

**Forest Hills  
Mennonite Church**

**Funeral  
Policy**



100 Quarry Road, Leola PA, 17540

[www.foresthillschurch.org](http://www.foresthillschurch.org)

717-656-6227

Adopted April 2025 by Forest Hills Church Council

In a funeral or memorial service, we invite the presence of God in our grieving and give thanks for the life of the person who has died in the light of God's grace in Christ. This comes to expression in the singing of hymns, prayer, Scripture reading, and preaching.

The following are guidelines designed to help the families of lost loved ones who are members of or attended Forest Hills plan for a funeral or memorial service. At these times, there are many decisions that need to be made. Often, people have not needed to make these types of decisions before, so guidance is helpful, especially as it relates to what is "normally done." The following is an attempt to outline what is "normally done".

### **SCHEDULING A FUNERAL AT FOREST HILLS MENNONITE CHURCH:**

1. Please contact one of the pastors as soon as possible.
2. One of the pastors will meet with the family to offer pastoral care and guidance and to begin the process of planning the funeral service. The pastor will check with the administrator to see when the church is available.
3. The care pastor will coordinate with staff and volunteers (ushers, kitchen crew, custodian, AV techs, musicians) to find a date that works for everyone and confirm that the church building is available.

**OFFICIANTS:** One of the pastors of Forest Hills Mennonite Church can officiate at the funeral and/or burial. Additional ministers, family members, friends, and members of the congregation may be invited by the family or the pastor to assist in the service.

**FUNERAL HOMES:** We work with a variety of funeral homes, and the pastors are willing to be present while families are making arrangements with funeral homes.

**THE SERVICE:** This service may be observed before or after the burial. The service may include music, readings, sharing of memories, eulogy, etc. Services are held in our sanctuary. If a meal is to follow the service, it works best if the family goes through the line first, immediately after the service ends. The sanctuary seats 400, the fellowship hall seats 250 for a meal, and we have 195 parking spaces.

**MUSIC:** The care pastor will coordinate with the Associate Pastor of Worship to find musicians. Family and/or musician friends are welcome to participate. They will often hold a rehearsal on the morning of the service. Music for the service is chosen by each family in consultation with the officiating pastor planning for the service. Any rehearsals should be scheduled by the musicians in consultation with the church office and music leader. Copies of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* are available for use in the sanctuary. The piano, monitors, etc., should not be moved without permission.

### **TECHNOLOGY:**

**RECORDING/STREAMING OF THE SERVICE:** Audio and video from the service can be recorded and live-streamed on the church's YouTube and Facebook platforms. The family will be able to access a recording of the livestream after the service has concluded. If the service will be live-streamed, please refrain from using pre-recorded audio unless it is in the public domain. Otherwise, we risk YouTube turning off the livestream and flagging us with a copyright violation. If the program is not being recorded or aired live, then you may use those items.

**IF YOU PLAN TO INCLUDE A PHOTO SLIDESHOW,** please tell us immediately so that we can schedule adequate coverage at the AV desk. We strongly recommend that you use the church computer for your presentation to ensure optimal compatibility. If you bring your own device, bring an adapter to plug your device into a full-size HDMI port. All presentation materials should be emailed or brought to church on a thumb drive 48 hours in advance for our AV desk operators to test with our system. If emailing, please also bring a thumb drive with your presentation and save it in a file format readable by a PC computer (ex: file extensions .ppt or .pptx). A shared Google Drive folder can also be used. Email to [jcarlson@foresthillschurch.org](mailto:jcarlson@foresthillschurch.org).

**FLOWERS:** Flower arrangements for the sanctuary and foyer are permitted and may be sent to the church whenever the church is open or left at the entrance under the carport the morning of the service. Staff or funeral home employees will take care of positioning flowers. It is the responsibility of the family to remove them after the service. Often, families will leave an arrangement or two for the next worship service as a memorial to their loved one.

**MEMORIES:** Families will often set up one or two tables with photos, collectibles, and other items that are meaningful to the family and loved one. These are usually set up in the lobby. 6- and 8-foot tables, as well as black tablecloths, are available. If the funeral is on a Saturday, memorabilia must be cleaned up immediately following the meal. Guest books can be placed on a podium by the front door or after the memory tables.

**VIEWINGS & VISITATIONS:** Viewings and visitations are held in our solar lounge. These are held the evening before the funeral service and/or on the day of the service before the memorial. If an open-casket viewing takes place in the foyer before the service, the casket will be closed after the guests are seated. The doors of the sanctuary are closed, and the family is given a final private opportunity to say goodbye. The funeral home or pastor will manage the flow of guests with assistance from ushers. An usher can hand out programs and have guests sign the guest book. The pastor or funeral home staff will stop the greeting line and will initiate the start of the service as needed.

**BULLETIN (PRINTED ORDER OF WORSHIP):** The administrator will ordinarily produce and print the bulletin for funerals. If the family prefers color printing, they will need to have it printed at Staples, Office Max, etc.

**HONORARIA:** The ordained pastors of Forest Hills Mennonite Church believe that funerals are a part of their pastoral call to ministry. They count it both a responsibility and a privilege to be with families in their moment of need. They also acknowledge that families may wish to honor pastors with an honorarium. Many families are uncertain about an appropriate amount and often contact the church office to ask what is customary. The following are suggested as general guidelines for those wishing to provide an honorarium. These should not be interpreted as a fee-for-service arrangement:

Officiating Pastor: \$150–200. Depending on the extent to which the officiating pastor is involved in the planning, preparation, and leading of the service and graveside service.

Additional Pastor(s): \$75–100. Depending on the extent to which the additional pastor(s) is/are involved in the planning, preparation, and leading of the service and graveside service.

**FEES:** The following fees apply to funerals held on-site at Forest Hills Mennonite Church. Fees are different than honorariums in that they are a fee for service and are fixed.

Pianist	\$100.00
Vocalists	\$ 50.00 each
Sound Tech	\$ 75.00
Livestream Operator	\$ 75.00
Meal Coordinator	\$100.00

Typically, payments are coordinated with the funeral home. Normally, one check is written to the funeral home to cover all fees and honoraria. The home will then disperse the amount(s) accordingly. On those occasions when a funeral home is not involved in the proceedings, payments may be given directly (ordinarily on the day of the funeral) to the person.

**MEALS:** A fellowship meal can be requested after the service. The pastor will work with the family to get an estimate of how many people might attend. Tables and chairs will be set up by church volunteers. The meal coordinator will order and pick up the food from Oregon Dairy, coordinate set up and clean up, and get volunteers to help with the meal. The meal will be served buffet style, and the bill will be given to the family after all the invoices are received. Staff and volunteers will generally leave the building after cleaning up. The family may continue to visit in the lobby if desired; in this case, we request that the family turn off the lights when leaving. Our fellowship hall seats up to 250.

**Option 1 - Cold Meal**

Deli Trays  
Rolls  
Lettuce, Tomato, and Condiments  
Potato Salad and/or Macaroni Salad  
Chips  
Carrots  
Cake  
Water (in pitchers on tables)  
Coffee and Tea

Paper Supplies (white)

**Option 2 – Dessert Bar**

Two types of cake  
Cookie trays  
Coffee and Tea  
Paper Supplies  
Water (in pitchers on tables)  
Paper supplies (white)

**Option 3 – Outside Catering**

The family chooses a caterer and orders the food. Details for this option will need to be coordinated with the administrator (who provides setup, cleanup, servers, etc.).

**MEMORIAL BENCH:** Since Forest Hills does not have a cemetery at its church facility, we have a stone memorial bench out front that provides a place where lost loved ones can be remembered. We have names engraved approximately twice a year. The cost is \$195 for the first 10 letters and \$10 for each letter after that. If the cost is a barrier, but your family is interested, we have funds designated to ensure that everyone can be included. Please let the administrator know if you would like your loved one included. Invoices will be emailed after the bench is engraved.

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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Minister of Care and Visitation  
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717-808-6917

Jon Carlson  
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Lauren Krady  
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**Worksheet**  
**PLANNING A MEMORIAL/FUNERAL SERVICE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Planning Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor and family members present: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary family contact for service: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for Viewing/Visitation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) / Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location for Funeral/Memorial Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Date / Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of rows roped off for family: \_\_\_\_\_

People involved in the Service

Pre-Service Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Pianist: \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Song Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Vocalists: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregational Songs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Special Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

Tributes: \_\_\_\_\_

Scriptures: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Comments & Benediction: \_\_\_\_\_

Slide Show: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Sound Tech: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> AV Tech (if streaming or slides): \_\_\_\_\_

Will Forest Hills print the bulletin/program? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Will Funeral Home staff be present? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Graveside Service? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Officiant for Graveside Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal: \_\_\_\_\_

How many guests do you expect? \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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