

**PREPARING FOR DEATH:
A Resource Guide**

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This manual was prepared by a subcommittee of the Deacon and Nurture Commissions of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

We express appreciation to College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana, which generously shared their manual, Dealing with Death: A Guide to Resources.

We used that manual as a model and borrowed extensively from it as we developed our own.

We also thank Mitch Kingsley for providing accurate information on legal aspects and Chiles-Laman Funeral Homes, who freely shared information regarding funeral arrangements and costs.

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Dealing with Death

Although death is a part of human experience, many of us prefer not to think or talk about it. Eventually we will face the death of a family member or friend and sooner or later face our own death.

Because death is a mystery, many prefer to deny it. However, a biblical faith helps us face the reality of death squarely. We die and our bodies return to the earth. But God, by the mighty and mysterious act of resurrection, recreates us for fellowship in the Divine Love. Resurrection is the ultimate act of God's care. So, the New Testament can declare, "Death has been swallowed up in victory." (I Corinthians 15:54).

Although Christian faith does not resolve all our anxieties about death, faith is a resource to help us embrace death with hope. The faith community can also provide understanding and invaluable support as we face the losses death brings.

This booklet was prepared by a committee of the Nurture and Deacon commissions to provide information and to encourage planning as a way of preparing us to deal with death. Spending time now making decisions and sharing those decisions with people close to us can bring a sense of peace and will make it much easier to finalize plans when the time of death comes.

Resources Offered by First Mennonite Church

As a faith community, we seek to express God's healing and hope to one another during times of grief and loss. We extend our support tangibly by offering inexpensive boxes for cremains and funeral meals.

First Mennonite Church provides resources to its members and regular attenders as they face end-of-life questions and make plans for their eventual death. By early planning, members can make rational choices without the pressures of grief or sorrow at the time of death. Early planning also allows discussion of plans with family and friends so that they are prepared to carry out the wishes of the deceased.

1. Pre-planning. Individuals are invited to share with one of the pastors their thoughts and feelings about death and their wishes regarding funeral plans. These suggestions can be placed in one's membership file. They can always be changed or adapted. Many persons have found a sense of relief and freedom in such prior planning. pp. 30-31
2. When a serious illness or death occurs, call a pastor. The pastor is prepared to represent the faith community and help mobilize the resources of the congregation in appropriate ways. For many people the Sunday school class and/or small group become significant care resources at the time of serious illness or death.
3. The church is prepared to help plan a funeral or memorial service. This service is a time for

appropriate remembrance and celebration of the person's life and opportunity for the community to reach out to God in a service of worship. "In a funeral or memorial service, we seek the presence of God in our grieving and give thanks for the life of the person who has died. God's grace is the center and circumference of the service. This comes to expression in the singing of hymns, prayer, Scripture reading, and preaching. An obituary and other reflections on the person's life should be included in this spirit." (Minister's Manual edited by John Rempel pg.186) The pastor will help plan and will arrange for contacting persons the family wishes to have participate. Although a number of factors (namely travel arrangements for family members living at a distance) will influence the timing of the funeral or memorial service, this service is often held close to the time of death to allow the grieving community an opportunity to express their care for the family and provide a time to remember the loss of life as a community.

4. Specific help and other resources offered by the church and available to families may include:

- a. Someone to go with the family to the funeral home to help with decisions regarding the selection of services needed.
- b. Boxes for Cremains. The construction of simple wooden boxes is a ministry of love and support available to members and minor children, who are not yet members, of First Mennonite Church. The work of construction is done by individuals who volunteer their services. Boxes for cremains are available for a donation of \$50.00.

- c. Visitation at the church with church members assisting.
- d. Gathering around the table nourishes both body and soul. Eating together is an important part of healing in the grieving process. First Mennonite Church provides a meal or refreshments for family and friends following a service of worship. We ask the family for whom the meal is prepared to pay \$2 per person attending the meal to help cover the cost of expenses. (\$1.50/person for light refreshments)
- e. Members of First Mennonite Church have free access to burial plots in Ebenezer Cemetery.
- f. Grief support and special needs groups.
- g. Resources in the church library on coping with serious illness, dying, death and grief (also see the bibliography at the end of this booklet).
- h. Referral to people or agencies who have expertise in areas of particular needs.

The Stewardship of Dying

All of life, including our final days and our death, is a gift of God. As a church we encourage members to live graciously and generously with the blessings God has bestowed. Our decisions concerning death are part of our life stewardship.

- 1. Plan to minimize your funeral costs.** Funeral directors are prepared to offer a wide range of services and products from the simple and inexpensive to the more deluxe and expensive. Traditionally, Mennonites have been modest in their values and have opted for a less expensive service and casket. Visit a funeral director now and ask for a range of services and the price of each service. Keep in mind that First Mennonite Church offers some services, such as a box for ashes, outlined in the previous section. With your spouse, family members, or other trusted friends, select the services in the price range that reflect your values.
- 2. Have an up-to-date will.** A will has been called the “crowning act of Christian stewardship.” Unless one leaves a will, the state will decide how one’s possessions should be distributed and how one’s loved ones should be cared for. Decide how much your children need. Decide how much to designate to the work of the church. Choose a competent executor to settle your estate. Select a guardian to provide a good Christian home for minor children. Seek the services of an attorney to document your wishes in the necessary legal language. Some may wish to discuss with an attorney the possible benefits of a **living trust** as an alternative to a will. Depending upon the value of one’s estate and/or the kinds of assets held, the living trust may offer significant advantages. Because a trust need not go through probate court, reduction or elimination of probate expenses and greater privacy may be to your advantage.

3. Let your family know where everything is. A carefully written will is of no value unless it can be found. Prepare a memorandum to your survivors stating the location of your will, insurance policies, tax returns, safe deposit boxes and keys, burial lots, stock certificates and deeds. Outline funeral and burial wishes. Sign and date the memorandum and give copies to your children or other family members. Instructions should be reviewed at least every three to five years or whenever there are major changes in one’s life. The pastors are available for consultation in this process.

4. Consider the implications of joint ownership. Most spouses/partners own property in joint tenancy, with rights of survivorship. In these cases, upon the death of a spouse, the house or bank account passes automatically to the survivor. But joint ownership is not without its problems. Estate taxes may be higher. Joint ownership is not a substitute for a will. The larger one’s estate, the more one needs to consider other kinds of ownership, such as individual ownership, tenancy in common or revocable trusts. Check this out with an attorney or an estate planner. Everence can offer resources that include faith, values, and financial considerations.

5. **Estimate your estate's potential "death tax."** Your estate may be larger than you realize. List all your assets based on present fair market value. At death the federal and the state governments impose an estate tax. The larger your estate, the more you may need careful estate planning to minimize these taxes. Consult an attorney or tax accountant.
6. **Consider how your funeral will be paid for.** Estimate the cost of the funeral and burial arrangements you desire. Consult with an attorney about advantages and disadvantages of payment plans.
7. **Be sure the estate has adequate liquidity.** An executor will need enough cash to pay taxes and administration costs of settling the estate. Allow for adequate cash in savings accounts or readily marketable investments. Life insurance is another way to provide liquidity.
8. **Project your need for life insurance.** Financial protection is the principal function of life insurance. People who have lived long enough to accumulate an estate may not need life insurance. Younger people with substantial family needs may need some protection. Purchase only as much coverage as you need. Investigate the usefulness of lower cost term insurance rather than whole life.
9. **Investigate survivors' benefits from Social Security.** If you are covered under Social Security at your death, cash benefits may be available to your surviving spouse and children. However, there are certain qualifications. Check with a Social Security office to determine how much your survivors can count on.
10. **Check your pension plan death benefits.** The primary purpose of a pension plan is to provide continuing retirement benefits. Some plans include death benefits so that if one dies before retirement, the plan makes payments to designated beneficiaries. Investigate the provisions of your pension plan.
11. **Consider Advance Directives** (see pages 12-15). Advance directives are written statements that express your preference and wishes about health care decisions (especially end-of-life care) when you can no longer speak for yourself. There are three major types of advance directives:
 - a. A Living Will
 - b. Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (DPAHC)
 - c. Ohio DO NOT Resuscitate-Comfort Care (DNRCC) or Comfort Care Arrest (DNRCC-A)
12. **Transfer some assets during your lifetime.** Consider giving some of your things to children, heirs, or other recipients now. Consider transferring some assets to church causes, either as outright contributions or into plans that provide lifetime income. There may be significant tax advantages. Gifts can include: cash, land, stocks or bonds, or treasured possessions. Consider designating some of your treasured possessions to children or other heirs so that at the time of death your wishes are known.

Advance Directives: Instructions

At any age it is important to remember that although we are mentally or physically capacitated today, there may be a time or circumstances in which we are not able to make decisions for ourselves. For instance, a serious accident or medical event may leave us temporarily or permanently unable to understand complex health information or to articulate our wishes. Advance Directives give adults over the age of 18 the ability to determine *in advance* how they would wish their healthcare to be provided in the future and/or to designate the person they would want to speak on their behalf. It is not contrary to Mennonite or Christian belief to state one's wishes for end-of-life care in the form of advance directives. The three major directives serve specific functions and may be used by healthcare providers under differing circumstances.

Sample forms of the three major advance directives (or website addresses where they can be found) are enclosed in this booklet. Periodically review your advance directives to ensure that they express your present wishes and include up-to-date information.

1a. Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (DPAHC):

Assigning a DPAHC is a wise move. This document names a person whom you would want to speak for you, only in the event that you are temporarily or permanently unable to communicate, unconscious, or unable to make sound judgments or decisions related to healthcare. Your physician will determine if you are incapacitated and unable to speak for yourself. You do not have to have a terminal or incurable disease or be near death. The person you designate does not have to be related to you and it is recommended that you consult with any person you choose before designating them as your DPAHC.

13. **Counsel for transfer of assets.** In addition to your attorney and accountant, the Mennonite Foundation, 1110 North Main Street, Goshen, Indiana, (574-533-9511) is a source of guidance and counsel. The Foundation is particularly interested in helping Mennonites become faithful stewards of accumulated possessions. Older persons should inquire about charitable trust arrangements or about including your favorite church charities with a bequest. Such a gift is a marvelous way to carry out the biblical plan of Jubilee—the redistribution of resources for the work of the church at the close of life.

14. **Burial plots.** (See page 19)

15. **Memorial funds.** Memorial funds are a way of supporting charitable causes you believe in deeply. Further, a memorial fund is a tangible way for friends to show their support. Include memorial instructions on the pre-arrangement sheet filed with the funeral director and in the church office.

It is important that you choose someone who is familiar with you and your wishes and feels able to assume this responsibility. Your DPAHC is only empowered to make healthcare decisions on your behalf (not to transact other business affairs). In the event that you do not name a DPAHC and cannot make healthcare decisions, Ohio law stipulates that decisions may be made by your next-of-kin (as they exist or are available) in the following order: a legal guardian, spouse, adult children, adult siblings, parents, or other adult relatives. Executing a DPAHC does not require an attorney or notary, and may be witnessed by two adults (neither may be your attending physician, the administrator of a long-term health facility where you reside, or related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption). No one may execute a DPAHC on your behalf.

1b. Living Will: A living will is an instrument that expresses one's wishes for health care under certain circumstances. Under Ohio law a living will may be invoked if and when you have been determined by two or more physicians to be in a terminal condition, have been admitted to the hospital for 48 hours or longer, and are considered to be permanently unable to speak for yourself. While Ohio law is rather restrictive concerning the conditions for invoking a living will, your statement of intent can be very helpful to your physician(s) and family. A living will also offers the opportunity to state your wishes concerning artificial nutrition and/or hydration at the end-of-life. Executing a living will does not require an attorney or notary, and may be witnessed by two adults (neither may be your attending physician, the administrator of a long-term health care facility where you reside, or related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption). No one may execute a living will on your behalf.

1c. Ohio DNR Comfort Care: In order to serve people who do not meet the restrictive criteria for invoking a living will, yet who may have a terminal or life threatening condition, or who are nearing end-of-life, and are still able to speak for themselves, Ohio established the Ohio DNR Comfort Care law. This law allows people to forego heroic procedures which would *prolong your dying process, rather than prolong your life*. DNR means "do not resuscitate" and gives nursing homes, emergency medical personnel, or hospital personnel permission to forego cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), which includes chest compressions, electric shocks or mechanical ventilation in the event that your heart should stop or that you stop breathing. However, healthcare personnel must take all steps necessary to provide physical and emotional comfort (such as comfortable positioning, clearing the airway, use of oxygen, or providing pain medications). There are two options available through the Ohio DNR: Comfort Care is typically used by persons who are electing to forego active or curative treatment for their condition and wish only to be kept comfortable throughout the end-of-life; Comfort Care Arrest is chosen by persons who wish to continue active or curative treatment up until such time that they may experience cardiac or pulmonary arrest. This is a standardized document executed in consultation with your physician and **MUST** be signed by a physician. It does not require an attorney or notary. If you have an Ohio DNR it is wise to keep a wallet card for identification.

[www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/DNR/dnr1.htm]

- 2.**Any advance directive may be revoked at any time by so stating orally or in writing. All revoked copies of your advance directives should be destroyed and notice of your revocation given to persons who hold copies. In the event that you execute new written directives, you should distribute these new instructions to all who hold copies.
- 3.**Copies of your advance directives should be given to family members, the church office, one's physician, hospital, and attorney. (Remember, the "safest place" may not be accessible to healthcare personnel or your family in the event of a medical emergency. Your wishes cannot be followed if they are "safely" stored in a file and no one knows that they exist!) Hospitals are mandated to inquire about the existence of your advance directives, and they have varying policies regarding filing of advance directives. Blanchard Valley Regional Health Center (Bluffton and Findlay campuses) will accept copies of your advance directives and store them for retrieval if you are admitted as an inpatient. At many hospitals a copy must be presented upon admission to the facility. Nursing homes are also required to ask about advance directives when you are admitted and will maintain copies in order to honor your wishes. It is wise to carry a wallet card indicating the existence of one's advance directives, in case of illness or accident in another locality.
- 4.**If a physician refuses to abide by your duly executed advance directives, you or your spokesperson should request a consultation of the hospital ethics committee (if you are an inpatient), request another physician, or seek legal advice. Physicians must follow the laws of the state in which they practice and may only invoke advance directives as allowed by law and accepted medical standards of practice. Often a patient's medical situation does not allow for their advance directive to be invoked, thus creating a potential conflict or impairment of physician-patient communication. It is important to attempt to clarify these medical and legal issues.
- 5.**The church office will refer you to members with expertise in these matters if you have questions.

Sample 1
Living Will Declaration
(Complete form inserted in this booklet)

Declaration made this _____ day of _____, _____.

I _____ being at least eighteen (18) years old and of sound mind, willfully and voluntarily make known my desires that my dying shall not be artificially prolonged under the circumstances set forth below, and I declare:

If at any time my attending physician certifies that: (1) I have an incurable injury, disease or illness; (2) my death will occur within a short period of time; and (3) the use of life-prolonging procedures would serve only to artificially prolong the dying process, I direct that such procedures be withheld or withdrawn, and that I be permitted to die naturally with only the performance or provision of any medical procedure or medication necessary to provide me with comfort care or to alleviate pain, and if I have so indicated below, the provision of artificially supplied nutrition and hydration. (Indicate your choice by initialing or making your mark before signing this Declaration):

_____ I wish to receive artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, even if the effort to sustain life is futile or excessively burdensome to me.

_____ I do not wish to receive artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, if the effort to sustain life is futile or excessively burdensome to me.

_____ I intentionally make no decision concerning artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, leaving the decision to my health care representative.

In the absence of my ability to give direction regarding the use of life-prolonging procedures, it is my intention that this declaration be honored by my family and physician as the final expression of my legal right to refuse medical or surgical treatment and accept the consequences of the refusal.

(Example of other instructions that may be added)

It is my wish that, at the time of my death, any of my body organs that are usable (and desired by organ donation facilities) be made available for donation.

I understand the full import of this declaration.

| | | |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Signature | Date | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| City | State | County |

The declarant has been personally known to me, and I believe him/her to be of sound mind. I did not sign the declarant's signature above for or at the direction of the declarant. I am not a parent, spouse or child of the declarant. I am not entitled to any part of the declarant's estate or directly financially responsible for the declarant's medical care. I am competent and at least eighteen (18) years old.

Witness _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Local Information for Funeral Planning

Services offered by the funeral director

1. Clients may choose the services they desire from the funeral director. Costs for various services are itemized.
2. Pre-arrangement of funeral home services is possible, either selected services or complete funeral arrangements.

Viable options for body disposal

1. Burial
2. Cremation
3. Donating the body for medical research. (This must be pre-arranged; see pages 22-23.)

Timing for disposition of the body

1. If death is natural and the family chooses burial, it can be arranged after proper filing of the death certificate, having secured a physician's signature and a burial permit.
2. If a death is accidental or a homicide, the coroner will be notified and may order an autopsy. This investigation does not usually delay the process of funeral arrangements. There is no charge to family for a mandated autopsy.
3. Is an autopsy desired? Autopsies may be done when there is a sudden or unexplained death, or the family wants specific disease information for the family medical history. The decision can be communicated to the doctor or the funeral home. If the death occurs in the hospital, the decision should be made before the body is taken from the hospital. There may be a charge to the family for this.

Embalming

1. If there is no viewing, embalming is not required in Ohio in most circumstances.
2. If the body is transported interstate, embalming is required.
3. If the body needs to be held over 24 hours for any reason, either embalming or refrigeration is needed.

Burial plots

1. Plots can be pre-arranged and paid for, or they can be purchased at the time of death by the funeral director or family.
2. Bluffton has two cemeteries: Maple Grove and Ebenezer. In addition, Pleasant Ridge in Pandora and Clymer in Mt. Cory are also available. Costs and requirements are very similar (with the exception that burial plots in Ebenezer Cemetery have a minimal fee of \$150 to members of First Mennonite Church).
 - a. The cost of a plot includes the plot and perpetual care.
 - b. Most cemeteries require a vault (additional cost).
3. An interment fee is charged for opening and closing the grave.

Cremation

1. Chiles-Laman offers cremation services. There are also crematories in Cridersville and Van Wert.
2. The body must be held 24 hours before cremation in Ohio (to avoid destroying evidence of foul play).
3. Embalming is not required if there is no public viewing.
4. A casket is not necessary, but some type of container is required. The crematory or funeral home has inexpensive containers. One can rent a casket from a funeral home for viewing prior to a cremation.
5. The funeral director takes care of the documents required for cremation:
 - a. Death certificate
 - b. Authorization permits
 - c. Notification of Social Security
6. The funeral director can make all arrangements.
7. The funeral director or family and friends can transport the body to the crematory.
8. Although it depends on one's choices regarding viewing, embalming and use of rented casket and mortician services, in general, direct cremation is less expensive than the usual viewing and earth burial practices. However, viewing is possible and then cremation may follow the funeral service.
9. Ashes are returned to the family in a container.
 - a. The state of Ohio permits ashes to be scattered. If they are scattered on private property, the permission of the property owner is required. If they are scattered on one's own property, no permit is needed.
 - b. Ashes can be buried at a cemetery. Some cemeteries may require a small vault. The First Mennonite Church casket committee may build a small wooden box for burial of ashes.
 - c. Urns are available from the funeral director.

Death Certificate

A physician and the funeral director sign the death certificate. It is filed with the County Health Department. Copies are available through the funeral director. Additional copies, if needed, can be purchased later from the Health Department.

Body or Organ Donation

Donating the body for medical education or research

If you plan to donate your body for medical research, you must make arrangements in advance with a medical school. (The funeral director can provide the necessary information, including the registration form from the medical school. A fee is charged at the time of registration.) The medical school will keep a copy of the forms in their file, and you will keep a copy. At the time of death, the funeral director will make the arrangements.

After the research is completed, the body is cremated. The medical school will bury or return the ashes, as you prefer.

If you donate your body for research, it is still possible and appropriate to have a memorial service.

Donating organs for transplants

It is best to document one's desire to donate acceptable organs before death. In Ohio the front of the driver's license has a place to indicate your desire to donate organs. Since July 2001 this declaration on one's driver's license is legally binding. A registry is maintained of all drivers desiring organ donation. Complete information is available in *Faithful Decisions: Organ and Tissue Donations*, a resource kit from Life Connections of Ohio, available in the First Mennonite Church library.

Since suitable circumstances for major organ donation (heart, lung, liver and kidney) arise from the sudden death of otherwise healthy people, discussions between medical personnel and families allowing for organ donation will occur rapidly.

Prior signed statements from victims are not mandatory if family members are unified in their desire to give someone else life out of their own tragedy. While major organ donation may require a decision before brain death is certified, other organs, such as skin, bone and eyes, can be donated within the hours after death. Gifts of body parts can be a source of hope and comfort to families in otherwise tragic circumstances.

Currently, in Ohio, hospitals are required to notify an organ procurement organization (OPO) of every death occurring in the hospital. Only if the OPO determines that the body may have organs suitable for donation is the family then approached. It is possible to have a conventional viewing and funeral after the removal of body parts.

Checklist of Steps to Take

Following a Death

- _____ Call a pastor or church office. (The pastor will be a support and resource for you in completing the next steps.)
- _____ Call a funeral home to set an appointment to make arrangements for care of the body and its burial.
- _____ Call all significant people to inform them of the death.
- _____ In consultation with pastor and funeral home, set day, time and location for funeral/memorial service. (The service usually takes place three days after the death. This allows one day for the announcement to appear in the newspaper and another day for visitation. The service can be later for several reasons such as accommodating persons traveling from a distance.)
- _____ Set visitation day, time and location. (Visitation usually happens the day before the service. It can be held at the funeral home or at the church.) Possible times: 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.; 2-5 p.m.; or 5-8 p.m.
- _____ Decide the type of service
- _____ Funeral Service. The body is present in the service. A brief graveside service and burial follow the funeral service.
- _____ Memorial Service. A graveside or interment of ashes is done with the family at another time.
- _____ Preparation for the funeral home
- _____ Biographical Information Sheet (If one has not already been completed, you may want to complete the one on pages 28-30 before going to the funeral home.)
- _____ Bring set of clothes
- _____ Social Security Number
- _____ Military discharge papers, if applicable
- _____ Picture for newspaper if you desire

- _____ Number of death certificates needed (Copies are needed for each occasion where proof of death is required, mainly when assets are transferred by designation of beneficiaries, e.g. stocks, bonds, life insurance policies, and transfer of property.)

At the funeral home

- _____ Finalize hours of visitation and service
- _____ Give biographical information
- _____ Choose casket or container for cremains (or an FMC crafted container)
- _____ Choose memorial cards (optional)
- _____ Choose flowers (optional)
- _____ Give any instructions for burial service if you have special preferences:
 - _____ Do you want to be present while casket is lowered?
 - _____ Do you want to place flowers on casket?
 - _____ Do you want to shovel dirt on casket?
- _____ Number for meal following service (Include family, close friends and persons traveling from a distance. The congregation provides this meal.)

Plan service with pastor

- _____ hymns
- _____ scriptures
- _____ persons to be involved
- _____ music
- _____ remembrances
- _____ printed order of service

- _____ At visitation decide on arrangement of family members (family in one receiving line or scattered throughout the room) display of pictures and/or other items

Biographical Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Birth date: _____

Birth place: _____

Father's Name: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Current Church membership: _____

Spouse's name: _____

Place and date of marriage: _____

Children:

| Name | Birth Date | Address/Phone |
|------|------------|---------------|
|------|------------|---------------|

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
|-------|-------|-------|

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| _____ | _____ | _____ |
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| _____ | _____ | _____ |
|-------|-------|-------|

Siblings:

Birth Date:

Main occupations or employers: _____

Date retired: _____

Education:

High School _____

College _____

Other _____

Membership in clubs, significant organizations,
or voluntary service: _____

Suggestions for Funeral Arrangements

Location of will and other important papers:

Persons and organizations to be contacted:

| Name | Address/Phone |
|-------|---------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Newspapers to be notified: _____

Copies of this form can be shared with survivors and filed in the church office.

Date _____

For the sake of your survivors, you may wish to write your preferences for a funeral service. Copies of this form can be shared with survivors and filed in the church office.

1. I ___ do/ ___ do not have arrangements with a funeral home.

Funeral home preference: _____

2. My preference is:

- _____ embalmed and buried at _____ cemetery
- _____ burial without embalming or viewing
- _____ cremated: ___ ashes scattered, ___ ashes buried, or
_____ ashes returned to family
- _____ donate body for medical research

3. I prefer to have visitation or calling at:

- _____ the church with an
 - _____ open casket,
 - _____ closed casket,
 - _____ no casket.
- _____ funeral home with an
 - _____ open casket,
 - _____ closed casket,
 - _____ no casket.

4. Service preference relating to place, funeral/memorial service and burial:

5. _____ I want a funeral at minimal cost.
_____ I leave the financial arrangements to my survivors' discretion.

6. These scriptures and writings have been meaningful to me:

7. These hymns and songs are some of my favorites:

8. I would like, if possible:

a. the following persons to assist in the service:

b. I would suggest the following persons as pallbearers:

9. I suggest memorial gifts to be designated for:

10. Other preferences or requests:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Suggested Scriptures and Hymns

Many scriptures and hymns may be appropriate to include in a funeral or memorial service. The ones suggested here are not exhaustive but suggest areas of thought a family might choose.

Scriptures:

Psalm 23 "The Lord is my shepherd..."

Psalm 46 "God is our refuge and strength..."

Psalm 84:1-4; 10-12 "How lovely is thy dwelling place..."

Psalm 90 "Lord, you have been our dwelling place..."

Psalm 91 "You who live in the shelter of the Most High..."

Psalm 121 "I lift mine eyes to the hills..."

Psalm 139:1-18 "O Lord, you have searched me..."

Isaiah 40 "Comfort, O comfort my people..."

Isaiah 43:1-3 "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you..."

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens..."

John 11 "I am the resurrection and the life..."

John 14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled..."

Romans 8 "There is therefore now no condemnation..."

I Cor. 15 "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory..."

II Cor. 5 "...we have a building from God..."

Phil. 1:21 "For to me, living is Christ, and dying is gain."

I Thes. 4:13-18 "But we do not want you to be uninformed..."

"Therefore, comfort one another..."

I Thes. 5:1-11 "Therefore encourage one another..."

II Tim. 4:6-8 "I have fought the good fight..."

I Peter 1:22f "You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed..."

I John 3:1-3 "...that we should be called children of God..."

Rev. 14:13 "...Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord..."

Rev. 21:1-4 "...he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more..."

Rev. 22:1-5 "...the Lord God will be their light..."

Hymns:

(Hymn numbers come from *Hymnal: A Worship Book.*)

H 37 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
H 59 Sing praise to God who reigns
H 62 Who is so great a God
H 71 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee
H 114 In thee is gladness
H 118 Praise God from whom
H 121 Holy God, we praise thy name
H 143 Amazing grace!
H 203 Break forth, O beautiful heav'nly light
H 263 The strife is o'er
H 275 Lift your glad voices
H 303 Come, gracious Spirit
H 327 Great is thy faithfulness
H 328 O God, our help in ages past
H 332 Blessed assurance
H 336 When peace like a river
H 352 Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us
H 366 God of grace and God of glory
H 377 Healer of our every ill
H 412 We shall walk through the valley
H 425 Come, come ye saints
H 486 God of our life
H 491 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
H 526 In the rifted Rock I'm resting
H 545 Be thou my vision
H 553 I am weak and I need thy strength

H 576 If you but trust in God
H 577 O love that will not let me go
H 580 My life flows on
H 581 Take thou my hand, O Father
H 589 My Shepherd will supply my need
H 592 Love divine, all loves excelling
H 593 O Power of love
H 596 And I will raise you up
H 599 He leadeth me
H 606 Oh, have you not heard
H 614 In the bulb there is a flower
H 616 Children of the heavenly Father

Sing the Journey

STJ 27 God of the Bible
STJ 44 The love of God
STJ 46 O breathe on me, O breathe of God
STJ 73 The Lord lift you up
STJ 76 The Lord bless you and keep you
STJ 95 I want to walk as a child of the light
STJ 98 All will be well
STJ 103 Why should I feel discouraged

Sing the Story

STS 49 I will come to you in the silence
STS 92 Sing with all the saints in glory
STS 99 The Lord's my Shepherd
STS 121 Nothing is lost on the breath of God

Voices Together (insert, 2020)

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+ *Resources for helping children understand death and grief.*

*+ Alex, Marlee. *Grandpa & Me*. Bethany House Publishers, 1982.

A small child enjoys a week on the farm with Grandpa. Joys of animal contacts are disrupted by the death of a kitten. They bury the kitten and plant flowers. Months later, when Grandpa dies, she and Grandma recall what she learned about living, dying, heaven. A contrast and comparison of animal death and human death.

Arnold, Johann Christoph. *I Tell You a Mystery*. Plough Publishing House of the Bruderhof Foundation, 1996.

In a society that is afraid of death, Arnold tells 23 stories in 23 brisk chapters that illustrate beautifully how the God who loves us will walk with us “all the way,” giving us assurance of the resurrection and eternal life. Arnold is a leader of the Bruderhof community.

Barber, Dr. Cyril J. and Sharalee Aspenleiter. *Through the Valley of Tears*. Revell Publishing, 1987. A funeral pre-planning discussion guide. Writing with compassion, the authors do not slight or seek to mollify the pain of loss. In-stead, they lead you through the valley of tears to a renewed sense of wholeness. Their sensitive, biblical approach will help you through your bereavement and healing. Recovering from the loss of a loved one takes time.

* Bell, John L. *The Love Which Heals: A Service of Grieving and Gratitude for Those who Have Been Recently Bereft*. Wild Goose Resource Group, 2000.

An excellent resource book about compassion and encouragement to those who are grieving.

* Bell, John L. *The Last Journey: Reflections for the Time of Grieving*, GIA Publications, Inc. 1996 (includes a CD of songs for the time of grieving)

This book and CD are a collection of songs, scripture, and prayers concentrating on finding hope and courage throughout grieving and loss.

Berton, Walton F. *Who Will Decide?* Augsburg Publishing, 1983.

A funeral preplanning discussion guide.

* Briehl, Susan and Marty Haugen, editors. *Turn My Heart: A Sacred Journey from Brokenness to Healing*. (book and music CD) GIA Publications, Inc., 2003.

The authors incorporate scripture, poetry, prayers, songs, and pictures to assist the reader in moving from the pain of experiencing loss towards trust to healing and hope in God. The accompanying music CD provides instrumental and choral music for comfort during difficult times.

Byock, Ira. *Dying Well*. Riverhead Books, 1997.

This is a book about living. It is a book about realizing the human potential to grow—as individuals and as members of families, through the process of dying. Being with people who are dying (in conscious and caring ways) is of value to them and to us. Their reminiscences, our care and the time we spend together all contribute to a legacy that enriches our lives. *Dying Well* tells stories about tragedy, but also about love, commitment and courage.

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This leading philosopher and ethicist attacks the prevailing societal notion that medical progress will eventually eliminate almost every illness. We also seem to be blind to the cost (financial, social, emotional and spiritual) of attempting such an enterprise. Callahan makes a strong case for graceful acceptance of our mortality. He also argues strongly against euthanasia, calling it another form of violence, that of consenting adults killing each other.

*+ Cohn, Janice, D.S.W. *I Had a Friend Named Peter*. William Morrow & Company, 1987.

The author, a psychotherapist, gives a lengthy introduction of what children comprehend about death, how they express or act out their feelings, how to respond to the child’s questions, spoken or implied. Story of a child whose childhood friend has been killed in an accident.

*Curley, Terence P. *Console One Another: A Guide for Christian Funerals*, Sheed and Ward, 1993.

This book explores the new Roman Catholic ritual for Christian burial. It is a good resource for pastors or pastoral staff.

Davidson, Glen W. *Understanding Mourning: A Guide for Those Who Grieve*. Augsburg Press, 1984.

As a good resource for those who mourn and those who help the bereaved, this book offers guidelines for healthy mourning and returning to a reorganized life.

*Davidson, Joyce D. and Kenneth J. Doka, editors. *Living with Grief at Work, at School, at Worship*. Brunner/Mazel a member of the Taylor and Francis Group. 1999 Hospice Foundation of America.

This book is a collection of papers and commentary from a 1999 teleconference. It includes an extensive list of references cited in the papers, plus an excellent resource list of agencies dealing with specific diseases and programs to aid the bereaved.

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In dealing with lifelong health problems and a devastating divorce, the author turned to the Psalms for understanding and acceptance. Through scripture, she realizes God's unshakable love and protection. This book could be used in small groups or for individual study.

*Dawn, Marva J. *Joy in Our Weakness: A Gift of Hope from the Book of Revelation*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002

This book is not a commentary on Revelation but a book about suffering. Dawn says this book is not for scholars but for all of us who make up the body of Christ.

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Hewitt John H. *After Suicide*. Westminster Press, 1980.

The author offers much needed information and clinically

tested advice for those struggling to cope in the aftermath of a suicide. Also included is an Anniversary Memorial Service that enables family members to recommit them-selves to life. It presents positive steps that can help family and friends find strength together as they readjust and return to healthy, productive living.

*Ilse, Sherokee. *Empty Arms: Coping with Miscarriage, Still-birth and Infant Death*. Wintergreen Press, 1996.

The author speaks from personal experience in addressing the range of emotions that occur when a pregnancy ends in death. The writing is straightforward, personal, and compassionate. It can be read as a whole or in sections as certain issues and questions arise.

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Many life experiences may cause grief in children – whether it be loss of a pet or a loved one, or loss caused by a divorce or moving. The book offers practical ways for adults to assist children in acknowledging the loss and in moving through the process of grieving in a healthy way.

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“The death of a child,” begins the author’s preface, “is by far one of the most tragic events that can strike the average American family.”

This book helps build an understanding of how parents and close family members respond to a child’s death and how they progress through grief toward resolution. Three types of death are investigated: death after an illness, sudden death, and death by murder. The author bases his writing and conclusions on in-depth inter-views with 155 families who had suffered the loss of a child.

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A 177-page workbook to be completed and periodically updated by people of all ages. A useful tool with which to indicate our personal desires in the planning for our own

deaths. We are encouraged to write our own obituaries, plan our own memorial service, and to record messages to our loved ones. Kuenning, Delores. *Helping People Through Grief*. Bethany House Publishing, 1987.

Your next-door neighbor has miscarried her first baby. What do you say when you see her? Your mother calls to say your father has been diagnosed as having cancer. What do you say? Your daughter calls to tell you her husband has filed for divorce. What do you say? Each chapter is based on true experiences. Caregivers are supplied with practical advice and insight, appropriate scripture and a list of recommended books and support groups.

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*L'Engle, Madeline. *The Summer of the Great Grandmother*. Seabury Press, 1979.

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*Miller, James E., *When You Know You're Dying: 12 Thoughts to Guide You through the Days Ahead*. Willowgreen Publishing, 1997.

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These stories are about living each moment of our lives filled with love, hope and gratitude. Dying people teach us to live as if each moment is a gift. When we live with the intensity that each moment is precious, we accumulate a lifetime of wisdom and wealth, a consciousness that can only increase with the passing of time.

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*Rupp, Sister Joyce. *Praying Our Good-byes*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN, 1988.

We all have our own unique good-bye times when we lose someone or something that has given our lives meaning and value. With the touch of a poet the author gives us a book about these experiences of leaving behind and moving on, the stories of union and separation that are written in all our hearts. This is about the "spirituality of change."

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*+Slattery, Kathryn. *Grandma, I'll Miss You*. Chariot Books, David C. Cook Publishing, 1993.

An eight-year-old reacts to her mother's expecting a new baby and her grandmother's anticipating death each the beginning of a new life. Grandma explains that death is as much a part of life as birth; leaving the familiar and entering a new life, more exciting, more fulfilling.

*+Smith, Doris Buchanan. *A Taste of Blackberries*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1973.

Jamie is with his best friend when they stir up a bee's nest. His friend dies of allergic reaction to the bee stings. As a first-person account by Jamie, it lets the author express all the doubts, questions, guilt that the child suffers but cannot verbalize.

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As someone with extensive experience in counseling the terminally ill, Smith provides support for both the person who is dying as well as caregivers. Insights are offered on many issues including releasing control, dealing with privacy, crying, partnering with physicians, embracing God, expressing anger, forgiving, reviewing your life, making a valid will, making visitors comfortable, telling your stories, and composing your goodbyes.

*Studer, Gerald C. *After Death What?* Herald Press, 1976.

A thought-provoking biblical study of life after death.

+Sutherland Fox, Sandra. *Good Grief*. New England Association for Education of Young Children, 1985.

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An excellent study of the many dimensions to help us

achieve the goal of a good death. The book has two parts: 1) basic issues (medical, social, theological); and 2) case studies and reflections, looking death squarely in the eyes –then moving through it in grace toward the saving power of God. Instructions for group study are included.

*Vogel, Linda J., *Rituals for Resurrection: Celebrating Life and Death*, Upper Room Books, 1996.

This book helps readers reflect on the nature of community in times of crises, understanding the role of ritual in families, and think about funerals and closure of relationships.

*Vos Wezeman, Phyllis and Kenneth R. Wezeman, *Finding Your Way after Your Child Dies*, Ave Maria Press, 2001.

This book is a practical guide including readings and suggested rituals to try whenever the need arises, whether occasioned by the passing of a school bus or a glance at a family portrait.

*Vos Wezeman, Phyllis, Jude Dennis Fournier and Kenneth R. Wezeman. *Guiding Children through Life's Losses: Prayers, Rituals, and Activities*. Twenty-third Publications, 2001.

This book develops sixteen themes to help children acknowledge a loss, express feelings associated with change and recognize an opportunity for growth. An excellent re-source for counselors, teachers, Sunday school teachers and may be used for intergenerational events.

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*Weaver, Henry. *Confronting the Big C*. Herald Press, 1984.

How one man worked through the diagnosis of cancer with the help of his wife, doctors, and his own inner strength and faith.

*Weems, Ann. *Psalms of Lament*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Poet and bereaved parent, Ann Weems offers a collection of 50 personal psalms of lament. The psalms will be moving to anyone experiencing the pain of grief.

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The small book of only 64 pages was first copyrighted in 1987. It is now in its 25th anniversary printing (1997), testifying to its enduring value to many thousands of parishioners and believers of many faiths. Westberg, a Lutheran chaplain, is well known for his writings about the inter-section of faith and health. This book fulfills its claim to be a constructive approach to the problem of loss.

*Zonnebelt-Smeenge, Susan J. and Robert C. DeVries. *Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse*. Baker Books, 1998.

Written by a clinical psychologist and a pastor/professor, the authors share personal experiences of spousal loss as well as professional insights about facing grief. While addressing issues such as the personal journey of grief, obstacles in the grieving process, helping children, and financial issues, the authors never lose sight of the value of the partnering with God in the journey of grief.

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Time and again we stumble for words and actions that will reflect our feelings of compassion and our desire to be of comfort. This practical, easy-to-read book covers three common areas of concern: "What can I write?" "What can I say?" "What can I do?" Issues addressed include special circumstances (suicide, sudden death, death of parent or child), how to write a condolence letter (including several moving samples), specific suggestions for helping, and how to help when more help is needed (therapy, grief groups, etc.). This book can help broaden and deepen our care for each other in times of grief and loss.

Additional resources available from Mennonite Mutual Aid:

Healthy Living Series. *Life Issues: Death. A Time to Live, A Time to Die*. Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, 1997.

Healthy Living Series. *Life Issues: Grief. A Time to Grieve*. Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, 1996.

Check the church library for additional resources.