

Funeral Planning and Policy

Rincon Congregational United Church of Christ (Rincon)

A Note to You

This document is for use by the members of Rincon Congregational United Church of Christ (Rincon), both as a recommendation encouraging you to prepare a plan for your funeral or memorial service, while you are fully capable of deciding among the many alternatives available, and, secondly as a guideline for families preparing for, or dealing with, the death of a family member, loved one, or friend. If you make and file a plan (see attached Personal Preference Form) with the church in advance of your death, it may make the process and duties of grieving a little easier for your loved ones. It frees them from trying to figure out what you might have wanted or what's important to you. The pastor will reach out and offer support and guidance to your family at the time of your passing. This document also contains valuable information about the church's policy regarding services held at the church, funeral home, and graveside.

Our Condolences to Family and Friends

If your family member has already passed away, we offer our sincere sympathy, love, and prayers in this time of sadness, grief, and separation. We hope that the church can make this a meaningful, thoughtful, and loving time for your family and friends. The church honestly desires that your funeral or memorial service be characterized by dignity, reverence, and grace as we commit your loved one to eternity. We will be respectful of your boundaries and desires.

Arrangements When a death occurs, the immediate family is encouraged to notify the church as soon as possible and to share in the planning of the service. Internment, cremation, or donation for medical purposes are some methods for disposition of the body. The body should be placed in care of the mortuary of your choice. The Funeral Service is sometimes called a Memorial Service when the body or ashes are not present. However, the service is essentially the same. And whichever "title" you choose is what will be done.

Visitation If the family desires viewing of the body this can be done publicly or privately, at the funeral home or at the church before worship.

The Funeral Service

Location: If possible, the service most appropriately is held in the place where the congregation regularly gathers for worship. If it is held in another place, it is important that it remains a corporate act of the church's worship.

When: The service may take place before or after the burial and committal of the body. The service should be held at an hour convenient for the immediate family and the community of faith. The church office will help you find open times for both the Pastor and the facilities.

Service Leadership: The Pastor of Rincon shall be responsible for planning and leading the service, fully involving the immediate family. Another minister chosen by the family may assist and if desired, will be invited by the pastor of Rincon. The music may be handled by the church organist and/or other musicians of the church, and if there are others you would like to include musically, please work with the Pastor and church musicians to coordinate.

Presentation of the Body or Remains: The presence of the coffin may help the bereaved and the congregation to confront and deal with the reality of death. The coffin will be closed for the service. A covering may be placed over the coffin to symbolize resurrection and showing the equality of all people in the services of the church. [When military funeral honors are used, the covering may be the flag.] However, the body or remains need not be present at the service.

The casket may be open prior to the funeral service for participants and family to view the remains. The casket will be closed prior to the start of all ceremonies.

If there is a procession into the place of worship, the pastor leads it as the congregation sings a hymn. A procession forms and leaves the church after the service, the pastor preceding the coffin.

Cremation remains may be handled in several ways. If the ashes have not been interred, they may be carried in by a family member or the pastor and placed on the altar before the service. Often interment will be done with family members only after the service in which case, they will be transferred to the Church Columbarium or other facility. The ashes will not be available for display if interment will be done prior to the service.

Fraternal, Sororal, Civic, or Military Rites: Any fraternal, sororal, civic, or military funeral honor rites should be conducted separately, before or after the service. Those rituals that can be conducted in a reverent, solemn manner may be held in the Sanctuary. They must be brief, dignified, and respectful of all participants and shall be conducted consistent with local, state, or national practices for those organizations. If the organization is unknown, the pastor reserves the right to review the entire ritual before it is conducted within the confines of the church. Once the funeral worship service begins, no other ritual, or continuance of such ritual shall compromise the service's integrity. There should be no rites conducted in the Sanctuary at the end of the worship service.

Other rituals, such as 21-Gun salutes, shall be only conducted at graveside.

Worship Service: God's word is read and proclaimed, hymns may be sung, prayers offered, and the sacrament of Holy Communion shared by those who desire it. The service celebrates the life of the deceased, gives thanks for that person's life, and commends that life to God. It provides the Christian community and others an opportunity to support the bereaved with their presence. Its purpose is to affirm once more the powerful, steadfast love of God from which people cannot be separated, even by death.

This ultimate hope was reflected in the words of Paul, "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor

depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

It is especially appropriate at a time of death that we proclaim our faith and trust in the continual presence of God that never leaves us. In the ancient words of the Psalmist,

“Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.” (Psalms 139:7-10)

Most of the singing in the service should be done by those gathered. There is no better way to express the unity of the family of faith and the joy and comfort that is integral to the gospel. If you desire a soloist or choral anthem, this shall be done with the concurrence of the pastor and accompaniment must be arranged with the church organist or other musicians. You are responsible for any additional cost.

The pastor may deliver a sermon, declaring the Christian hope and the promise of God’s everlasting love. Thanks may be offered for the life of the deceased and for the witness of that life to God’s love for all, a love which strengthens and supports even in the midst of grief.

The pastor may accommodate participation of the immediate family in the eulogy during the worship service. On certain occasions an invitation may be given to the congregation. The pastor may limit the participation of the congregation at their discretion if time or content become an issue.

The celebration of Holy Communion provides a rich and profound opportunity for consolation and strength. We practice ‘open communion’ where all those who wish to receive it are invited to participate. The decision to share Holy Communion shall be principally up to the immediate family.

The Committal The committal or burial may take place before or after the funeral. The pastor will accompany the funeral party to the place of interment. It should be conducted with dignity and brevity.

Receptions As part of the ministry of the church, the members offer to provide a reception in Fellowship Hall with simple refreshments of beverages and cookies. There is a charge for receptions provided to non-members.

Fees

Pastor: While an honorarium may be made at the discretion of the family, there is no fee for services of those who have been members of Rincon U.C.C. For services of non-members, \$400, with the check made out to the officiating minister.

Organist: The fee for the organist of Rincon U.C.C. for all services is \$150. The check is to be made out directly to the organist.

Bulletins: Worship bulletins are provided and printed by the church office at no cost.

Other Services: Additional services such as live streaming, uploading of the service to the Internet, and preparation of Power Point Presentation are available at costs to be negotiated.

Memorials Gifts to the church or to other charitable causes may be suggested by the family at the time arrangements are made.

Wills The Council of Rincon encourages members to have wills and suggests that the possibility of bequests to the church be considered. Having a valid will is integral to family welfare and to planned-giving, following the sound principle of Christian stewardship.

Personal Preference Form This form can provide a clear indication of personal preferences in final rites. It may always be revised, rewritten, amended, or withdrawn, as one's desires change. The completed forms are to be turned in to the church, with a copy to be retained at home in a secure place. Such thoughtful preparation can considerably ease the trauma of death for family and friends, and, as such, it is an act of love.

Further, some people have found a "spiritual legacy" to be meaningful. One may like to write a statement of faith for survivors, a testament of what life as part of the body of Christ has meant. Such a statement can be attached to the Personal Preference Form.

The Council Rincon Congregational United Church of Christ
Tucson, Arizona
October 2022

PERSONAL PREFERENCE FORM
(In the Event of Death Information Sheet)

Name: Last: _____ First: _____ Middle: _____
Legal Name (If different) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Place of Birth:** _____

Date of Death: _____ **Place of Death:** _____

Disposition of Remains:

Mortuary: _____ I prefer burial in _____
I already (do) ___ (do not) ___ own a lot there.

Crematorium: _____ The following disposition of the ashes may be made:
Rincon Columbarium: Section: _____ Niche # _____
Other: _____

Medical Research: Body to be used for Medical Research at: _____
Afterward remains to be sent to: _____
Other: _____

Service: I prefer:

- _____ Immediate burial or cremation with a memorial following.
- _____ A conventional funeral.

I (have) ___ (have not) ___ written a brief statement of faith.

It is located at _____

Personal Information:

Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____

Other (Please list) _____

Spouse/Partner's Name: _____

Parent's Names: (Please list all.)

Children and Grandchildren's Names: (Children in order of birth, each followed by their children, birth order also.)

Siblings Names (in birth order)

Life Events you might want us to mention such as:

Schools Attended: _____

Vocational/Professional Record: (or retired from.) _____

Military Service: _____ **Branch of Service:** _____

Grade, Rank or Rating: _____

War/Conflicts Served: _____

Additional Information: _____

Rincon UCC Involvement: _____

Other Organizations, Churches, and Community Involvement:

Additional information you desire to make a part of the record (such as tributes, interests, awards and honors):

Information for Memorial Service:

Music:

Organ/Piano Selections: _____

Solo Selections: _____

Hymn Selections: _____

Scriptures: _____

Communion: I do _____ I do not _____ desire to have Communion as part of the service

Other Readings: _____

Specific Instructions: _____

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to: _____

The above information is an accurate statement of my intentions and desires and is to be used in assisting the minister(s) of Rincon UCC and surviving relatives/friends plan an appropriate funeral/memorial service.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____