

Highlands United Methodist Church

1045 20th Street South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205
Office Number: 933-8751

The Christian Funeral

Highlands United Methodist Church, as a ministry, offers a funeral or memorial service for the family, loved ones, and friends of the departed. The liturgy (order of service) follows the United Methodist Book of Worship and the United Methodist Hymnal. The liturgy is an Easter liturgy. It finds all meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we too, shall be raised. The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty 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 our Lord.” This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn. As we remember and celebrate a person’s life through this liturgy of the church we do so acknowledging our loss and grief. While the liturgy itself is largely the same for all people there are opportunities to select particularly meaningful scriptures and hymns. The planning of the service usually takes place between the pastor and the family. This is an important and sacred time meant to honor any funeral/memorial service plans made previously and offer the ministries of the church to the bereaved. The Service of Death and Resurrection is primarily for the family, loved ones, and friends of the departed.

Link to Methodist Service: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/a-service-of-death-and-resurrection>

Clergy

Highlands has ordained ministers on staff available to counsel family members and offer guidance in planning the service. Clergy staff will coordinate and lead funerals and memorial services in the church. Families may request that a guest minister or lay speaker also assist with the service. In consultation with the family of the deceased, Highlands’ clergy staff will contact and coordinate with the guest preacher or speaker regarding his or her role in the service.

Music

Highlands’ music staff will provide and coordinate music for the funeral and memorial services held at the church. In the event that Highlands music staff is not available, Highlands Choirmaster and Organist will designate substitute musicians. A listing of appropriate hymns is available through the church office. Our policy is for live music during the service. If desired by the family, Tower Bells can be played before and after the service. An option of tolling by the Tower Bells is also available. The fees are reflected on the last page.

Vergers

A Vergers is a lay leader possessing a deep understanding of the liturgies of all worship services and who also is responsible for assisting the clergy with the logistics of services, particularly memorial and funeral services. Specifically, the Vergers is responsible for ensuring that the

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Sanctuary or other designated space is prepared and ready for the service; for meeting with the family, lay readers, visiting clergy and other individuals with roles in the service to ensure they know what to expect; and to guide and direct the participants through the service. The Verger also assists the clergy for the inurnment of ashes in the Columbarium or internment of a casket at a graveside service or mausoleum. In some regards, the Verger serves as the “stage manager” for such services to ensure that the services flow easily and that all those present experience a beautiful, worshipful service.

Ushers and Greeters

Depending on the availability, the church will attempt to arrange for ushers and greeters.

Facilities of the Church

Highlands will provide, to its members, its sanctuary without charge. The church will furnish standard printed worship bulletins to aid the family and congregation in following the worship service.

Services with a Casket/Urn

There are several options the family may choose for the Christian funeral. The family may want to inter the casket in a mausoleum crypt or grave at a cemetery before the memorial service. Likewise, the ashes contained in an urn may be inurned in a grave or columbarium niche prior to the memorial service. The family may wish to have a traditional funeral service where the body is present, either in the casket or in an urn during the service. The choice of a memorial service or a funeral service will not change the meaningful nature of the worship.

Prior to the funeral, the casket may be brought into the sanctuary by way of the parking lot. The elevator is located just inside the parking lot entrance in the Greeting Space.

Viewing of the body during the visitation should take place prior to the service. Before the service begins, the casket will be closed. If the church’s pall is requested, please notify the office in advance. The pall may not leave the sanctuary for graveside services. If the U.S. flag is used on the casket, the family of the deceased should provide it to the church. Flowers should not be placed directly on either the church pall or the U.S. flag.

In the case of cremation, the urn will be placed on the pedestal in the opening of the chancel rail. The church pall, designed for the urn, is available.

Guest Registry Books

Guest registry books should be provided by the family and delivered to the church for the ushers to display, if desired.

Visitation

The family may plan a time of visitation in the Greeting Space before or after the memorial service to receive friends.

After Service Reception

The Fellowship Hall may be used for a reception after the service if it is not scheduled for another event. Caterers are responsible for the set-up, break down and clean up. Use of the kitchen is not included. Additional Sexton and Security fees may apply.

Flowers

If a pall or United States flag is not desired to cover the casket, a blanket of flowers may be used. Floral arrangements may be placed on the church's pedestals on each side of the casket or on either side of the altar cross on the retable. They must be placed in the two brass urns provided by the church which use #5 liners. Flowers may not be placed directly on the altar table. It is requested that sprays and potted plants from the florist, along with personal memorabilia, be displayed in the Narthex or the Greeting Space only. Flowers will need to be picked up before the building is closed for the day.

Memorial Gifts

A listing of Memorial options is available through the church office. The staff can provide information regarding any of these areas of special interest in the life of Highlands United Methodist Church.

Fees and Honorariums

Several of the individuals who will play a role in the funeral service, such as the organist, other musicians, the verger, and security officers, are not full-time employees of Highlands United Methodist Church. As such, the church recommends that such individuals be compensated for any time, expense, or inconvenience incurred by these individuals. Any members of the Highlands UMC clergy who participate or lead the worship service do so free of charge. However, if the family wishes to do so, they may provide such clergy member with an honorarium. A list of required fees and recommendations for honoraria is provided below:

Fees:

Choirmaster and Organist:	\$300
Security (2 Officers for 2 hours)	\$200 (total)

Off-duty uniformed Birmingham Police Officers as required by church security policy.

Weekend Support Staff:

Required only if service occurs outside of regular church business hours (M-F 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Sexton	\$200
Sound Technician	\$100

Optional:

Verger (Honorarium)	\$200 suggested
Additional Musicians	\$250 each
Soloist(s)	\$100 each
Tower Bell Chimer	\$100
Highlands' Acolytes/Crucifers	\$ 50 each