



# Funeral Procedures and Policy

*Updated April 18, 2017*

*When they arrive at the gates of death, God welcomes those who love him.  
(Psalm 116:15, Message)*

*<sup>13</sup>And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. <sup>15</sup>We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup>Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

*Then we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>So encourage each other with these words.  
(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)*

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I am so sorry for your loss. I know a little about what you are going through. Rhonda and I lost our 23-year-old son Geno to cancer. It was more difficult than we could ever describe. But you know all about that, and we share a common sorrow.

The good news is that we found God's grace and strength to be a well of comfort. We found God's people to be gracious and caring. We found that even though our lives would never be the same again, God continues to meet us at each occasion of grief. Perhaps nowhere is that more vivid than in John 11 when Jesus heard about his friend Lazarus's death and visited the family.

When Jesus arrived, he found the family deep in mourning. The pain was too much for him to bear, and the Bible tells us Jesus wept publicly.

*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" (John 11:33-36)*

Every time I read this passage, it touches me in a special way! To be honest with you, when it comes to my son's death, I have struggled with an inconsistency between my own theology and emotions. Even though I know Geno is in heaven, I still find myself grieving when certain things remind me of his absence. I have even felt selfish knowing he is in heaven yet wanting to be with him again. I am sure you understand, but here is what is so amazing about Jesus! Before He left for Lazarus's funeral, Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead. He already knew that things would work out for the better. Yet He was still deeply moved by the fact that Lazarus's family was experiencing pain, loss, and grief. It encourages me that God is not so intellectually condescending and fixed on superior facts that He cannot connect with my pain.

How amazing is it that an all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present God cares enough about us to weep in the moments of our pain and sorrow! That same God is eager to bring comfort to you in your own time of loss. The Highpoint family is as well. That is why we have prepared this resource to help you plan a meaningful memorial for your loved one. That is why we have made our Funeral Coordinator available to help you. That is why we weep with you in your time of loss. Please take the time to read it as it will remove a lot of the anxiety that so often accompanies planning funerals in times of grief.

May God bless you during this time of loss and grief.

Pastor Gene Roncone  
Highpoint Church

## Funeral Procedures and Policy

Highpoint Church considers it an honor to host and conduct the funeral services of those who are a part of the Highpoint Community. The funeral accommodations provided vary depending on many different conditions. This document is intended to help clarify expectations and gather the needed information to plan a meaningful memorial for your loved one.

Following are answers to common questions regarding our procedures and policies for funerals at Highpoint Church. For clarification, both funeral and memorial services will be referred to as “funerals.”

**A. I feel so overwhelmed! Where do I start?** It is common for those grieving to experience overwhelming feelings of helplessness, anger, guilt, loneliness, and sometimes even relief after the prolonged suffering of a deceased loved one. Planning a funeral can be overwhelming for those experiencing grief. There are several things that can make planning a funeral more stressful than necessary:

- Rushing into the process without giving time to reflect upon the true and lasting legacy of your loved one. Many families that have a memorial service just days after death later regret rushing into it and wish they had been more deliberate about the components of the memorial service and who was involved.
- Overly emotional or strong-willed family members sometimes want the memorial service to accommodate their specific schedule, preferences, or travel plans.
- Unreasonable timelines that fail to consider the required coordination of people, schedules, logistics, and resources needed to plan a meaningful funeral.

Highpoint stands ready to minister to you and your family and help you coordinate the funeral. That is why we created this funeral policy to help you plan. A pastor is also on call to minister to those who may be grieving, and our Funeral Coordinator is prepared to serve as our official liaison between the church and a representative of your family.

**B. What is the purpose of a Christian funeral?** Biblical examples teach us that there are four primary purposes of a Christian funeral:

- 1. To glorify God.** For Christians, a funeral service is a way of expressing thankfulness to God for the life and contribution of a deceased loved one. Even in his own grief following the death of his wife, Abraham intentionally planned Sarah’s funeral as an expression of faith and thankfulness to God. The normal custom of the time would have been for Abraham to bury Sarah in the land of her birthplace; however, Abraham chose to express his faith in the Lord’s promises by purchasing a gravesite for Sarah in the Promised Land (Genesis 23:19).
- 2. To honor the deceased.** One of the best ways to honor a loved one is to take the time to identify and celebrate their legacy.
- 3. To comfort the grieving.** The Bible tells us that Jesus showed up at Lazarus’s funeral and wept with the family when he saw them grieving (John 11:33, 35). The Bible even instructs us to share in the sorrows of others saying, *weep with those who weep* (Romans 12:15).
- 4. To encourage hope in heaven.** Funerals allow Christians to proclaim the most significant doctrine: the resurrection. Paul reminded grieving Christians that Christ’s resurrection is a well of eternal hope for all believers saying, *And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that*

*when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died*  
(1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 emphasis added).

Highpoint would like to help you incorporate each of these purposes into your funeral.

- C. Who is available to help me plan the funeral?** Once a date and time have been approved, the official planning team will consist of Highpoint's Funeral Coordinator, one family representative, and Highpoint's Executive Administrator.
- 1. Church Funeral Coordinator.** Highpoint's Funeral Coordinator will be the church's official liaison with the family representative when Highpoint's facilities are used. They will assist in coordinating the church resources and be the lead supervisor at the time of the funeral service.
  - 2. Family Representative.** To facilitate good communication in the planning process, there will need to be only one (1) primary contact person/spokesperson designated for the family. It is preferred that this person live in the area, and it is required that they be present at the planning/consult meeting.
  - 3. Executive Administrator.** Highpoint's Executive Administrator shall review and authorize the use of all Highpoint facilities, resources, church staff, and officiants.

Highpoint does not employ musicians, video/slide show editors, soloists, or worship or song leaders. The Funeral Coordinator can provide a list of outside companies and/or individuals that may be available to provide these services and their fees.

- D. What can I expect from Highpoint Church?** Highpoint Church will provide the following services for each family:
- 1. Funeral Coordinator.** The Funeral Coordinator will be the church's official liaison with the family representative when church facilities are used. When the funeral is held at the church, they will also serve as the lead supervisor for the funeral service. If the funeral is off campus, a funeral coordinator will not be provided.
  - 2. Service coaching.** Once the pre-funeral worksheet has been completed, the Funeral Coordinator will provide an initial consultation to plan for the service with the family of the deceased.
  - 3. Facilities.** Highpoint will provide available facilities and resources for the funeral service and family.
  - 4. Minister.** Not knowing what travel plans the staff pastors may already have, we will do our best to find one who is available. If one is not, we will provide an option from the list of ministers who attend Highpoint.
  - 5. Promotion and notification.** If the deceased was a member of Highpoint Church and in good standing, the notice of their passing and time of their funeral will be published in a church publication prior to the service when possible.
  - 6. Media resources.** Highpoint will provide audio-visual support in the form of a sound person, microphones, keyboard, audio recording, and projection equipment. Highpoint does not edit or create videos or slideshows and does not have paid musicians, soloists, song leaders, or video technicians. The Funeral Coordinator will be happy to recommend someone who can meet this need for the family. All musical or customized media presentations must be arranged for and taken care of by the family.
  - 7. Post-funeral facility needs.** Highpoint Church can provide a room with tables and chairs for a post-funeral gathering to seat no more than seventy-five (75) people in the Vista Room, Youth Complex, or existing café seating. Any post-event gathering in the atrium must use the existing

café seating (table and chairs) in their normal setup and placement. Although a food and refreshment table can be set up, the metal tables and chair placement cannot be moved or rearranged to avoid scratching the finish on the retro plated floor. The family will be responsible to provide any food services or beverages being served as well as janitorial services needed for cleanup. All caterers, food providers, and outside access to the facility must be approved and coordinated through the Funeral Coordinator prior to plans being made. Due to the retro-plate finishing on our floors, no equipment, facility entrances, staging, displays, tables, or chairs should be moved or altered without the PRIOR approval of the Funeral Coordinator.

**E. What are the available venue options for the funeral?** There are several locations where the funeral can be conducted and still have the involvement of one or more of Highpoint's pastors.

- 1. Local mortuary or funeral home.** The large meeting space provided by most all mortuaries and funeral homes.
- 2. Gravesite or committal service.** The short service (usually 5-10 minutes) held at the actual gravesite or final resting place.
- 3. Highpoint Church facility.** All services held at Highpoint Church will be officiated by a member of our pastoral staff unless prior approval has been given by the Executive Administrator. The specific Highpoint venue used for the service will be determined at the discretion of the Funeral Coordinator in consultation with the Executive Administrator and family. The following venues are available for consideration.

- Vista Room (5-50 individuals with large screen media cart and limited sound/media)
- Dv8 Youth Space (20-50 individuals with full sound and media)
- Aspen Theater (50-150 individuals with full media and sound)
- Alpine Auditorium (150-900 individuals with full media and sound)
- Summit Room for immediate family prior to funeral service (1-30 people)

**F. How do I reserve a date and time at Highpoint Church?** To coordinate the funeral with existing church events, staff availability, and required lead time, the following requirements must be met to use the church facilities:

- 1. Two options.** Two (2) separate day and time options shall be submitted to the Funeral Coordinator to provide multiple options in coordinating resources. For example, Option 1: Tuesday morning at 10 a.m., and Option 2: Wednesday afternoon at 1 p.m. All services must be scheduled between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- 2. Lead time.** The church shall have a minimum of three (3) full weekdays (Monday through Friday) between the time of approval and start of the funeral service. For example, if a date is submitted Thursday, the soonest the funeral could take place would be Wednesday morning which would leave Friday, Monday, and Tuesday to plan. This will enable the church to secure and coordinate the required pastoral staff and janitorial services as well as the sound and media personnel required.
- 3. Weekend funerals.** To enable time for cleaning and remobilization for scheduled church services, Highpoint will not host funerals on Saturdays beginning after 10 a.m. or anytime on Sundays.
- 4. Promotion.** Highpoint will not commit to proposed dates until they have been evaluated for impact points. The family should not advertise or communicate the proposed dates and times until receiving a confirmation with final approval.

5. **Event conflicts.** Church services, annual events, large ministry functions, and holiday productions already scheduled on the church calendar will not be cancelled to accommodate funerals.

#### G. How do I plan pastoral involvement?

1. **Off-campus involvement.** Highpoint's pastoral staff is willing to participate in funeral services off campus. Please remember that our pastors are very busy and be sure to connect with them as soon as possible to determine their availability. Each family will need to contact and communicate directly with the individual pastor regarding their availability, role, and level of involvement in the service.
2. **On-campus funerals.** All services held at Highpoint Church will be led by a member of Highpoint's pastoral staff and contain a message of Christian hope. Not knowing what travel plans our pastors may already have, we will do our best to find one that is available.
3. **Outside ministers or officiants.** Any outside ministerial or officiant participation in funerals at Highpoint Church must have the prior approval of the lead pastor.

#### H. What are the most important steps for me to take? Death can be overwhelming and introduce a flurry of chaos and needed planning. Following are the five (5) most important things to do to begin your funeral planning:

1. **Select only one (1) primary spokesperson designated for the family.** To facilitate good communication in the planning process, your family will need to select one person to represent you in decision making. It is preferred that this person be local as they must be present at the planning/consult meeting.
2. **Initial contact.** If you would like to have the service on the Highpoint Church campus, have your family's primary contact person call the church office to schedule a phone meeting to consult with the Funeral Coordinator. This meeting will guide you through the process of planning and preparing for the funeral. You should be prepared to give the Funeral Coordinator your two different day and time options for the funeral service so they can be checked against the church calendar, events schedule, and personal availability.
3. **Read the Highpoint Funeral Policy.** Please read this funeral policy in its entirety to help clarify thoughts and organize expectations.
4. **Complete the Pre-Funeral/Memorial Planning Worksheet.** To assist you in this time of need, we have collaborated with funeral homes to prepare a pre-funeral/memorial worksheet. This worksheet becomes the foundation for the entire funeral. It will help focus your thoughts and intentions while planning a funeral service and will continue to be a valuable resource for other organizations you will need to contact in the coming days. You will need to have this form completed and emailed to our Funeral Coordinator before the planning meeting. You will also need to appoint one member of your family to gather the family together to get their input and serve as your liaison with the church. After you have completed the worksheet, email it to the Funeral Coordinator at [funeral@highpointchurch.us](mailto:funeral@highpointchurch.us). Additional copies of this worksheet can be downloaded from Highpoint's funeral resource center at [www.highpointchurch.us/funeral](http://www.highpointchurch.us/funeral).
5. **Submit the Pre-Funeral/Memorial Worksheet to the Funeral Coordinator and set up a family planning meeting.** The Pre-Funeral/Memorial Worksheet must be completed before the family planning meeting can take place.

**I. What are the costs and expenses for using Highpoint's facility?**

- 1. Active members, supporting attendees, and their immediate family.** There will be no charge for facility usage and no charge for officiating pastoral staff (honorariums are customary but not required).
- 2. Nonmembers or inactive members** (when an exception has been made by the lead pastor to allow the service at Highpoint Church). This fee includes costs associated with facility usage, set-up, cleanup of the respective room(s), utilities, and usage for equipment and personnel costs:
  - Alpine Auditorium – \$2,500
  - Aspen Theater – \$1,250
  - Atrium for reception – \$500
  - Visa Room – \$300
  - Dv8 Youth Space – \$500

**J. How do I get additional information?** For additional information or clarification, please connect with:

- 1. Funeral Coordinator.** If you need additional information, please contact our Funeral Coordinator directly. Our Funeral Coordinator can help you start the process and coach you on options that will best suit your needs. You can reach them by email at [funeral@highpointchurch.us](mailto:funeral@highpointchurch.us).
- 2. Funeral Resource Page.** For other helpful resources, including the Pre-Funeral/Memorial Planning Worksheet as well as a video message by Pastor Gene on grief, go to [www.highpointchurch.us/funeral](http://www.highpointchurch.us/funeral).
- 3. Memorial Service Providers.** To assist you in planning a special and meaningful service for your loved one, we have compiled a list of memorial service providers such as soloists, singers, pianists capable of playing hymns and worship choruses on keyboards, video editing and slide show technicians, bagpipe players, pigeon/dove releasers and military taps or color guards. The most updated list can be accessed at on our funeral resource page.

May God bless you during this difficult time of loss and grief.

Highpoint Church