson-Wesley

