

FUNERAL POLICY FOR ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DURING COVID-19

For Christians, gathering to mourn the dead, celebrate their life and proclaim the hope of resurrection are essential practices of our faith. Christians bury their dead traditionally from the church with the community of faith gathered. During the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, our usual mourning rituals have been interrupted. We think of those women on that first Easter, who went to follow their familiar mourning ritual to anoint Jesus's body, to find it disrupted.

We remember their initial shock and confusion and feel it too. We're waiting to feel the hope of resurrection. In times of trial like the death of a loved one, we turn to the familiar practices and rituals of our faith and ancestors. And so we know that this disruption for a grieving community is doubly hard. We grieve this disruption with you.

During the pandemic, Asbury United Methodist Church is adhering to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the District of Columbia Government, and the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. At this time, the District of Columbia is in Phase II of reopening; and the Trustees of Asbury United Methodist Church have decided that Asbury will remain closed for worship services and ministry activities. We believe the logistical and safety considerations are too great. Until the ban on gatherings is further lifted, we will be limited in our funeral practices in the following ways:

Viewing/Wake: We **are not** able to host a wake or viewing at the church at this time.

Funeral: We **are not** able to host funeral services at the church at this time. However, Asbury clergy **are** able to lead services at any funeral home of the family's choosing in coordination with the funeral home staff. It may be possible for the funeral home to livestream the service.

Graveside Service: We **are** able to lead a graveside service outdoors, where possible, and require that all people practice physical distancing.

Repast: We **are not** able to host a meal following the funeral at this time.

Memorial Service: While we are limited in what we are able to host at this time, we are able to plan for memorials after the pandemic has passed. We would welcome the opportunity to host a memorial service for your loved one at a later date when we can all safely gather and celebrate their life.