

# THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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## FUNERALS & MEMORIALS



*I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me,  
even though they die, will live. John 11:25*



*Our help is in the name  
of the Lord, who made  
heaven and earth...  
Psalm 124:8*



*(Photos of Nave)*

# INTRODUCTION

This booklet serves as a resource for members of The Riverside Church as well as non-members who are interested in scheduling a funeral or memorial service. It is also designed to answer some basic questions and provide resource information that will be helpful in planning a meaningful service.

It is our hope and prayer that we will help to lighten the burden and provide comfort through the challenging experience of arranging the funeral or memorial of a loved one. We prayerfully achieve this through a staff of well-trained pastors who, through their care and sensitivity, help provide guidance through the journey of loss.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

The Riverside Church holds funeral and memorial services for members, immediate family and friends of our faith community. We hold services in both the Nave and Christ Chapel, and offer spaces for repast gatherings. When a death has occurred, or is imminent, one of our ordained Riverside ministers will be assigned to that family to provide pastoral care. The minister will meet with family members, pray with them, and guide them in planning a meaningful service. The Director of Music assists families with music selections and the hire of soloists, if desired. Riverside clergy may also travel with the family to the final committal, when requested.

The Coordinator of Pastoral Events is available to assist with the non-liturgical details of planning a service including: identifying and scheduling spaces for repast events, providing referrals for funeral homes, cremation services, florists, and caterers.

## OUR POLICY & PRACTICE

The Riverside Church clergy will preside as officiants for funerals and memorials held at the church. The request for the participation of a former Riverside minister in a memorial or funeral service shall come at the invitation of the current Senior Minister.

## PRE-PLANNING

When a death occurs, family and loved ones are required to make a myriad of decisions at one of the most stressful times in their lives. Pre-planning a funeral or memorial allows you to make your wishes known with clarity, and can alleviate a great deal of stress for your loved ones. You may contact the Coordinator of Pastoral Events or the Parish Care office for information on pre-planning a funeral or memorial. An ordained Riverside Minister will meet with you and your family and prayerfully assist in crafting a meaningful service; complete with scriptures and music selections.

**The Memorial Society of The Riverside Church** provides counsel and advice to members of the church and the surrounding community about practical end-of-life issues. Under the supervision of the Parish Care Ministry, the Memorial Society volunteers offer assistance in the following areas:

- Provide materials for persons to express their wishes in writing, regarding their bodily remains after death, health care proxies and living wills, and organ donation.
- Provide information about funerals, memorial services, cremation, interment, and burial options in the New York metropolitan area.
- Assist church members and their immediate family in purchasing niches in the Columbarium of The Riverside Church, the receiving vault of ashes of the dead, located in South Hall lobby.





*God is our refuge &  
our strength, an ever-  
present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not  
fear... Psalm 46:1*



*(Photos of Christ Chapel)*

## **FUNERAL VS. MEMORIAL**

While it is not uncommon for people to use the terms “funeral” and “memorial” interchangeably, these are actually two different options.

A funeral service is a formal service of worship in which the casketed body of the deceased is present. It is the practice of The Riverside Church to close the casket after the final viewing. Once the casket has been closed, it remains closed and will not be re-opened. Typically, a graveside service immediately follows a funeral.

A memorial service is a formal service of worship that takes place without the casketed body being present. It is a common practice to have an urn with the cremated remains or ashes accompanied with a photo to serve as a replacement for a casket, but this is a matter of preference. Some families chose to have the simplicity of a candle and/or photo of their loved one.

When attempting to make a decision between a funeral or memorial, it is often helpful to understand that funerals are typically time sensitive and do not always afford the opportunity to plan out all the details one might like to have incorporated in the service. Memorials are not time sensitive and may take place whenever a family feels prepared to arrange a service with the Coordinator of Pastoral Events. Additionally, costs related to funeral services are often considerably higher than memorial services.

## **MEMORIAL GATHERING**

Riverside Church also makes it possible for families and friends to host a Memorial Gathering, which is not to be mistaken for the Memorial Service referenced above. The distinction between a Memorial Service and Memorial Gathering can best be described by the non-religious nature. Memorial Gatherings are typically more secular in nature and do not require the presence of Riverside Clergy. These gatherings do not take place in any of the chapel spaces and are designed to provide family and friends with a space to share remembrances and celebrate the life of the deceased.

## WHEN PLANNING A MEANINGFUL SERVICE:

All funerals and memorials at The Riverside Church are services of worship that witness to the Resurrection of Jesus. As such, the service ought to be consistent with the spirit of the Christian faith and the mission and Ministry of The Riverside Church.

- While all services are understood to be celebrations of the life being remembered, we always recognize that this person is now sharing in Jesus' resurrection.
- Extravagance and material display should be avoided. An elaborate and expensive casket is unnecessary, since our Creator intended that the human body should return to the elements from which it came. A show of pride in material things is inconsistent with the Christian emphasis on the living spirit.
- Viewing the remains in an open casket during the funeral service has no support in scripture or Christian tradition. The use of a pall to cover the casket throughout the service signifies that before God all of us are equal and that God does not regard our loved ones according to the amount of money spent on these rites.
- While many of the members of The Riverside Church may prefer committing the body to the ground, there are a growing number of people who feel that cremation offers a number of aesthetic and practical advantages. The Riverside Church supports the personal decision of the member.



## **Sample Outline for a Funeral or Memorial Service**

This is a sample outline for a Funeral/Memorial Service at The Riverside Church; it can be varied, with more or less content, or a different order of events.

The places marked for hymns/music tend to work as good points of transition, and for “breaking up” the service, but this can be varied according to the content and pace of the service and the amount of music desired. It is the policy of The Riverside Church that the church’s Director of Music must approve all music.

**MUSICAL PRELUDE** (usually by church organist)

**PROCESSION (OPTIONAL)**

**OPENING SENTENCES & INVOCATION**

(by minister, usually from scripture)

**HYMN** or other musical selection

**READING/S** from scripture and/or other sources meaningful to the deceased

**SILENT READING OF OBITUARY (OPTIONAL)**

**WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE**

(This may include reflection or remarks prepared by family members and friends)  
**(OPTIONAL)**

**HYMN** or other musical selection e.g. Solo

**SCRIPTURE**

**HOMILY** or **EULOGY**

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING** (minister)

**LORD’S PRAYER** (unison)

**HYMN** or other musical selection **(OPTIONAL)**

**BENEDICTION** (minister)

**MUSICAL POSTLUDE** (usually by church organist)



## **Suggested Scriptures for a Funeral, Memorial or Committal Service**

### **Psalms**

Psalm 16: 5-11; Psalm 23; Psalm 27:1; 4-9, 13-14; Psalm 39:4-5, 12  
Psalm 42:1-6; Psalm 43; Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11; Psalm 90:1-10, 12; Psalm 98  
Psalm 100; Psalm 103; Psalm 106:1-5; Psalm 116: 1-9, 15; Psalm 121  
Psalm 139:1-12; Psalm 145; Psalm 146

### **Wisdom and the Prophets**

Job 19: 23-27

Isaiah 25: 6-9; 26: 1-4,19; 40:1-11; 43:1-3, 18-19, 25; 61:1-4, 10-11; 65:17-25

Lamentations 3:19-26, 31-36

Daniel 12:1-3

Joel 2:12-13, 23-24, 26-27

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

### **Epistles**

Romans 5:1-11; 6:3-9; 8:14-25, 31-39; 14:7-9, 10-12

I Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20, 20-26, 36-38, 42-44, 50-58

II Corinthians 4:16-5:1-10

Ephesians 1:11-23; 2:4-10

Philippians 3:7-11, 20-21

Colossians 3:1-17

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

II Timothy 2:8-13

Hebrews 2:14-18; 11:1-3, 13-16, 12:1-2

I Peter 1:3-12; 3:18-22; 4:6

I John 3: 1-3

Revelation 7:2-3, 9-17; 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13; 21:1-4, 22-25; 22:1-5

### **Gospels**

Matthew 5:1-12; 11:25-30; 25:1-13, 31-46

Luke 7: 11-17; 18:15-17; 23:33, 39-43

John 3:16-21; 5:24-29; 6:37-40; 11:17-27; 14:1-6, 25-27

## Suggested Music for a Funeral, Memorial or Committal Service

The Riverside Church is home to expertly trained musicians and vocal soloists. Music for Funerals and Memorials Services is provide by the Music Department, and all requests must be approved by the Director of Music. Once your event has been booked, you may contact the Music Department at (212) 870-6721 for assistance with selecting music for your event. There may be fees associated with hiring soloists and/or choir members.

The list of possible selections is quite lengthy, but some of the most requested Hymns from the Riverside Church Hymnal are listed below.

#260: A Mighty Fortress is Our God

#138: Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

#543: Abide With Me

#467: How Great Thou Art

#280: Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound

#507: I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord

#339: Be Thou My Vision

#282: If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee

#341: Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine

#263: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

#438: Blest Be the Tie That Binds

#464: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

#306: Fairest Lord Jesus

#376: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

#526: For All the Saints

#383: My Faith Looks Up to Thee

#286: Give to the Winds Thy Fears

#172: My Shepherd Will Supply My Need

#276: Great is Thy Faithfulness

#384: O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

#281: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

#404: Precious Lord, Take My Hand

#460: Holy God We Praise Your Name

#170: The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want

#420: God of Grace and God of Glory

## AFTER THE FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL: GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT

### 3 Important things to remember about grief

- Everyone grieves differently: Despite what others may say, no one knows exactly how you feel. While grief is a natural occurrence that we all experience in our lifetime, the grieving process is different for everyone. What you are feeling is unique to you. Be gentle with yourself. There is no defined way that you should be feeling at any particular time.
- There is no timetable for grief: How quickly you start to feel like your old self will depend on many factors. Some people bounce back quickly while others need more time. If you feel uncomfortable with how long it is taking you to recover, consider seeking help. Riverside clergy, support groups, and professional grief counselors are some available resources.
- You are not alone: Spending time with those who care about you can offer comfort. Seek out friends and family who will understand what you are going through. Remember that your Riverside Church family is here to support you through your season of grief as well as the seasons that follow.



Grief is a natural reaction to the loss we experience when someone we love or care about dies. As painful and difficult as it is, the grieving process is an important step in healing. Readjusting to a new reality and healing may take time but here are some suggestions to help:

- **Don't rush yourself:** Working through grief takes time. While you may be anxious for things to return to normal, you should give yourself time to mourn.
- **Stay connected:** Spend time with friends and family. Being around people who care about you and that you care about can help. Try to resist the urge to isolate yourself. If you are retired or have time available, seek out volunteer opportunities that feel meaningful. While it can be comforting to be around others who are experiencing similar feelings and grief, be sure to balance your time with others who are not grieving.
- **Get help if you feel you need it:** Sadness is perfectly normal, but if you feel you cannot attend to your normal activities or you are worried that you are not coping well, reach out. Speak with Riverside clergy, friends or family members, consult with your doctor, and contact a support group or one of the resources listed.



## **GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES**

The pain of grief is real but so is God's peace, which surpasses all understanding. If you are coping with the loss of a loved one, surround yourself with every resource available for support, peace, and love. In searching for answers from God through prayer, scriptures, and from those who journey alongside of you, we believe you can find comfort and hope in these challenging times.

### ***Riverside Church Parish Care***

#### **Matthew 5:4**

Grief Support for Spouses

The group is open to anyone surviving the loss of their spouse. Meetings take place on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 5pm-7pm

Contact Parish Care – (212) 870-6741

**Betterhelp.com** – Affordable, private online counseling. Anytime, anywhere available 24 hours.

### ***Cancer-Related Bereavement***

#### **Cancer Care**

275 Seventh Avenue, 22nd Floor, (between 26th and 27th Streets)

New York, NY 10036

Contact: Intake department or bereavement coordinator

Leave message and they will call you back. (800) 813-HOPE

Cancer Care offers groups to address the concerns of a variety of populations who are affected by any type of cancer, which includes:

- Bereavement Support for Partners and Relatives
- Cancer care offers more than 50 support groups each month, where people meet face-to-face, over the telephone, or online to discuss problems, gain support, and learn from other. Each of these groups is led by a professional oncology social worker from the staff of Cancer Care.

### **Calvary Hospital**

1740 Eastchester Road Bronx, NY 10461

Contact: Dr. Sherry Shack, Director of Bereavement Services  
(718) 518-2125

Cost: Free

Groups are open to the community and run by professional pastoral counselors.

### **Gilda's Club NYC**

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

195 West Houston St.

Contact: (212) 647-9700

Cost: Free

Gilda's Club New York City Mission: To support, educate and empower individuals impacted by cancer and their families. Their free comprehensive cancer program includes support groups, educational lectures and workshops for individuals living with a cancer diagnosis, caregivers, and anyone grieving the loss of a loved one to a cancer-related illness – men, women, teens, and children. For more information, please call and find out when the next orientation meeting for new members is being held.

Monthly drop-in group, every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6:00 – 7:30

Groups run by professionals Visiting Nurse Service of New York  
1250 Broadway, 17th floor

## **General and Population-Specific Bereavement Groups**

### **New York City Self-Help Center**

(212) 582-9100

Clearinghouse for all types of support groups

Telephone counselors are available Mon – Friday, 11:00-2:00 to match people with the most appropriate group. Self-help bereavement groups for all situations are available in all boroughs.

General Bereavement Group

Family Life and Respect Life Office

Pastoral Bereavement Program

(212) 371-1000, x3187

In every borough and most counties, non-denominational

Cost: None

### **The 92nd Street YMCA**

1350 Lexington Avenue

New York, NY 10128

Groups for Widows/Widowers and for loss of parent

Cost: \$100.00 for six sessions

## **Bereavement Services for Older People**

### **AARP Grief and Loss Programs**

(New York Service Program for Older People) Widowed Person's Service day and evening groups led by trained widowed persons

Contact: Barbara Danish, 787.7120

302 W 91st New York, NY

Cost: None

**SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment)**

Contact: Allan: (212) 741-2247 ext. 229

208 West 13th St.

New York, NY 10011

Provides mutual support to older gay men and lesbians who have lost their life's partner or who are caring for their partner who is gravely ill. Screening before attending first meeting.

**Survivors of Suicide**

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

120 Wall Street, 29th Floor

New York, NY 10005

1-888-333-2377

**Survivors of Homicide**

Parents of Murdered Children

(513) 721-5683

**Visiting Nurse Service of New York**

Calvary Hospital

General Bereavement group for Spanish-speakers meets the 3rd Thursday of the month.



### **AIDS-Related Bereavement**

Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital HIV+ Mental Health Clinic  
(212) 305-4562

Contact: Lucy Wicks

Cost: Sliding scale/Medicaid/Insurance

710 W. 168th St., 6th Floor

New York, NY 10032

### **Children**

Jewish Board of Family Services (JBFCS)

549 West 180th St., New York 10033

(212) 795-9888 x143

Groups for children who have lost a parent or significant other beginning at age 5-teens and there is a simultaneous educational group for parents

Graham-Windham Manhattan Mental Health Center

274 West 145th St., 2nd Fl.

New York, NY 10039

Contact: Kate Sherman, CSW

(212) 368-4100 x22

Groups held Thursdays 4:00 – 5:00

For girls and boys ages 10 – 13

## Professionals We Are Pleased To Recommend

### **All Boro Cremation Services, LLC**

1289 Forest Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10302  
(718) 887-8168

### **Benta's Funeral Home**

630 St. Nicholas Avenue  
New York, NY 10030  
212-281-8850

### **Cremation Consultants**

362 Van Brunt Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11231  
718-624 -8969  
212-929 -9797  
Paul Griffone

### **Crestwood Funeral & Cremation Services**

445 West 43rd Street  
New York, NY 10036  
212-245-7575  
Peter Deluca

### **Frank E. Campbell**

1076 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
William J. Villanova, General Manager

### **Mickeys Sunset Funeral Services**

1879 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10032  
212-281-1670  
212-534-0699  
Raymond Hickman

### **Unity Funeral Chapel - NYC**

2352 8th Avenue  
New York, NY 10027  
212-666-8300

### **Columbia Florists**

718-543-3753  
Approved Caterer for Repast Events:

### **Daniela's Flower Shop**

646-678-3150

### **Superior Florists**

212-679-4065

### **Madeline's Catering (Long Island Division)**

212-229-2226  
catermadeline.com  
events@catermadeline.com

Approved Caterer for Repast Events:

### **Melba's Restaurant & Catering**

212-864-7777  
Toni Davis  
events@melbasrestaurant.com

### **Voilà Caterers**

212-316-9600  
Nick Swain  
info@voilacaterers.com

Video Editor/Custom Photo Montages

### **Latour de Force Productions**

(917) 509-4098  
Kristina Latour  
Latourdeforceproductions.com  
Kristina@ldfprods.com

## Pastoral Needs - Who Do I Contact?

- My loved one is a church member who is very ill, and I would like to have Riverside minister to visit them:

**Contact: The Minister for Parish Care – (212) 870-6741**

- I am a member and I need someone to be placed on the prayer list: Contact: **The Office of Parish Care – (212) 870-6909**

- Someone close to me has died, and I want to arrange for the Funeral or Memorial to take place at the Riverside Church:

**Contact: The Pastoral Events Coordinator – (212) 870-6762**

- My family member has a niche in the Columbarium and we want to commit their remains:

**Contact: The Memorial Society – (212) 870-6815**

- It's outside of business hours and someone has taken ill, or is having surgery. I really need to speak with a Minister:

**Contact: Security - (212) 870-6712 to reach the Clergy on Call**

## Your Riverside Church Funeral/Memorial Checklist

I have contacted a Funeral Home or Cremation Service .....

I have contacted the Pastoral Events Office at (212) 870-6762 with  
3 dates of interest .....

If the deceased was a member of the Memorial Society, I have contacted  
the office at (212) 870-6815 to confirm any arrangements the deceased  
may have on file .....

My Event has been confirmed, and I have signed my event agreement and  
made payment arrangements if applicable .....

I have contacted the approved caterers for a repast onsite .....

I have met with the assigned Riverside Minister and discussed the  
service details .....

I have contacted the Director of Music at (212) 870-6721 to confirm the  
selections for the service .....

I have submitted the final order of service to the Riverside Minister for  
approval before going to print .....

I have confirmed all logistical details with the Pastoral Events Coordinator;  
including the technical services needed, the room setup for repast, and the  
time of my arrival on the day of the event .....

Notes:



Notes:



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