

COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH

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Dealing with Death

A guide to resources

Revised 1998

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Note: Legal citations in this booklet are based on Indiana law. Laws in other states may vary.

Westberg, Granger. *Good Grief*. Fortress Press, Philadelphia.

The small book of only 64 pages was first copyrighted in 1962. It is now in its 25th anniversary printing (1997), testifying to its enduring value to many thousands of parishioners and believers of many faiths. Westberg, a Lutheran chaplain, is well known for his writings about the intersection of faith and health. This book fulfills its claim to be a constructive approach to the problem of loss.

Zunin, Leonard M. and Hilary Stanton Zunin. *The Art of Condolence*. Harper Perennial, 1992, paper, \$12.00.

Time and again we stumble for words and actions that will reflect our feelings of compassion and our desire to be of comfort. This practical, easy-to-read book covers three common areas of concern: “What can I write?” “What can I say?” “What can I do?” The authors address such issues as special circumstances (suicide, sudden death, death of parent or child), how to write a condolence letter (including several moving samples), specific suggestions for helping, and how to help when more help is needed (therapy, grief groups, etc.). A very fine book that can help broaden and deepen our care for each other in times of grief and loss.

Check the church library for additional resources.

Table of Contents

Schmidt, Abraham. *Dialogue with Death*. World, Inc. 1976, \$8.95
 Moving and vivid accounts of personal encounters with death.
 Deals with feelings rather than profound explanations.

Sittser, Gerald L. *A Grace Disguised*. Zondervan Publishing House,
 Grand Rapids, 1996.
 A drunk driver, on an Idaho road, caused the tragic loss to Sittser
 of three generations of his family: his mother, his wife, and his
 young daughter. The book is more than a chronicle of the author's
 sorrow; it is a very moving reflection on the losses we all suffer
 and the amazing grace of God that can transform us. Sittser
 reminds us that it is better by far to live in an unfair world where
 grace is available and we get more than we deserve, than to live in
 an absolutely fair world without grace, and where we get what we
 deserve.

Smith, Willard H. *The Trail to Santa Fe: a Pilgrim's Progress*. Evangel
 Press, Nappanee, 1985.
 The last chapter of this autobiography deals with death.

Studer, Gerald C. *After Death What?* Herald Press, 1976, paper \$1.95.
 A thought-provoking biblical study of life after death.

Sutherland Fox, Sandra. *Good Grief*. New England Association for
 Education of Young Children, 1985, \$9.50.
 Helping groups of children when a friend dies.

Vaux, Kenneth and Sara Vaux. *Dying Well*. Abingdon Press, Nashville,
 1996.
 An excellent study of the many dimensions to help us achieve the
 goal of a good death. The book has two parts: 1) Basic issues
 (medical, social theological); and 2) Case studies and reflections,
 looking death squarely in the eyes—then moving through it in
 grace toward the saving power of God. The book includes
 instructions for use as a group study.

Weaver, Henry. *Confronting the Big C*. Herald Press, 1984, \$5.95.
 How one man worked through the diagnosis of cancer with the
 help of his wife, his doctors and his own inner strength and faith.

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statement of rediscovered faith. It can be a profound comfort to those in grief.

MMA - Healthy Living Series. Life Issues: Death. *A Time to Live, A Time to Die*. MMA, Goshen, 1997.

MMA - Healthy Living Series. Life Issues: Grief. *A Time to Grieve*. MMA, Goshen, 1996.

Mellonis, Bryan and Robert Ingpen. *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children*. Bantam Books, New York, 1983.

Nouwen, Henry. *A Letter of Consolation*. Harper and Row, 1982, \$8.95. Six months after his mother's death, the author wrote this letter to his father. He writes during the Easter season and reflects on the meaning of life and death in that context. The letter acknowledges the loneliness and the grief but finds consolation and hope in the victory of love over death as seen in Christ's resurrection.

Oliver, Samuel. *What the Dying Teach Us*. The Hawthorn Pastoral Press, 1998.

These stories are about living each moment of our lives filled with love, hope and gratitude. Dying people teach us to live as if each moment is a gift. When we live with the intensity that each moment is precious, we accumulate a lifetime of wisdom and wealth, a consciousness that can only increase with the passing of time.

Oosterveen, Gerald. *Too Early Frost*. Zondervan, 1988, \$8.95.

A father's account of losing his first child is a true testimony of faith by a man, a father and a minister who thanks God for the memories he has and for God's love that gives us "a bright hope for tomorrow when doubt is swept away and faith will be sight."

Rupp, Sister Joyce. *Praying Our Good-byes*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN 46556, \$5.95, paperback.

We all have our own unique good-bye times when we lose someone or something that has given our lives meaning and value. With the touch of a poet the author gives us a book about these experiences of leaving behind and moving on, the stories of union and separation that are written in all our hearts. This is about the "spirituality of change."

Davidson, Glen W. *Understanding Mourning*. Augsburg Press, 1984, \$5.50.

Subtitled, *A Guide for Those Who Grieve*. Offers guidelines for healthy mourning and returning to a reorganized life. A good resource for those who mourn and those who help the bereaved.

Hewitt. *After Suicide*. Westminster Press, 1980, \$7.95.

The author offers much needed information and clinically tested advice for those struggling to cope in the aftermath of a suicide. Also included is an Anniversary Memorial Service that enables family members to recommit themselves to life. It presents positive steps that can help family and friends find strength together as they readjust and return to healthy productive living.

Knox, Lucinda and Michael Knox. *Last Wishes: A Handbook to Guide Your Survivors*. Ulysses Press, Berkeley, 1994.

A 177 page workbook to be completed and periodically updated by people of all ages. A useful tool with which to indicate our personal desires in the planning for our own deaths. We are encouraged to write our own obituaries, plan our own memorial service, and to record special messages to our loved ones.

Kuenning, Delores. *Helping People Through Grief*. Bethany House Publishing, 1987, \$6.95.

Your next-door neighbor has miscarried her first baby. What do you say when you see her? Your mother calls to say your father has been diagnosed as having cancer. What do you say? Your daughter calls to tell you her husband has filed for divorce. What do you say? Each chapter is based on true experiences. Caregivers are supplied with practical advice and insight, appropriate scripture and a list of recommended books and support groups.

L'Engle, Madeline. *The Summer of the Great Grandmother*. Seabury Press, 1979, \$6.95.

A memoir of a much loved parent. Concerned with the aged and the dying. Looks at attitudes and values in today's society.

Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. Bantam Books, 1961.

After the death of his wife, Lewis wrote this journal to defend himself against the loss of belief in God. In it he freely confesses his doubts, rage and awareness of human frailty. In it he also finds again the way back to life. The brief journal is an eloquent

Dealing with death

Although death is a part of human experience, most of us prefer not to think or talk about it. Eventually we will face the death of a family member or friend and sooner or later face our own death.

Because death is a mystery many prefer to deny it. However, a biblical faith helps us face the reality of death squarely. We die and our bodies return to the earth. But God, by the mighty and mysterious act of resurrection, recreates us for fellowship in the Divine Love. Resurrection is the ultimate act of God's care. So the New Testament can declare, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (I Corinthians 15:54).

Although Christian faith does not resolve all of our anxieties about death, faith is a resource to help us embrace death with hope. The faith community can also provide understanding and invaluable support as we face the losses death brings.

This booklet was prepared by a committee of the Caring Commission to provide information and to encourage planning as a way of preparing us to deal with death. Spending time now making decisions and sharing those decisions with people close to you can bring a sense of peace and will make it much easier to finalize plans when the time of death comes.

The economics of dying

1. **Plan to minimize your funeral costs.** Funeral directors are prepared to offer a wide range of services and products from the simple and inexpensive to the more deluxe and expensive. Traditionally, Mennonites have been modest in their values and have opted for a less expensive service and casket or coffin.

Visit your funeral director now and ask for a range of services and the price of each service. Ask to visit the casket room and there, with your spouse or other trusted friends, select a casket style in the price range that reflects your Christian values. You can also purchase a simple coffin from local crafts people. Some families choose to make their own coffin.

Funeral directors are accustomed to working with people in pre-arranging complete funerals. By early planning, you can make rational choices without the pressures of grief or sorrow at the time of death.

2. **Make sure you have an up-to-date will.** A will has been called the “crowning act of Christian stewardship.” Don’t let the state decide how your possessions should be distributed and how your loved ones should be cared for. Decide how much your children need and how much should go to the work of the Lord. Choose a competent executor to settle your estate. Select a guardian to provide a good Christian home for minor children. Go to a lawyer to have your wishes expressed in the necessary legal language.
3. **Let your family know where everything is.** A carefully written will is of no value unless it can be found. Prepare a memorandum to your survivors stating the location of your will, insurance policies, tax returns, safe deposit boxes and keys, burial lots, stock certificates and deeds. Outline funeral and burial wishes. Sign and date the memorandum and give copies to your children or other family members. You should review your instructions at least every three to five years or whenever there are major changes in your affairs.
4. **Consider the implications of joint ownership.** Most husbands and wives own property by joint tenancy, with rights of survivorship. In these cases, the house or bank account, upon the death of a spouse, passes automatically to the survivor.

Bibliography

- Arnold, Johann Christoph. *I Tell You a Mystery*. Plough Publishing House of the Bruderhof Foundation, 1996.
In a society that is afraid of death, Arnold tells 23 stories in 23 brisk chapters that illustrate beautifully how the God who loves us will walk with us “all the way,” giving us assurance of the Resurrection and eternal life. Arnold is a leader of the Bruderhof community.
- Barber, Dr. Cyril J. and Aspenleiter, Sharalee. *Through the Valley of Tears*. Revell Publishing, 1987, \$12.95.
Recovering from the loss of a loved one takes time. Writing with compassion, the authors do not slight or seek to mollify the pain of loss. Instead, they lead you through the valley of tears to a renewed sense of wholeness. Their sensitive, biblical approach will help you through your bereavement and healing.
- Berton, Walton F. *Who Will Decide*. Augsburg Publishing, 1983, \$4.75.
A funeral preplanning discussion guide.
- Byock, Ira. *Dying Well*. Riverhead Books, New York, 1997.
This is a book about living. It is a book about realizing the human potential to grow—as individuals and as members of families, through the process of dying. Being with people who are dying (in conscious and caring ways) is of value to them and to us. Their reminiscences, our care and the time we spend together all contribute to a legacy that enriches our lives. *Dying Well* tells stories about tragedy, but also about love, commitment and courage; stories of people living in the shadow of death while growing within themselves and becoming closer with the ones they love.
- Callahan, Daniel. *The Troubled Dream of Life: Living With Mortality*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1993.
This leading philosopher and ethicist attacks the prevailing societal notion that medical progress will eventually eliminate almost every illness. We also seem to be blind to the cost (financial, social, emotional and spiritual) of attempting such an enterprise. Callahan makes a strong case for graceful acceptance of our mortality. He also argues strongly against euthanasia, calling it another form of violence, that of consenting adults killing each other.

H 275 “Lift your glad voices”
 H 303 “Come, gracious Spirit”
 H 327 “Great is thy faithfulness”
 H 332 “Blessed assurance”
 H 352 “Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us”
 H 366 “God of grace and God of glory”
 H 377 “Healer of our every ill”
 H 412 “We shall walk through the valley”
 H 425 “Come, come ye saints”
 H 486 “God of our life”
 H 491 “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling”
 H 526 “In the rifted Rock I’m resting”
 H 545 “Be thou my vision”
 H 553 “I am weak and I need thy strength”
 H 576 “If you but trust in God”
 H 580 “My life flows on”
 H 589 “My Shepherd will supply my need”
 H 592 “Love divine, all loves excelling”
 H 593 “O Power of love”
 H 596 “And I will raise you up”
 H 599 “He leadeth me”
 H 606 “Oh, have you not heard”
 H 616 “Children of the heavenly Father”

But joint ownership is not without its problems. Estate and inheritance taxes may be higher. Safe deposit boxes may be sealed until an inventory can be taken of the contents. Joint ownership is not a substitute for a will. This word of caution: the larger your estate gets, the more you need to consider other kinds of ownership, such as individual ownership, tenancy in common or revocable trusts. Check this out with your lawyer or an estate planner.

5. **Estimate your estate’s potential “death tax.”** Your estate may be larger than you realize. List all of your assets on the basis of present fair market value. At death the federal government imposes an estate tax, and the state imposes an inheritance tax. The larger your estate, the more you may need careful estate planning to minimize these taxes. Consult your lawyer or tax accountant to help you estimate your tax liability and to get some counsel as to what you can do to keep government from becoming the chief heir and beneficiary of your estate.
6. **Consider prepaying for your funeral.** Depending on your personal and financial circumstances, you may wish to prepay for your funeral at a funeral home that participates in such arrangements. The money is placed in an irrevocable “funeral trust.” The interest generated adds to the trust and may be taxable to you, but your preselected funeral is prepaid and the trust funds are no longer a part of your estate. The above is true for Indiana and our state has become a model for many other states.
7. **Be sure that your estate has adequate liquidity.** If you have everything tied up in a closely held business or real estate, where will your executor get enough cash to pay taxes and administration costs? Will something have to be sold at a distress sale, at less than fair market value? Make sure you have adequate cash in savings accounts or readily marketable investments. Life insurance is another way to provide liquidity.
8. **Project your need for life insurance.** The main question is this: Will your death create any financial hardship among your survivors? Financial protection is the principal function of life insurance. Many people who have been living long enough to accumulate an estate don’t need life insurance. But many younger people with substantial family needs may need some protection. Make sure you buy only as much coverage as you need and when you need it. Investigate the usefulness of lower-cost term insurance rather than whole life.

9. **Investigate survivors benefits from Social Security.** If you are covered under Social Security at your death, cash benefits may be available to your surviving spouse and children. However, there are certain qualifications. Check with a Social Security office to determine how much your survivors can count on.
10. **Check your pension-plan death benefits.** The primary purpose of a pension plan, of course, is to provide continuing retirement benefits. But most plans include death benefits. For example, if you die before retirement, the plan will usually make payments to designated beneficiaries. Make sure you understand the provisions of your pension plan.
11. **Consider Advance Directives** (see also sample and inserted forms). Advance directives are written statements that express your preference and wishes about health care decisions (especially end-of-life care) when you can no longer speak for yourself, due to unconsciousness or mental incompetence. There are two major types of advance directives:
- A “living will”
 - The naming of a proxy (health care representative, giving someone you trust durable power of attorney to speak on your behalf)
12. **Transfer some things during your lifetime.** Consider giving your children some things now, when they need help the most. Why make them wait until they receive their inheritance by way of your will? Or you might transfer some assets to church causes, either as outright contributions or into plans that provide lifetime income. There may be significant tax advantages. Almost anything makes a good lifetime gift to children and the church: cash, land, stocks or bonds. You might also consider designating some of your treasured possessions to children or other heirs so that at the time of your death there is no question as to who gets what.
13. **Other place to receive counsel.** In addition to your lawyer and accountant, the Mennonite Foundation, 1110 North Main Street, Goshen, Indiana, (533-9511) is a source of guidance and counsel. The Foundation is particularly interested in helping Mennonites become faithful stewards of accumulated possessions. Older persons should inquire about charitable-trust arrangements or about including your favorite church charities with a bequest. Such a gift is a

Suggested scriptures and hymns

Many scriptures and hymns may be appropriate to include in a funeral or memorial service. The ones suggested here are not exhaustive, but suggest areas of thought a family might choose. Hymn numbers come from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Psalm 23	“The Lord is my shepherd...”
Psalm 46	“God is our refuge and strength...”
Psalm 90	“Lord, you have been our dwelling place...”
Psalm 91	“You who live in the shelter of the Most High...”
Isaiah 40	“Comfort, O comfort my people...”
Isaiah 43:1-3	“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you...”
Matthew 11:28-30	“Come to me, you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens...”
John 11	“I am the resurrection and the life...”
John 14	“Do not let your hearts be troubled...”
Romans 8	“There is therefore now no condemnation...”
I Cor. 15	“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory...”
II Cor. 5	“...we have a building from God...”
Phil. 1:21	“For to me, living is Christ, and dying is gain.”
I Thes. 4:13-18	“But we do not want you to be uninformed ...”
	“Therefore, comfort one another...”
I Thes. 5:1-11	“Therefore encourage one another...”
II Tim. 4:6-8	“I have fought the good fight...”
I Peter 1:22f	“You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed...”
I John 3:1-3	“...that we should be called children of God...”
Rev. 14:13	“...Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord...”
Rev. 21:1-4	“...he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more...”
Rev. 22:1-5	“...the Lord God will be their light...”
H 62	“Who is so great a God”
H 114	“In thee is gladness”
H 118	“Praise God from whom”
H 121	“Holy God, we praise thy name”
H 143	“Amazing grace!”
H 203	“Break forth, O beauteous heav’nly light”

8. I would like, if possible:

a. the following persons to assist in the service:

b. I would suggest the following persons as pallbearers:

9. I suggest memorial gifts to be designated for:

10. Other preferences or requests:

Date Name

marvelous way to carry out the biblical plan of Jubilee—the redistribution of resources for the work of the church at the close of life.

14. **Burial plot and grave markers.** You may purchase grave markers and burial plots in advance, if you are sure where burial will occur. Burial of ashes from cremated remains requires less cemetery space, or they can be placed in a locker, placed in a church columbarium (see page 12), or scattered.

15. **Memorial funds.** Memorial funds are a way of perpetuating charitable causes you believe in deeply. Further, a memorial fund is a tangible way for friends to share your grief. Memorial fund responses may be significant enough to establish a continuing endowment or to put into place a specific piece of equipment for your favorite charity. Include your memorial instructions on the pre-arrangement sheet filed with your funeral director or in the church office.

Advance Directives: Instructions

With today's advancing medical technology, more of us will experience a period of mental incompetency as we near the end of life. Naming a trusted loved one as your attorney-in-fact is a wise move. To assign *durable* power of attorney to such a person is to give them power to make decisions on your behalf beginning at the time you are declared incompetent and throughout the period of your incompetency. Giving power of attorney to conduct one's financial and business affairs is familiar to us; to give someone authority to make health care decisions for us is less familiar but equally important. There are three forms of advance directives:

- a. Living Will
- b. Durable power of attorney for health care (and, in Indiana, naming a Health Care Representative)
- c. Guardianship (requires court intervention and appointment)

A sample form for a living will is located on page 9 and forms that can be executed for a living will and for naming a health care representative/delegating power of attorney are located in the center of this booklet as inserted pages.

1. A living will is an instrument expressing one's wishes in a general and philosophical way directly to one's caregivers. Naming a health care representative designates a person to carry out our wishes when we can no longer speak for ourselves. A living person is more effective than a living will in assuring that our wishes will be honored. Actually, we recommend that you execute *both* documents. Both have a place and fill a specific need.
2. In order for a living will to carry legal clout in Indiana (if legal clout is needed), it must conform to Indiana specifications: paragraphs one, two, and three on the forms on page 9 must be included, including the three check-off spaces in paragraph two. After the third paragraph, you may add whatever you wish by way of further instructions (e.g. re: organ donation), a listing of specific instructions or (as we have illustrated in our sample, paragraph four) a statement of the Christian beliefs that undergird your instructions to your caregivers. Furthermore:
 - a. You must be at least 18 years of age to complete a living will.
 - b. Your two witnesses must be at least 18 years of age.
 - c. Your two witnesses may not be anyone who stands to gain (financially or otherwise) by your death. They may not be your parent, child or spouse.

Suggestions for funeral arrangements

For the sake of your survivors, you may wish to write your preferences for a funeral service. Copies of this form can be shared with survivors and filed in the church office.

1. I do/do not have arrangements with a funeral home.
Funeral home preference _____
2. My preference is to be:
____ embalmed and buried: _____ cemetery
____ cremated, ____ ashes scattered, ____ ashes buried,
____ ashes returned to family
3. I prefer to have visitation or calling at: ____ the church, ____ funeral home with an: ____ open casket, ____ closed casket, ____ no casket.
4. Service preference relating to place, funeral/memorial service and burial: _____

5. ____ I want a funeral at minimal cost.
____ I leave the financial arrangements to my survivors' discretion.
6. These scriptures and writings have been meaningful to me:

7. These hymns and songs are some of my favorites:

Children:

Name	Address	Telephone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Father's name: _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Location of will and other important papers: _____

Persons and organizations to be contacted:

Name	Address	Telephone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Newspapers to be notified: _____

- d. Your two witnesses may not be financially involved in your care.
- 3. Executing a living will does not require the services of a lawyer, but the health care representative/power of attorney document must be notarized. It is not inappropriate, however, to request legal assistance in executing these documents, especially if you anticipate dissension in your family over carrying out your specified wishes.
- 4. An advance directive can be revoked at anytime by so stating either orally or in writing. Be sure to destroy all copies and distribute your new instructions to all that hold copies.
- 5. Copies of your advance directives should be given to family members, the church office, your physician and your attorney. Goshen General Hospital (but not Elkhart) will accept a copy and enter it into their computer records. At other hospitals or nursing homes, you must present a copy upon admission to the facility. It is also wise to carry a wallet card indicating the existence of your advance directive, in case of illness or accident in another locality. (The church office has such cards for your use.)
- 6. If your physician refuses to abide by the provisions of your advance directives, you should request another physician or seek legal advice.
- 7. Indiana has two laws regarding health care proxies (IC 30-5-5-16 and 17; also IC 16-36-1-6 and 7). The attached sample form in this booklet unites the two laws into one form, designating both your attorney-in-fact and your health care representative.
- 8. The church office will be able to refer you to members with expertise in these matters if you have questions.

Copies of this form can be shared with survivors and filed in the church office.

Living Will Declaration (sample)

Declaration made this _____ day of _____, _____.

I, _____, being at least eighteen (18) years old and of sound mind, willfully and voluntarily make known my desires that my dying shall not be artificially prolonged under the circumstances set forth below, and I declare:

If at any time my attending physician certifies that: (1) I have an incurable injury, disease or illness; (2) my death will occur within a short period of time; and (3) the use of life-prolonging procedures would serve only to artificially prolong the dying process, I direct that such procedures be withheld or withdrawn, and that I be permitted to die naturally with only the performance or provision of any medical procedure or medication necessary to provide me with comfort care or to alleviate pain, and if I have so indicated below, the provision of artificially supplied nutrition and hydration. (Indicate your choice by initialing or making your mark before signing this Declaration):

_____ I wish to receive artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, even if the effort to sustain life is futile or excessively burdensome to me.

_____ I do not wish to receive artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, if the effort to sustain life is futile or excessively burdensome to me.

_____ I intentionally make no decision concerning artificially supplied nutrition and hydration, leaving the decision to my health care representative appointed under IC 16-36-1-7 or my attorney in fact with health care powers under IC 30-5-5.

In the absence of my ability to give direction regarding the use of life-prolonging procedures, it is my intention that this declaration be honored by my family and physician as the final expression of my legal right to refuse medical or surgical treatment and accept the consequences of the refusal.

Biographical information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Social Security Number: _____ Birth date: _____

Birthplace: _____ Date baptized: _____

Church membership: _____

Spouse's name: _____

Place and date of marriage: _____

Main occupations or employers: _____

Telephone: _____ Date retired: _____

Education (# of years): _____

Membership in clubs or significant organizations: _____

Highlights of one's life: _____

- e. Resources in the church library on dying, death and grief (also see the bibliography at the end of this booklet).
- f. Referral to members who have expertise in areas of particular needs.

(Example of other instructions that may be added)

It is my wish that, at the time of my death, any of my body organs that are usable (and desired by organ donation facilities) be made available for donation.

As a Christian, I am not afraid to die for I believe that death is as much a reality as life itself. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, death has been swallowed up in victory (I Cor. 15:54). I am confident of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore I make this declaration of my wishes.

I understand the full import of this declaration.

Signature	Date
City	State
	County

The declarant has been personally known to me, and I believe him/her to be of sound mind. I did not sign the declarant's signature above for or at the direction of the declarant. I am not a parent, spouse or child of the declarant. I am not entitled to any part of the declarant's estate or directly financially responsible for the declarant's medical care. I am competent and at least eighteen (18) years old.

Witness _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Local information for funeral planning

Role of the funeral director

1. Clients can choose the services they desire from the funeral director. Costs for various services are itemized.
2. Pre-arrangement of funeral-home services is possible, either selected services or complete funeral arrangements.

Viable options for body disposal

1. Burial
2. Cremation
3. Donating the body for medical research

Timing for disposition of the body

1. If death is natural and the family chooses burial, it can be arranged after proper filing of the death certificate, having secured a physician's signature and a burial permit.
2. If a death is accidental or a homicide, the coroner will be involved and the investigation may delay the process.

Embalming

1. It is not required in Indiana in most circumstances if there is no viewing.
2. If the body is transported interstate, embalming is required.
3. If the body needs to be held over 48 hours for any reason, either embalming or refrigeration is needed.

Burial plots

1. Plots can be pre-arranged and paid for, or they can be purchased at the time of death by the funeral director or family.
2. Goshen has three city cemeteries: Violet, West Goshen, and Oak Ridge. Elkhart Prairie Cemetery is township owned, but it has the same requirements and costs as the city cemeteries.
 - a. The cost of a plot includes the burial permit, plot and perpetual care.
 - b. Most cemeteries require a vault.
3. Some rural burial grounds do not require a vault, but they usually require a fee for eventual ground fill.
4. An interment fee is also charged.

Resources offered by the congregation

1. Pre-planning. You are invited to share with one of the pastors your thoughts and feelings about death and your wishes regarding funeral plans for the time when death comes. These suggestions can be placed in your membership file. They can always be changed or adapted as necessary. Many persons have found a sense of relief and freedom in such prior planning.
2. When a death occurs, call a pastor. The pastor is prepared to represent the faith community and help mobilize the resources of the congregation in appropriate ways. For many people the Sunday school classes, neighborhood groups and K-groups become significant care resources at the time of death.

When a death occurs, the church office will call the Sunday school class representative and the neighborhood coordinator. Usually the neighborhood coordinator will take the initiative to contact the family on behalf of these care networks concerning unmet needs.

3. The church is prepared to help plan a funeral/memorial service. This service is a time for appropriate remembrance and celebration of the person's life and opportunity for the community to reach out to God in a service of worship. The pastor will help you plan and will arrange for contacting persons you wish to have participate.
4. Specific help and other resources offered by the church and available to families may include:
 - a. Someone to go with the family to the funeral home to help with decisions regarding casket selection and services needed.
 - b. Visitation at the church with church members assisting.
 - c. Neighborhood Group and/or Sunday school class will provide a simple meal if needed for the immediate family when visitation hours are divided.
 - d. A meal is provided for the family and close friends on the day of the service.

- ___ At the funeral home
 - ___ Finalize hours of visitation and service
 - ___ Give biographical information
 - ___ Choose casket
 - ___ Choose memorial cards
 - ___ Choose flowers
 - ___ Give any instructions for burial service if you have special preferences
 - ___ Do you want to be present while casket is lowered?
 - ___ Do you want to place flowers on casket?
 - ___ Do you want to shovel dirt on casket?
- ___ Do you need a meal between visitation hours for your family? (The neighborhood, Sunday school class or K-group provides this meal. Church office will contact.)
 - ___ Number of immediate family members
- ___ Number for meal following service (Include family, close friends and persons traveling from a distance. The congregation provides this meal.)
- ___ Plan service with pastor
 - ___ Hymns ___ Scriptures ___ persons to be involved
 - ___ printed order of service
 - Optional: ___ special music ___ remembrances ___ Organ
- ___ At visitation
 - ___ decide on arrangement of family members (family in one receiving line or scattered throughout the room)
 - ___ display of pictures and/or other items
- ___ Do you want an autopsy? (Autopsies may be done when there is a sudden or unexplained death or the family wants specific disease information for the family medical history. You can either tell your doctor or the funeral home. If the death occurs in the hospital, the decision should be made before the body is taken from the hospital. There is no cost to the family if a doctor or the coroner feels an autopsy is necessary and orders it to be done.)

Cremation

1. South Bend has several crematories.
2. The body must be held 48 hours before cremation in Indiana (to avoid destroying evidence of foul play).
3. Embalming is not required if there is no public viewing.
4. A casket is not necessary, but some type of container is required. The crematory or funeral home has inexpensive containers. One can rent a casket from a funeral home for viewing prior to a cremation.
5. The funeral director takes care of the documents required for cremation:
 - a. death certificate
 - b. authorization permits
6. The funeral director can make all arrangements.
7. The funeral director or family and friends can transport the body to the crematory.
8. Although it depends on one's choices regarding viewing, embalming and use of rented casket and mortician services, in general, cremation is cheaper than the usual viewing and earth burial practices.
9. Ashes:
 - a. They may be scattered in Indiana.
 - b. If they are scattered on private property, you need the permission from the property owner. If it is your property, you don't need a permit.
 1. Ashes are returned to the family in a container, or they can be buried at a cemetery in a metal box purchased from the crematory. The cemetery may require a small vault.
 2. Urns are also available.
 - c. Columbarium - some Mennonite churches are beginning to establish memorial gardens, spots of natural beauty on the congregation's premises, where the ashes of deceased members may be stored or scattered. Others presume the ashes will have been buried or otherwise disposed of but mount plaques on a wall in the garden to memorialize the deceased.

Death Certificate

1. A physician and the funeral director sign the death certificate. It is filed with the County Health Department.
2. Copies are available through the funeral director. Families should purchase at least six certified copies.

Body or organ donation

Donating the body to medical education and research

If you plan to donate your body for medical research, you should make arrangements in advance with a medical school. (Your funeral director can give you necessary information.) The school will provide the necessary forms. They will keep a copy of the forms in the school's file, and you will keep a copy. At the time of your death, the funeral director will make the arrangements.

After the research is completed, the body is cremated. The medical school will bury or return the ashes, as you prefer.

If you donate your body for research, it is still possible and appropriate to have a memorial service.

Donating organs for transplants

It is best to document one's desire to donate acceptable organs before death. In Indiana the back of the driver's license has a place to indicate your desire to donate organs.

Since suitable circumstances for major-organ donation (heart, lung, liver and kidney) arise from the sudden, traumatic deaths of otherwise healthy people, discussions between medical personnel and families allowing for organ donation may have to occur rapidly.

Prior signed statements from victims are not mandatory, if family members are unified in their desire to give someone else life out of their own tragedy. While major organ donation may require a decision before brain death is certified, other organs, such as skin, bone and eyes, can be donated within the hours after death. Gifts of body parts can be a source of hope and comfort to families in otherwise tragic circumstances.

Currently, in Indiana, hospitals are required to notify the Indiana Donor Alliance of every death occurring in the hospital. Only if the IDA determines that the body may have organs suitable for donation is the family then approached.

It is possible to have a conventional viewing and funeral after the removal of body parts.

Checklist of steps to take following a death

- ___ Call a pastor or church office (The pastor will be a support and resource for you in completing the next steps.)
- ___ Call a funeral home to set an appointment to make arrangements for care of the body and its burial
- ___ Call all significant people to inform them of the death
- ___ In consultation with pastor and funeral home, set day, time and location for funeral/memorial service (The service usually takes place three days after the death. This allows one day for the announcement to appear in the newspaper and another day for visitation. The service can be later for a number of reasons such as accommodating persons traveling from a distance.)
- ___ Set visitation day, time and location. (Visitation usually happens the day before the service. It can be held at the funeral home or at the church.) Possible times: 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.; 2-5 p.m.; 5-8 p.m.; and/or one hour before the service.
- ___ Decide the type of service
 - ___ Funeral Service—The body is present in the service. A short graveside service and burial follow the service.
 - ___ Memorial Service—This service is preceded by a short prayer service for family, a graveside service and burial.
- ___ Preparation for the funeral home appointment
 - ___ Biographical Information Sheet (If one has not already been completed, you may want to complete the one on page 14 before going to the funeral home.)
 - ___ Bring set of clothes
 - ___ Social Security Number
 - ___ Picture for newspaper if you desire
 - ___ Number of death certificates needed (Copies are needed for each occasion where there will be a transfer of property such as land, home, vehicles, stocks, bonds, each bank, each company holding a life insurance policy and any other assets.)