

what about **memorial** services?

SOMETIMES A MEMORIAL SERVICE MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE...

Most people simply have a ceremony on the day of the funeral but sometimes a memorial service might be appropriate. Examples could be where a family is widely scattered, or when a public figure has died and many people wish to pay tribute to that person. A memorial service can be arranged several days or weeks after the actual death and a public building such as a place of worship or hall can be used.

In the case of memorial services, time can be allowed for several people to be involved. One example of this was when a teacher died who had been active in a Trade Union, in the anti-apartheid movement and in the community. Family, friends and activists from the causes that meant so much to him all spoke and the ceremony ended with the choral part of Beethoven's 9th Symphony.



Ainsworth Presbyterian Chapel (Unitarian)

what should I do **next?**

If you wish to contact the Unitarians, one of our ministers, lay leaders or other officiant would be prepared to meet you with no commitment on either side so that you can discuss your wishes. Expenses might be requested if travelling is involved. Alternatively, a telephone call to the address below could give you more information.



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funeral and memorial services

– the unitarian way

a unitarian **information leaflet**

Thank you for picking up this leaflet. There are usually two main reasons why people read a leaflet like this: the first is to make known your own funeral wishes and the second is to prepare the funeral arrangements for someone else. We will deal with these reasons in turn.

your **personal** wishes

Although in law your next of kin has the right to decide your funeral arrangements, most next of kin are relieved when a person has made their own funeral wishes known. It is useful to draw up your own checklist and set down your answers in writing to some of the questions below. Your wishes should be left in a known place – possibly with personal papers and your Will. Do you want:

- ▶ Cremation or burial and where do you want this to be?
- ▶ A ceremony in the home, church, chapel, cemetery or crematorium?
- ▶ Music, hymns and readings? If so then what do you like? Note that many places now have the facilities to play recorded music.
- ▶ Flowers from the family only, from everyone, or donations to a good cause or charity?
- ▶ If cremation, then where do you want your ashes to be scattered or interred?

YOUR WISHES SHOULD BE
LEFT IN A KNOWN PLACE...

What of non-religious or humanist ceremonies?

Most Unitarian officiants will fit in with the wishes of the deceased and exclude what many see as traditional religious language. We start where people are and try to reflect the person's life rather than speculating on any unknown future.

arranging someone else's funeral

UNITARIAN OFFICIANTS WILL
FIT IN WITH THE WISHES OF
THE DECEASED...



Golders Green Unitarian Church

Has the person left a Will and any wishes, either in the Will or in writing elsewhere? If so then you should respect those wishes although the executor or next of kin has the final say. The family may already have paid for a plot in a cemetery or churchyard. If they have not then, for a burial, a plot will have to be bought (Local Authorities usually keep records of such plots.)

On registering a death, the registrar will provide a helpful booklet on what to do. Most people use a Funeral Director, although you can arrange a "do it yourself" funeral instead. Choose a Funeral Director who is bound by a Code of Practice and will provide a full estimate in advance.

You need to remember that services at a crematorium are usually limited to just thirty minutes – and that includes time for people to enter and exit. You can book extra time if required.

content of the ceremony

It is useful to have a printed order of service and these can easily be created on a computer and then copied at low cost. Music creates strong feelings for most people, as does a brief period of silence when the deceased can be remembered. Music heard at funerals has ranged from a full Brass Band to a soprano, from jazz to a string quartet, from hymns to a Hindu chant, from the Beatles to the Post Horn Galop, from part of a symphony to a grandchild playing a harp. The important thing is that the music should reflect the person's life and interests.

Readings have ranged from the Bible to the poems of Robert Frost, from Robert Burns to Ogden Nash. Members of the family and friends can also speak words of tribute, but remember that emotions can be powerful at this time, so a copy of the words should be available for the officiant in case the individual finds it difficult to cope with the occasion.



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REFLECT THE PERSON'S LIFE
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