

HOPE Passages

A Guide for When I Pass From This Life



A resource to help your family know your wishes
for the decisions to be made after your passing.

created by Hope United Methodist Church * October 2024

from Pastor Jeff

When my father passed away in the Spring of 2024, I felt lost. I didn't know what to do or where to begin in all the arrangements that were needed for Dad's service and to take care of Mom after his death. While this is a very common feeling, I was shocked. After all, I was a pastor who had walked with numerous families through their own losses. But when it came to experiencing a loss in my own family, I was in the same boat -- struggling to work through my grief and take the next steps. I quickly wished Dad and I had talked about his wishes more.

Most of us are very reluctant to face the prospect of our own death. We know it is inevitable, but we have difficulty acknowledging that reality. And yet we know that, when our death occurs, those who love us most will be numb with grief and overwhelmed with the many decisions which must be made, often in a short period of time.

We want to help you and your families in that journey. The purpose of this document is to enable you to relieve your loved ones of some of this stress by providing a guide for them as they cope with the burden, both emotional and financial, of making final arrangements.

We hope you will review the following pages thoughtfully, taking care to provide the suggested information in a clear and complete manner. You may also find through this process that additional information not specifically referenced in these pages will occur to you.

It will be important to discuss the contents of this document with your loved ones and to let them know where it is kept. We suggest that you also consider providing a copy to the pastoral staff at Hope United Methodist Church to assist them in ministering to your family in their time of grief.

Making your wishes known in writing will be a priceless gift to those you leave behind.

*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jeff*



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Burial Choices

One of the most important decisions you will make is how you want your body to be interred upon your death. The basic decision is whether to choose a traditional burial or cremation. For some, this may be an easy decision; however, we are seeing traditions change with an increase in cremation within the United States. Before you make this decision, let's look at the two options.

Traditional Burial

Burial is a tradition that has existed for thousands of years. Some religions advocate only traditional burial. The United Methodist Church approves of either burial or cremation. There are no biblical references designating the method. If you choose burial, you will need the assistance of a funeral home. They will help you plan for burial by helping you select the

type of casket, a funeral plot or mausoleum, a grave marker, and will help with arrangements for a funeral procession and interment at the cemetery.

If you are planning a memorial service at the church, you need to instruct the funeral home to work with your pastor on the memorial service arrangements.

You can expect that a traditional funeral will cost somewhere between \$7,500 - \$17,000. It could be more depending on the selections you make.

environment and is less costly. Some are uncomfortable with the loss of the body, but the process simply eliminates all water from the body, leaving only the basic elements and minerals. The ashes and crushed bone fragments are clean and can be disposed of in a variety of ways.

Most families choose to either inter the ashes in a columbarium or memorial garden. Others choose to spread the ashes in a special place of remembrance. HOPE United Methodist Church offers the option to inurn ashes in our HOPE Memorial Garden.

Cremation

Cremation has also been practiced for thousands of years. It has been growing in popularity within the United States over the past 50 years. Today, more than 75% of Coloradans choose cremation. It is often preferred as it has less impact on the

You can expect that the cremation procedure will cost approximately \$1,300. Scattering of ashes on your own will have no cost. Inurnment in a Memorial Garden or Columbarium with an urn would cost from \$2,000 – \$6,000, again depending on the choices you make.



Selecting a funeral home

Whichever burial choice you choose, it is best to take some time to look for a funeral home that will meet your needs and those of your family.

How do you know about a funeral home? Referrals from family & friends? What experiences did they have with their services? Are they the types of experiences you would want to have?

Do you know what services you want from a funeral home? Body preparation & embalming? A casket? Pre-funeral viewing? Funeral Service coordination? Transportation of casket to cemetery? Meeting rooms & spaces?

Are there any services not provided that you want?

Are their prices available for consideration? If not, do they provide written quotes for the cost of services? The more services requested, the higher the cost. You must be careful that your family does not get billed for additional services later. Get an all-inclusive price quote that is itemized with the services you want.

Some funeral homes will provide a single price for all services. Again, get a written itemization to insure that everything truly is included.

When purchasing a casket, ask to

see the options and make sure that the price quote adequately describes what is being purchased by product name and type of casket.

The funeral home business is very competitive and their sales people often work on commission. Do not be pressured into buying on the first visit. Ask for a price quote and then ask for time to consider it. Compare price quotes from several different funeral homes. Let them know up front that you will compare prices before purchasing. Don't let their sales people use sales tactics to force you into an early purchase. This could include statements such as: This price is only available today. Prices will increase tomorrow. We cannot guarantee you will get the items you want unless you purchase now.

Consider what your church can do for you at no cost or lower cost than the funeral home, e.g. provide the memorial service, handle the reception, and provide a memorial garden for cremation urns.

Contact the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any complaints about the funeral home's services. Consider the number of complaints and the seriousness of the complaints. If you hear anything that disturbs you, consider looking at other sites.

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit.

John 12:24

Traditional Burial: Choices to Make

It is difficult for your family members to make choices about your burial if you have not shared your desires with them. A burial will require a lot of assistance, typically through a funeral home. Making that selection requires some research on what services you want and who can provide them at the prices you can afford. Generally, a full burial can cost from \$7,500 - \$17,000. See Considerations When **Selecting a Funeral Home** on the previous page.

Here are some of the choices you must make:

Select a cemetery

Choosing a cemetery may not be an easy choice. Should you be buried where you are presently living? Should it be near your other family members? Should it be in an old home town? Out of state? There are many things to consider. That is why it is difficult to leave this decision up to your family in a time of great duress. It is better to take time to select the cemetery now while you can consider your preferences and those of your family.

First, decide where you want your remains to be located. Then tour the local cemeteries to find a facility that meets your

preferences. You will need to decide whether you want a conventional cemetery plot or a more expensive above-ground entombment in a mausoleum. There may also be special areas within the cemeteries for religious groups, veterans, etc. You may want to purchase several plots together if you want to create a family burial plot. Costs will vary based upon these choices.

If you were in the military, check your options for a military cemetery. You may already be entitled to a gravesite and marker at a military cemetery at no cost.

Select a casket

You will find that casket selection will entail many choices. Caskets can be as simple as a wooden box to elaborate metal caskets in a variety of colors. They can be lined with various materials. The type of casket is a personal choice based upon your financial ability and personal preferences. Typical caskets can run from \$900-\$8,000. You may also choose to have an underground burial container to protect the casket, typically a concrete crypt. These are mandated in Colorado as well as some other states. These usually cost from \$600-

\$2,800.

Select a grave marker

Markers for the grave site can vary substantially. Generally, they are intended to provide the name, birth date and date of death. Additional inscriptions can be added at additional cost. Cemeteries may provide a generic marker at little or no cost. You can select grave markers that are made from bronze, granite, marble, other stones or other metals. Some cemeteries may use a standard shape and style for their markers. Others will allow you to choose your own custom marker. If you wish to select and pre-purchase a grave marker, visit the funeral home you have selected or check with other memorial companies that make grave markers. If you have selected a mausoleum, the marker may already be included in the price. Prices will vary dramatically on grave markers. Your best choice is to find what you can afford and what is consistent with the way you wish to be remembered.

Embalming of the body

You must decide whether you wish to have the body

Traditional Burial (continued)

embalmed. Embalming preserves the body temporarily. In Colorado, if you choose not to embalm the body, burial is required within 24 hours. An alternative to embalming would be to have the body refrigerated until burial. Note that a body cannot be shipped on public transportation without embalming. A funeral home can assist with this option if you choose to have the body embalmed for burial. Such procedures are normally handled through a funeral home. The embalming process will preserve the body through the funeral viewings, funeral services, and final burial. Generally, embalming can cost from \$500 to \$900. Refrigeration can cost around \$80 per day.

Additional costs

You may wish to make arrangements with the cemetery to maintain the grave marker, clean the marker, etc. You may also want to make special flower arrangements for holidays.

Selecting a cemetery

Selecting a cemetery is also an important step. If you do not already have a preference for a cemetery, then you should look around at several before making any final decisions. Drive around to the different cemeteries in the area you prefer.

Determine if it is the right location. Is it convenient for family and friends to visit? Does it have a special significance to you or your loved ones? Will your family like your choice?

Do they have the right facilities to meet your needs? Gravesites? Mausoleums? Memorial Gardens? Columbarium?

Do they provide grave markers? What types? Do they have restrictions as to size or type? Will they be able to meet your needs? If not, can you purchase the grave marker elsewhere?

Does the landscaping appeal to you? Does it have trees, shrubs and grass to make the area attractive? Are there attractive flowers?

Is there artwork other than grave markers? Do you find the areas crowded or balanced?

Are the sites affordable? Do they fit your budget? Are purchases a one-time expense or are there ongoing fees?

Do they have prepayment options? Are they affordable? Can the pricing be raised at any time?

Does the cemetery disclose its finances? Do they have funding established to maintain their facilities/burial sites?

What if you change your plans at a later date? Can your gravesite be transferred or resold? If so, get this in writing.

Contact the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any complaints about the funeral home's services. Consider the number of complaints and the seriousness of the complaints. If you hear anything that disturbs you, consider looking at other sites.

Cremation: Choices to Make

If you have chosen to use cremation, you will have fewer decisions to make, but they are still important ones.

Choose a crematorium to handle the procedures

Crematorium services are provided by both funeral homes and independent crematoriums. You will want to select a provider that can handle pickup of the body, confirm identification of the body, place the body in a suitable container, perform the cremation, allow for witnesses and place the cremated remains in a container. Your family will be required to sign an authorization for the procedure to begin. Afterward, they will be able to take the remains with them. Generally, cremation procedures will cost from \$900-\$2,400. With some crematoriums, the arrangements can be preplanned and pre-paid. To understand more about selecting a crematorium, see Considerations When Selecting a Crematorium in the reference section at the end of this document.

Decide how you want the ashes handled

- ◇ Stored in an urn and buried,

placed in a columbarium/ memorial garden, or retained by the family.

- ◇ Scattered in a meaningful location.
- ◇ Scatter some remains and place the remainder in an urn as above.

If remains are to be retained in an urn and interred

Select an urn – Cremation urns can be any container used to hold cremated ashes. It can be as simple as a cardboard box or as ornate as a crystal container. Typically, they are bronze, aluminum, clay or glass. After the cremation, you will receive the ashes in a plastic bag or a plastic box. If you provide the crematorium with a container, they will place the ashes in it. If you don't provide an urn, you will need to transfer the ashes to a selected urn at a later time. You can make your own container/urn or have one made for this purpose. Check the size limitation before you purchase an urn to insure that it will fit in the niche or crypt. For example, the urns to be placed in crypts in the HOPE Memorial Garden must be no larger than 7.5" diameter x 10.5" high. Cremation urns can vary in price from \$90-\$1,000.

Select a location – You have several options as to where you can place cremation urns. First, the urn can be buried in a traditional cemetery burial plot with a standard choice of grave marker. You can use an existing family plot or purchase a new one. Since a cremation urn does not take much space, you can inter more cremation urns in one plot if allowed by the cemetery. You can also check with cemeteries for other cremation options such as memorial gardens where urns are placed in the ground, or a columbarium with niches in walls where urns can be placed behind stones or covers. Finally, you may find that a local church has a memorial garden or a columbarium for interring cremation urns. HOPE United Methodist Church has a Memorial Garden for inurnment of cremation urns.

If remains are to be scattered

Select a location – Scattering of ashes is becoming more common. However, you should be aware that there are some restrictions. The National Park Service does not allow scattering or burial on any of their park lands. The National Forest Service & BLM does not prohibit scattering, but does prohibit

burial. There are no prohibitions on scattering ashes on private property, but you should have the permission of the owner. You should also check local city regulations before spreading ashes on public property.

Consider a memorial plaque

– For those who choose to have their ashes scattered at a selected location, there will be no permanent marker to remember the individual. However, there are other options to provide

something more permanent. There may be opportunities to supply benches, signs or other items for public property or trails that can include a memorial plaque to the individual. Check with various parks, cities or other public organizations. You may find that there are opportunities to place a memorial plaque at the deceased individual's church. HOPE United Methodist Church provides the option to purchase memorial plaques for placement in its Memorial Garden for church

members, family and their loved ones.

Pre-arrangements

You may wish to make pre-arrangements for cremation, just like you would with a funeral home for burial. This will make the procedures simpler at the time you need it. You may do so through a funeral home that provides cremation services or through one of several cremation societies.



Selecting a crematorium

If you prefer cremation and do not plan to use a funeral home to handle your services, then you will need to identify a crematorium that can take care of this process.

There are multiple options available to handle cremation. This includes some funeral homes, independent crematoriums, and crematorium associations.

Does the crematorium handle pickup of the body? Will they assist with the death certificate preparation?

Do they verify that the body is the correct one before conducting the procedure?

Is the cremation performed on site or at another location? Will they allow a family member or designated friend to view the cremation or confirm the body?

If you are out of state or out of the country, can they arrange to have the body brought back for cremation? Do they offer a pre-purchase for body recovery? Is it reasonable?

Do they have a one-price program? Are there separate charges for different services? Is there a pub-

lished price for the services?

Will they give you a written price commitment? Is it all inclusive and in writing?

Do they sell urns? What are the prices? Do you see anything that you would prefer at an affordable price?

If your urn is to be placed in a columbarium or crypt, will the urn fit into the container?

Do they have a pre-payment program? Is it affordable?

What happens if you are unable to use the services? Do you forfeit the pre-payment?

Do they have agreements with other crematoriums within the country? If they are part of a chain or association, can a pre-payment be used at another location?

Contact the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any complaints about the funeral home's services. Consider the number of complaints and the seriousness of the complaints. If you hear anything that disturbs you, consider looking at other sites.

*This body we commit to its
resting place, earth to earth,
ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
Blessed are the dead who
die in the Lord. Yes, says the
Spirit, they will rest from
their labors...*

*A traditional
committal prayer*

HOPE Memorial Garden

Hope United Methodist Church has a beautiful Memorial Garden adjacent to the church. This garden was built in the tradition of the church cemetery as a sacred place to inurn church members and their immediate family. It is also a place to memorialize members, family and other loved ones who are not inurned there with a memorial plaque.

The Memorial Garden consists of an enclosed, private garden with a large circular raised lawn area. This is where cremation urns are buried. The urns are contained in a PVC crypt below the turf. They are completely enclosed within individual crypts that can contain

one or two cremation urns. The bricks around the raised lawn contain memorial plaques of those who are interred there.

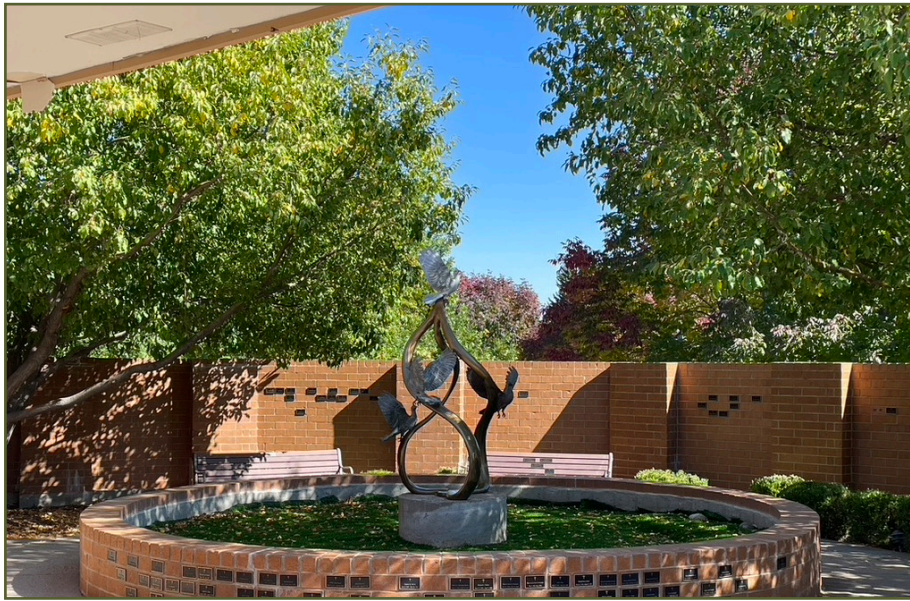
Why choose the HOPE Memorial Garden?

Besides the beautiful surroundings of the HOPE Memorial Garden, you will find that:

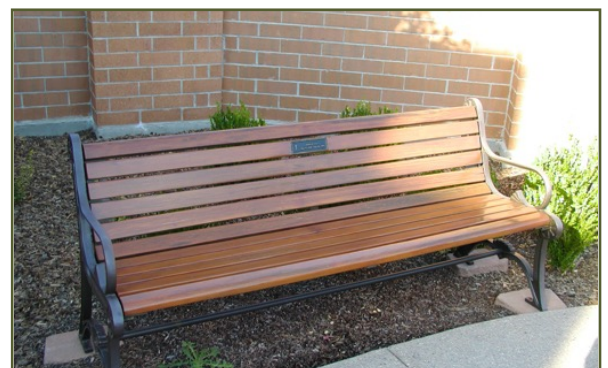
Cost – Inurnment is very reasonable. A crypt and plaque for one person is \$4,500. A crypt and two plaques for two people is \$5,000. Single memorial plaques to recognize loved ones are \$500 each.

Convenience – Inurnment in the memorial garden can be easily done as part of a memorial service at HOPE. The inurnment can be either public or private. You do not need to travel to another location.

Availability – The HOPE Memorial Garden is accessible at all times. Families can go there to remember and pray at their convenience.



The garden is surrounded by brick walls that contain memorial plaques of those not interred in the garden, but are memorialized there.



There are benches and tables for those who want to reflect in this beautiful and peaceful place.

Tradition – It is spiritually rewarding to know that a final resting place will be among friends and in the community of faith.

Legacy – HOPE is a loving place where your loved one will be remembered by the Christian Community of faith for generations.

With HOPE Memorial Garden, your planning is simple, economical, and convenient.



My Service: Choices to Make

Life is filled with milestones, and a funeral service, memorial, or celebration of life is one final one. Although the loss of a loved one is sad, honoring your life and allowing those in your life to pay their respects is an important time for family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. A service allows those in your life to connect or reconnect and be together as each continue the grief process.

Much like the arrangements for your remains already discussed, there are many choices open to how you want to be remembered in a formal service or informal gathering. Knowing your choices in advance or giving those responsible your permission to make choices for the service will help in this difficult time.

Location and type of service

There is no 'right' way to have a remembrance gathering. You may wish to consider the emotional or spiritual needs of those close to you, but also make choices that reflect your life and how you wish to be remembered.

Traditional -- A traditional funeral or memorial service, perhaps based in your religious tradition, can be held in your

church, or at another public location like a funeral home. If you choose a traditional service, the pastor and staff of the church or the funeral home you've selected can help with all the arrangements.

Graveside -- If you've chosen a traditional burial or to have your cremated remains inurned, then a graveside service may be desired in addition to a traditional service or as the primary gathering itself. While usually lead by a faith leader or funeral home staff, this is not required, except perhaps by the site where your remains will be placed.

Informal Gathering -- Some may choose not to have a formal service at all, but an informal gathering of family and friends in any variety of locations (at home, a favorite outdoor space, a restaurant, etc.)

Elements of a traditional service

There are many choices for your service you may wish to consider:

- ♦ **Location** - your church, a funeral home, or other public location.
- ♦ **Music Choices** - Music

often has an important place in a traditional service. Among choices to consider are prelude/gathering music, special solos, or congregational hymns, and closing music. A selection of some popular hymns and solos are listed later.

- ♦ **Eulogist, Speakers, and Service Leader** - who would you prefer to speak at the service and lead the service. This is often the pastor(s) of the church, but others can be selected to also participate in the service as well. Some churches have requirements on the pastor(s)' participation.
- ♦ **Scriptures, Poems, or Other Devotional Readings** - readings can include one or more scripture passages you or the family have chosen, poems, or other devotional readings.
- ♦ **Program options** - Hope UMC can produce a program (bulletin) for the service that includes an order of worship, worship participants, and photos of the deceased and family.
- ♦ **Livestreaming** - Today, with technology, many venues can livestream the service for those to watch who cannot be physically present.

Celebration of Life Service Template

Hope United Methodist Church

Prelude/Gathering Music

Family Procession

Greeting and Word of Grace

Prayer

Scripture Reading(s)

Hymn or Song - Optional

Scripture Lesson(s) and Other Reading(s)

Eulogy

Words of Witness

Remembrance through Imagery

Hymn or Song – Optional

Commendation

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn or Song – Optional

Dismissal with Blessing

Postlude/Exit Music

*Service elements and order can be
adapted to the family's needs and desires.*

*We do consider this service a sacred act of worship, so any non-
sacred music choices are placed in prelude, postlude, or during a
remembrance through imagery.*

*I am the resurrection and
the life. Those who believe in
me, even though they die, will
live, and everyone who lives
and believes in me will never
die.*

John 11:25-26

Common Hymns

- ◇ Abide With Me
- ◇ Amazing Grace
- ◇ Ask Ye What Great Thing I Know
- ◇ Be Still My Soul
- ◇ Blessed Assurance
- ◇ Blest Be The Tie That Binds
- ◇ Children of the Heavenly Father
- ◇ Christ Is Alive
- ◇ Close to Thee
- ◇ Come, Let Us Join Our Friends Above
- ◇ Faith of Our Fathers
- ◇ For All the Saints
- ◇ Give to the Winds Thy Fears
- ◇ God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale
- ◇ Great Is Thy Faithfulness
- ◇ He Leadeth Me
- ◇ Here I Am Lord
- ◇ How Blest Are They
- ◇ How Great Thou Art
- ◇ Hymn of Promise
- ◇ I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry
- ◇ Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- ◇ In The Garden
- ◇ It Is Well With My Soul
- ◇ Jesus, Remember Me
- ◇ Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
- ◇ Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
- ◇ Nearer My God To Thee
- ◇ O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing
- ◇ On Eagle's Wings
- ◇ Marching to Zion
- ◇ My Hope Is Built
- ◇ Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- ◇ From All That Dwell Below the Skies
- ◇ Navy Hymn (Eternal Father Strong To Save)
- ◇ Spirit Song (O Let the Son of God Enfold You)
- ◇ Sing With All The Saints in Glory
- ◇ Surely The Presence Of The Lord Is In This Place
- ◇ Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
- ◇ What A Friend We Have In Jesus
- ◇ Your Love O God, Is Broad

Popular Solos

- ◇ Abide With Me
- ◇ Be Thou My Vision
- ◇ Because He Lives
- ◇ Blessed Jesus
- ◇ Gaelic Blessing
- ◇ Gone Too Soon (if deceased is a young person)
- ◇ His Eye is On The Sparrow
- ◇ I Believe
- ◇ I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked
- ◇ Let There Be Peace On Earth
- ◇ On Eagle's Wings
- ◇ Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
- ◇ Spirit Song
- ◇ The Rose
- ◇ The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Suggestions

- ◇ Various Psalms (23, 42, 43, 46, 90, 91, 103, 116, 121, 130, 39, 145, 146)
- ◇ Isaiah 40:1-8
- ◇ Isaiah 40:28-31
- ◇ Exodus 14:5-14, 19-31
- ◇ Isaiah 43 (selected verses)
- ◇ Isaiah 55 (selected verses)
- ◇ 1 Corinthians 15 (selected verses)
- ◇ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11
- ◇ Revelation 21:1-7
- ◇ Romans 8 (selected verses)
- ◇ John 3:13-17
- ◇ John 12:20-36 (often used in committal service)
- ◇ John 14 (selected verses)
- ◇ Luke 24:13-35
- ◇ John 11 (selected verses)
- ◇ John 15:1-17
- ◇ John 16:12-22, 33
- ◇ John 20
- ◇ Any scripture passage that you believe reflects your life and values or has been meaningful to you.

Recording My Choices

We hope this information has been helpful to you in considering how you want to help your family prepare for your departure from this life. Now that you've reviewed all these topics, questions, and recommendations, it may be time to make some choices.

With this booklet are included some forms for you to record any plans you've made and any preferences you have for your remains, a service or gathering, as well as some other information that may be helpful to give to your family:

- ◇ Choices for a traditional burial (if that is your choice)

- ◇ Choices for cremation (if that is your choice)
- ◇ Choices for your service or a gathering of remembrance
- ◇ Notifications Upon My Passing
- ◇ Death Certificate Information
- ◇ Suggested Obituary
- ◇ Donations & Gifts In Memorium
- ◇ Information and Applications for Crypts and Memorial Plaques in HOPE Memorial Gardens

Once you have completed all you desire, it will be important to discuss the contents of this document with your loved ones and to let them know where it is

kept. We suggest that you also consider providing a copy to the pastoral staff at Hope United Methodist Church to assist them in ministering to your family in their time of grief.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the pastors or staff of Hope United Methodist Church. We are here to support your spiritual journey.





Hope

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