

FUNERAL POLICY FOR ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH COVID-19 PHASE II - INITIAL REOPENING

June 11, 2021

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 and post-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. As of June 11, 2021, the District of Columbia entered Phase II of reopening and relaxed restrictions against public gathering. In light of the Centers for Disease Control and Baltimore-Washington Conference guidelines, the Trustees of Asbury United Methodist Church have decided that Asbury will reopen for funerals subject to the following practices:

Viewing/Wake: We are able to host a wake or viewing at the church with masks and physical distancing required of attendees.

Funeral: We are able to host funeral services at the church with masks and physical distancing required of attendees. 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.

Memorial Service: We are able to host memorial services at the church with masks and physical distancing required of attendees.

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 funerals or memorial services at this time. Our Fellowship Hall does not provide appropriate space to allow the necessary physical distancing to safely gather.