

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Revised Draft 3/10/21

Purpose: At the time of death, many details require our immediate attention, and we form a Memorial Committee to tend to them. The Committee acts on specific, practical concerns, and can sensitively offer help to a bereaved family. The family starts the process by notifying the Clerk of the monthly meeting. If the Clerk is not immediately available, either the clerk of Ministry and Worship or of Care and Counsel should be called. The clerk taking the initial call will ensure that both of the other clerks are informed and that a memorial committee is formed.

Membership: Members or attenders of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. The Memorial Committee will be formed with 1-2 members from both the Ministry and Worship and the Care and Counsel committees to work closely with the family.

Meetings: Scheduled as needed

Duties – General:

1. Burial or cremation arrangement: The Committee starts by checking for a member's file in the Meeting Office that may contain previously determined wishes. The committee helps the family identify options for burial or cremation, and funeral homes providing these services.
2. Notify Friends and Relatives: The committee notifies the meeting and helps the family with notices to others.
3. Managing Visitors: If needed, the committee arranges for help in answering the door and telephone and keeping a record of calls and visitors.
4. Food: The committee coordinates and records the gifts of food to the family.
5. Memorial Service: The committee helps the family plan, announce and conduct a memorial service including their wishes regarding donations.
6. Obituary - The committee may assist the family in writing a newspaper obituary to the appropriate media, including arrangements for services, and wishes regarding flowers or donations.
7. Meeting for Business - The memorial committee notifies Meeting for Business of the death. The committee invites a Friend to write and present a memorial minute to Meeting for Business for approval.
8. Memorial Minute: This minute is a celebration of the Friend's life and relationship to the Meeting and to the world. It includes revealing anecdotes or illuminating reminiscences that capture the gifts and spiritual characteristics of this person that made them special.

Duties – Friends Memorial Service

1. Schedule (meetinghouse or other location): The committee schedules and announces the time and place of the service to the meeting.
2. Family Wishes: The committee consults with the family about any special arrangements for the service, such as flowers, music, or speakers and prepares a memorial service program.
3. Program: The committee arranges for a friend to prepare and print copies of a program for the memorial service that may include: name, photo, date of birth and death; “Memorial Service in the Manner of Friends,”; order of service (music, welcome, worship, closing) and an obituary.
4. Greeters: The committee arranges for greeters to hand out a program for the memorial service.
5. Building and Parking: The committee prepares the building and arrangements for parking.
6. Registration: The committee obtains a guestbook and permanent ink pen for attendees to sign if the family wishes. Arrange for someone to ask guests to sign.
7. Memorial Meeting: A member of meeting is asked to open and close the service with an explanation about Friends Worship, order of service, the closing of meeting and arrangements for refreshments after the service.
8. Refreshments: If refreshments are to be served after the service, arrange this with the Hospitality Committee.
9. Childcare: Arrange for adequate childcare during the service.

Memorial Service in the Manner of Friends

The Religious Society of Friends holds, as the basis of its faith, the belief that God endows every human being with a measure of the divine spirit.

Our manner of worship is an outgrowth of this belief. We gather in quiet worship mindful of the words: “Be still and know that I am God.”

A Friends memorial service is similar in many ways to a Meeting for Worship. We come together in reverent silence, with the desire to draw nearer to God, and to understand God’s will. It is a time not only for a sharing of loss, but also a time of thankfulness for the life of the person for whom the memorial service is held. We reflect on the value of that life as it relates to the lives of all of us.

All present share equally in this service. We sit quietly; at times an individual may be moved to speak, to offer prayer or a message that has come out of the silence. All are welcome to do this. The meeting closes with handshakes.

The responsibility for the spiritual depth of the meeting rests with each person. Those who keep silent as well as those who give a vocal message do their part when they yield their minds and hearts to the guidance of the Spirit.

Friends hope that in the Meeting for Worship a consciousness of the Divine Presence will come to every person to be a source of direction and of strength after leaving the meeting.

