

Funeral Operations Procedure — Draft May 2026

MAYFLOWER CHURCH

Kingston, Massachusetts

Funeral Operations Procedure

A Procedural Guide for Pastoral Staff, Office Administration, and the Hospitality Team

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Matthew 5:4

Draft — May 2026

1. Purpose

This procedure establishes Mayflower Church’s standard practice for ministering to bereaved families and conducting funeral and memorial services. It supports the church’s commitment to walk with members and their families through death with pastoral tenderness, gospel proclamation, and operational excellence.

Funerals are, for a New England congregation of our age and history, one of the church’s most consistent points of contact with the wider community. Many who would never enter the sanctuary on a Sunday morning will sit through a funeral and hear the gospel preached. This procedure exists so that no detail — collation, music, bulletin, livestream — distracts from that proclamation, and so that the family is carried, not bewildered, through the days surrounding the service.

2. Scope and Eligibility

This procedure governs funerals and memorial services conducted by Mayflower Church staff, whether held in the sanctuary, the Briggs Memorial Building, a graveside, a funeral home, or elsewhere. The procedure applies to:

- Members of Mayflower Church and their immediate family (spouse, parents, children, and grandchildren by request).
- Former members and long-tenured attendees, at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.
- Community members not connected to Mayflower, when the Senior Pastor receives the request as a gospel-witness opportunity. Non-member services follow the same procedural standard, with the honoraria noted in Section 11.

The Senior Pastor consults with the Elder Board when accepting a non-member service that may set precedent or present a pastoral concern (e.g., the deceased's public profile, the family's expectation that the service conform to non-Christian rites). The procedure does not require elder approval for ordinary non-member funerals.

3. Companion Documents

This procedure works alongside several other Mayflower documents. The procedure itself is the runbook for staff. Family-facing materials, position descriptions, and broader systems are referenced rather than duplicated.

- Funeral Planning Guide R1 — the family-facing booklet walked through at the planning meeting.
- Position Description 22 — Hospitality Team Leader.
- Position Description 18 — Worship Team Leader.
- Position Description 19 — Audio-Visual Team Leader.
- Position Description 15 — Church Secretary.
- Position Description 16 — Director of Biblical Counseling.
- Mayflower Decision-Making Framework — April 2026 (for non-member or non-standard service requests).
- Streamline System 4 (Master Calendar Integration) and System 7 (Communication).
- Mayflower Constitution and Bylaws, governing the pastor's duties and the church's ministry of care.

4. Definitions

Several terms used in this procedure have specific meanings at Mayflower.

- Collation — the reception or repast held in the Briggs Memorial Building immediately after a funeral service. Sometimes called the repast.
- Family Contact — the single person designated by the family as the primary point of communication between the household and the church staff. Identified in Section 1 of the Funeral Planning Guide.

- Officiant — the pastor leading the service. Default: the Senior Pastor. A guest officiant may be approved by the Senior Pastor in coordination with the family.
- Service of Witness to the Resurrection — the pastoral and theological framing of a Christian funeral as worship that bears witness to Christ’s victory over death. Mayflower’s funerals are conducted in this frame.
- Responsible Party — the person (typically the Family Contact) who signs the planning guide and accepts financial responsibility for collation and honoraria costs.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Every funeral involves several hands. The principle is simple: the Senior Pastor carries the family, the Church Secretary carries the operation, the Hospitality Team Leader carries the collation, and the boards carry the household in care and prayer. The table below summarizes who owns what.

Role	Responsibility
Senior Pastor	Pastoral lead. First contact with family. Officiates the service and the committal. Walks the family through the Funeral Planning Guide. Preaches the funeral sermon. Owns post-funeral care through the one-year anniversary. Final approval on bulletin, order of service, and any non-standard request.
Church Secretary	Operational lead. Runs the Planning Center People workflow. Drafts the bulletin. Coordinates musicians, AV, and hospitality. Confirms cemetery and funeral home. Sends invoices. Maintains records.
Hospitality Team Leader	Owns the collation end-to-end. Sends the food request to the congregation. Recruits volunteers. Sets the room. Manages food drop-offs. Captures the final guest count. Submits receipts. Coordinates breakdown and cleanup.
Worship Team Leader	Books the organist or pianist. Books the vocalist when requested. Coordinates rehearsal and special music. Confirms hymn choices with the family. Briefs musicians on order of service.
Audio-Visual Team Leader	Sets the sanctuary audio. Operates the livestream if requested. Archives the recording. Delivers a private link to the family within seven days of the service.
Deacons	Practical care for the bereaved household. Coordinate meals through the deacons’ meal team. Offer home visitation. Check in on pantry and household needs in the weeks following the service.

Role	Responsibility
Director of Biblical Counseling	Available as a grief-care referral. Offered to the family by the Senior Pastor at the one-month check-in or sooner if indicated.
Elder Board	Informed of every funeral. Consulted by the Senior Pastor on non-standard or precedent-setting requests. Pray for the family during the planning week and the service.
Custodian	Cleans the sanctuary and the Briggs Memorial Building before and after the service. Resets chairs and removes trash. Standardized honorarium suggested.

6. Procedural Phases

The procedure runs in six phases, anchored to the service date. The phases are sequential but overlap in practice. Each phase corresponds to a set of cards in the Planning Center People workflow specified in Section 14.

6.1 Phase One – First Notification and Pastoral Contact

Timing: same day as notification, typically the day of death.

A death is reported to the church through a phone call, a text message, an in-person visit, or the “Notify of a Death” form on the church website. The objective of Phase One is twofold: that the family hears the pastor’s voice within hours, and that the operational machinery starts quietly in the background.

1. Whoever receives the notice (Church Secretary, an elder, a deacon, or the pastor directly) notifies the Senior Pastor within thirty minutes.
2. The Senior Pastor calls or visits the family within two to four hours. The first contact is purely pastoral: prayer, presence, and the offer to come alongside. No planning details are pressed.
3. Before ending the call, the Senior Pastor sets a planning meeting for one or two days out and identifies the Family Contact.

4. The Senior Pastor notifies the Church Secretary, who opens the funeral workflow in Planning Center People (see Section 14) and applies the relevant tags.
5. The Senior Pastor sends a confidential notice to the Elder Board, Deacon Board, and Hospitality Team Leader by email or text.
6. The prayer chain is activated only with the family's explicit permission.

6.2 Phase Two — Family Planning Meeting

Timing: one to two days after notification, typically in the home or at the church.

Phase Two is the meeting at which decisions are made. The Senior Pastor walks the family through the Funeral Planning Guide R1 section by section. The aim is to leave the meeting with the service planned in broad strokes, with details filled in by phone over the following days.

1. The Senior Pastor brings a printed copy of the Funeral Planning Guide R1 to the meeting; the Church Secretary emails a PDF copy in advance so the family can read ahead if they wish.
2. The pastor and family work through the guide together. The pastor writes in the planning guide as decisions are made.
3. Decisions captured in the meeting at a minimum: date, time, location, format, music selections, scripture readings, eulogist (if any), pallbearers, photo for the bulletin, obituary handling, collation menu choice, and the Responsible Party.
4. The Senior Pastor sends a written summary of the meeting to the Church Secretary within twenty-four hours.
5. The Church Secretary begins coordination calls the same day the summary is received.

6.3 Phase Three — Coordination Week

Timing: from the day after the planning meeting through forty-eight hours before the service.

Phase Three is the operational week. The Church Secretary drives the work, with the Hospitality Team Leader, Worship Team Leader, and AV Lead each owning their domains.

1. The Church Secretary confirms the date and time with the funeral home and the cemetery.

2. The Church Secretary contacts the Worship Team Leader within twenty-four hours of the meeting summary. The Worship Team Leader books the organist, pianist, and vocalist.
3. The Church Secretary contacts the AV Lead within the same window. A livestream tech check is scheduled for the day before the service.
4. The Church Secretary forwards the menu selection, the expected guest count, and the service time to the Hospitality Team Leader. The Hospitality Team Leader owns volunteer recruitment, the food request to the congregation, and pantry orders from this point.
5. The Church Secretary drafts the bulletin using the Mayflower funeral bulletin template. The Senior Pastor reviews; the Family Contact approves.
6. The Church Secretary receives the photograph and obituary from the family or funeral home, confirming spelling and dates.
7. The Senior Pastor visits the family mid-week. This visit is pastoral, not operational.
8. The Senior Pastor begins sermon preparation, anchored in the family stories captured in the planning meeting and in the gospel.

6.4 Phase Four — Day Before the Service

Timing: the calendar day before the service.

1. The bulletin is printed in a quantity equal to one and a half times expected attendance, with a minimum of one hundred.
2. The sanctuary is set: chairs in place, faux floral arrangements on the chancel, hymnals or printed sheets distributed, candles trimmed if used.
3. The Briggs Memorial Building is set for the collation: tables, tablecloths, faux floral centerpieces, beverage station prepped, non-perishable food items staged, serveware laid out.
4. The AV team tests audio, livestream, and the sermon notes display.
5. The Church Secretary calls each pallbearer with arrival time and a brief on what to expect.
6. The Senior Pastor confirms with the Family Contact the family's arrival time, parking, and the location of the family room.

6.5 Phase Five — Day of Service

Timing: the calendar day of the service.

1. The family arrives sixty minutes before the service. The Senior Pastor meets the family in the family room for prayer and a brief walk-through.
2. Visitation, if held at the church, runs in the thirty to sixty minutes prior to the service.
3. The service is conducted, typically forty-five to sixty minutes. The Senior Pastor leads from prelude through recessional.
4. A procession to the cemetery follows, if the family elects a graveside committal.
5. The Senior Pastor leads the committal at the graveside, typically ten to fifteen minutes.
6. The family and friends return to the church for the collation.
7. The Hospitality Team Leader captures the actual guest count. The Church Secretary is informed for invoicing.
8. The family departs when ready, accompanied to the door by a staff member or elder.

6.6 Phase Six — Pastoral Care After the Funeral

Timing: from the day after the service through the one-year anniversary.

Grief does not end at the recessional, and Mayflower's ministry of care does not either. Phase Six is the longest phase. It is the part most easily forgotten by busy staff and most felt by the family.

1. The Senior Pastor writes a handwritten note to the Family Contact within seven days of the service.
2. Pastoral check-ins by phone or visit at one week, one month, three months, and six months. The one-month check-in includes an explicit offer of the Director of Biblical Counseling.
3. The Church Secretary sends the final invoice for collation costs and honoraria within fourteen days of the service.
4. A note or call near the one-year anniversary of death.
5. The family is invited to the annual Memorial Sunday observance (see Section 15).
6. The workflow is closed at the one-year anniversary. The Family Contact is tagged for the annual Memorial Sunday list.

7. Hospitality and Collation Procedure

The Hospitality Team Leader owns the collation. The role is given full operational authority over the food, the room, the volunteers, and the timeline. Staff and pastor support; they do not direct.

Menu choices

The Funeral Planning Guide presents the family with two menu options. Menu One is finger fruits and vegetables, chips, light desserts, coffee, tea, and punch, provided at no cost to the family. Menu Two adds finger sandwiches, potato salad, and pasta and vegetable salads at six dollars per guest. The Hospitality Team Leader confirms the menu choice with the Church Secretary within forty-eight hours of the planning meeting and proceeds accordingly.

Volunteer recruitment

The Hospitality Team Leader sends a request to the congregation through the church newsletter and the prayer chain. The request names the deceased, the service date, the time of the collation, and the categories of food needed. Volunteers sign up to bring specific items and to serve. The Hospitality Team Leader aims for four to six on-site volunteers for a standard service of one hundred guests; more for larger services.

Setup standards

Tables are arranged with adequate space for movement. Tablecloths are placed on every table. Faux floral arrangements are placed as centerpieces. A beverage station is set with coffee, tea, and punch. Serveware is laid out by station. The room is set the afternoon before the service so the morning of is light work only.

Day-of execution

Volunteers arrive ninety minutes before the service begins to receive food drop-offs and finish setup. During the service, two volunteers remain in the Briggs Memorial Building to receive late drop-offs and to finalize beverages. As the family returns from the cemetery, the room is fully ready. The Hospitality Team Leader greets the family and directs them to the receiving line if one was planned.

Guest count and receipts

The Hospitality Team Leader records the actual guest count for Menu Two services and submits all receipts to the Church Secretary within seven days. Receipts are categorized as food, beverage, paper goods, or other. The Church Secretary issues the final invoice based on actual costs, which may differ from the estimate.

Cleanup

Volunteers remain through cleanup. Trash is removed, dishes are run through the dishwasher, tablecloths are laundered or returned, faux floral arrangements are stored. The Custodian completes final floor and bathroom cleaning that evening or the next morning.

8. Music and Worship Coordination

Music carries the affective weight of a funeral. Mayflower's practice favors familiar hymns sung well over performance pieces. The Worship Team Leader holds the line on this principle while serving the family's wishes.

1. The Church Secretary forwards the family's hymn and music selections to the Worship Team Leader as soon as they are confirmed in the planning meeting summary.
2. The Worship Team Leader books the organist or pianist within twenty-four hours, the vocalist when requested by the family.
3. Musicians are briefed on the order of service, the keys, and any solos or special arrangements.
4. Honoraria are one hundred dollars per musician (organist, pianist, vocalist, or other musician) for both member and non-member services. The Church Secretary processes payment within ten business days of the service.
5. Where the family requests a hymn or song the worship leader judges unfit for a Christian funeral, the Senior Pastor decides. The default is to honor the family wherever the song is not theologically or pastorally untenable.

9. Audio, Visual, and Livestream

Audio is mandatory; livestream is at the family's election.

1. The Church Secretary confirms the AV requirements with the AV Team Leader within twenty-four hours of the meeting summary.
2. If livestream is elected, the AV Team Leader schedules a tech check on the day before the service. The livestream URL is placed in the printed bulletin and on the church website.
3. The recording is archived in the church's digital records. A private link is sent to the Family Contact within seven days of the service. Public posting requires the family's explicit permission.

4. Microphones are tested for the pulpit, the lectern, and any tribute speaker positions. Tribute speakers are coached briefly on microphone use before the service begins.

10. Bulletin, Obituary, and Communications

The bulletin is the document the congregation holds during the service. It carries the order of service, the obituary, the photograph, the hymn lyrics or numbers, and any acknowledgements. The Church Secretary owns the draft; the Senior Pastor and the Family Contact approve.

Bulletin standards

Mayflower uses a single funeral bulletin template across all services to preserve dignity and consistency. The cover carries the deceased's name, the birth and death dates, a photograph supplied by the family, and a brief scripture or hymn line chosen with the family. Inside are the order of service, the obituary, hymn texts or numbers, and a final word of thanks from the family if desired.

Obituary

The family or the funeral home supplies the obituary. The Church Secretary confirms spelling, dates, and surviving family member names with the Family Contact. The obituary is printed in the bulletin and posted with the service announcement on the church website.

Congregational communication

The funeral is announced through the church newsletter, the website, and, with the family's permission, the prayer chain. Social media announcement requires explicit family permission and is kept dignified and brief. The default is a single post with the deceased's name, service date and time, livestream link, and an invitation to pray for the family.

11. Costs, Honoraria, and Invoicing

Cost transparency is built into the Funeral Planning Guide. This section governs how those costs are processed inside the office.

Members

- Pastor's services: no fee. The pastor's ministry to members at the time of death is part of his calling.
- Collation Menu One: no cost to the family. Provided as a ministry of the congregation.
- Collation Menu Two: six dollars per actual guest, billed after the service based on the final guest count.
- Musicians: one hundred dollars per musician (organist, pianist, vocalist, additional musicians).
- Custodial: standardized suggested honorarium (see recommended revision in Section 16).

Non-members

- Pastor's services: two hundred dollars suggested honorarium, never required. Hardship is honored by simply setting the suggestion aside.
- Collation: same menu pricing as for members.
- Musicians: same honoraria as for members.
- Sanctuary and Briggs Memorial Building use: no fee for a non-member service approved by the Senior Pastor.

Invoicing

The Church Secretary issues the final invoice within fourteen days of the service. Checks are payable to Mayflower Congregational Church with "Collation for [name of deceased]" in the memo line for collation gifts and "Honorarium for [name of deceased]" for service honoraria. Honoraria paid directly to musicians or to the Custodian by the family bypass the church office; honoraria routed through the church for tax-deductibility purposes are processed by the Church Secretary.

12. Variants

Several common variants do not require a separate procedure. The variants below note where the procedure flexes.

12.1 Graveside-only service

A graveside-only service is brief, outdoors, and typically attended only by family and close friends. The pastor leads a fifteen- to twenty-minute service drawing from the standard committal order. No bulletin is printed unless the family requests one. No collation is hosted unless the family asks. Musicians are typically not engaged.

12.2 Memorial service without body present

A memorial service follows the standard order of service but omits the committal. The body is interred privately, before or after the memorial, by the family's arrangement with the funeral home. The bulletin and the collation proceed as for a full service.

12.3 Cremation

When the body has been cremated, the urn may be present at the front of the sanctuary during the service or not, at the family's preference. The funeral home or the family delivers the urn; the church does not transport remains. If the family elects scattering, the church does not officiate the scattering. If the family elects interment of cremains, the standard committal order is used and condensed.

12.4 Non-member services

Non-member services follow the full procedure with the honorarium structure noted in Section 11. The Senior Pastor consults the Elder Board where a non-member request raises a pastoral or precedent concern. The Senior Pastor retains discretion to decline a service that would require Mayflower to host elements inconsistent with Christian worship.

13. Recordkeeping and Confidentiality

A completed funeral leaves three classes of record.

1. Operational records: the planning guide as completed in the family meeting, the bulletin, the order of service, and the invoice. Filed in the church's digital records under Funerals → [Year] → [Name of Deceased]. Access limited to the Senior Pastor and the Church Secretary.
2. Pastoral records: notes from the planning meeting, the family stories shared in the "Help Us Tell the Story" section, and the pastor's sermon. The family stories are held as pastoral confidence and are not used or repeated outside the service or subsequent pastoral conversation without the family's permission. The sermon may be referenced in future preaching only in ways that do not breach pastoral confidence.
3. Photographs: any photograph supplied by the family for the bulletin or service is returned to the family within fourteen days of the service, unless the family asks the church to retain it for the digital archive.

All records are subject to the church's general retention practices. Pastoral records are not shared with the Elder Board or any other board absent an extraordinary need approved by the Senior Pastor and the affected family.

14. Planning Center People Workflow

Mayflower runs the funeral lifecycle as a single workflow in Planning Center People, with a companion practical-care workflow for the deacons. This section is the build specification: any staff member with workflow permissions in Planning Center should be able to construct the workflow from what follows.

14.1 Workflow name and structure

Workflow name: Funeral & Bereavement Care.

Category: Pastoral Care.

Attached to: the designated Family Contact (a member of the family who has a profile in Planning Center People; created if none exists).

Naming convention: the workflow card set is labeled “Funeral of [Deceased Name] — [Service Date]” in the card descriptions, so a Family Contact who experiences multiple bereavements is not confused.

How a new instance is opened: the Church Secretary adds the Family Contact to the workflow on receiving notice of death. A Note is added to the Family Contact’s profile in the “Pastoral Care — Funeral Planning” category identifying the deceased and the service date. The tag “Funeral Active — [Year]” is applied.

14.2 Cards

The twenty-six cards below run from notification through the one-year anniversary. Due dates are expressed as offsets from notification (positive) or from the service (negative or service-day).

#	Card name	Assignee	Due	Notes
01	Notification logged	Church Secretary	Day 0	Capture deceased name, family contact, funeral home, requested service date.
02	Pastoral first contact	Senior Pastor	Day 0	Call or visit within 2-4 hours. Offer prayer and presence. Set the planning meeting.
03	Notify staff and boards	Senior Pastor	Day 0	Confidential email to Office, Elders, Deacons, Hospitality. Prayer chain only with family permission.
04	Planning Guide delivered	Church Secretary	+1 day	Email the PDF to the family contact; bring a printed copy to the meeting.

#	Card name	Assignee	Due	Notes
05	Family planning meeting	Senior Pastor	+2 days	Walk the guide section by section. Capture decisions. Send summary to Office within 24 hours.
06	Service logistics confirmed	Church Secretary	+3 days	Date, time, location, funeral home, cemetery confirmed and entered on the master calendar.
07	Musicians booked	Church Secretary → Worship Leader	+3 days	Organist or pianist; vocalist when requested. Honoraria queued.
08	AV and livestream confirmed	Church Secretary → AV Lead	+3 days	Confirm livestream election and schedule tech check the day before the service.
09	Hospitality briefed	Church Secretary → Hospitality Leader	+3 days	Forward menu choice, expected count, and service time. Hospitality Leader owns the collation from this point.
10	Bulletin drafted	Church Secretary	+5 days	Use the funeral bulletin template. Include order of service, obituary, photo, hymn texts.
11	Photo and obituary received	Church Secretary	+5 days	Confirm spelling and dates with the family contact.
12	Bulletin approved	Senior Pastor + Family Contact	+6 days	Pastor approves, then office confirms with family contact, then prints.
13	Pallbearers confirmed	Church Secretary	+6 days	List of pallbearers and honorary pallbearers, with arrival times and brief instructions.
14	Sermon prepared	Senior Pastor	-1 day	Funeral sermon written, anchored in family stories and gospel proclamation.

#	Card name	Assignee	Due	Notes
15	Day-before setup	Church Secretary + AV Lead + Hospitality Leader	-1 day	Sanctuary set, AV tested, bulletin printed, Briggs Memorial set for the collation.
16	Service conducted	Senior Pastor	Service day	Lead from prelude through recessional; lead the committal. Mark complete after committal.
17	Final guest count captured	Hospitality Leader	Service day	Actual attendance at the collation, sent to the office for invoicing.
18	Pastoral note sent	Senior Pastor	+7 days	Handwritten note to the family contact and the immediate household.
19	Week-1 check-in	Senior Pastor	+7 days	Call to family contact.
20	Collation receipts submitted	Hospitality Leader	+7 days	All food and supply receipts to the office.
21	Final invoice issued	Church Secretary	+14 days	Collation actuals plus any honoraria routed through the church office.
22	Month-1 check-in	Senior Pastor	+30 days	Phone or visit. Explicit offer of the Director of Biblical Counseling.
23	Month-3 check-in	Senior Pastor	+90 days	Phone or visit.
24	Month-6 check-in	Senior Pastor	+180 days	Phone or visit.
25	One-year anniversary contact	Senior Pastor	+365 days	Note or call near the anniversary of death.
26	Workflow closed	Senior Pastor	+375 days	Tag family contact for Memorial Sunday. Workflow archived.

14.3 Tags

- Funeral Active — [Year]: applied on workflow entry; removed at card 16 (service conducted).
- Bereaved — Year 1: applied at card 16; removed at card 26 (workflow closed).
- Bereaved — Memorial: applied at card 26 and retained indefinitely. Powers the annual Memorial Sunday list.
- Funeral Family Contact — [Year of Service]: applied at workflow entry; retained for the year so that the office can quickly pull the prior year’s family contacts at Memorial Sunday.

14.4 Lists

Four smart lists support the workflow.

- Funeral Active — anyone tagged “Funeral Active — [Year].” Used by staff to see open funerals at a glance.
- Bereaved — Year 1 — anyone tagged “Bereaved — Year 1.” Used by the Senior Pastor for the rolling six-month check-in cycle.
- Memorial Sunday Honorees — anyone tagged “Funeral Family Contact — [Current Year].” Used annually for the Memorial Sunday observance.
- Bereavement Anniversaries This Quarter — a derived list pulling anyone whose deceased loved one’s service date falls within the quarter ahead. Used by the Senior Pastor to plan anniversary contact.

14.5 “Notify of a Death” form

A Planning Center People Form titled “Notify Mayflower of a Death” is published on the church website and the staff intranet.

Form fields: your name; your relationship to the family; deceased’s full name; deceased’s preferred name; date of death; family contact name; family contact phone; family contact email; funeral home (if known); requested service date (if known); additional context (free text).

Submission emails the Church Secretary and the Senior Pastor. The Church Secretary reviews each submission manually before adding the Family Contact to the workflow. This human-in-the-loop step prevents accidental triggers from misuse or duplicate notifications.

14.6 Companion workflow — Bereaved Household Practical Care

A separate, shorter workflow handles practical care from the deacons.

Workflow name: Bereaved Household — Practical Care.

Assignee: the deacon lead for the month, with the Director of Biblical Counseling cc'd as needed.

Cards: meals coordinated for week one (due +1 day); meals follow-up for week two (due +10 days); pantry and household check (due +21 days); final household check (due +35 days).

The Family Contact is added to this companion workflow at the same time as the primary Funeral & Bereavement Care workflow.

14.7 Planning Center Calendar integration

Every funeral is added to the Planning Center Calendar with the title “Funeral — [Deceased Name]” and the service date and time. The event reserves the sanctuary and the Briggs Memorial Building, and triggers a notification to the AV team and the Hospitality Team Leader through their existing calendar subscriptions. The committal is added as a separate child event at the cemetery.

14.8 Permissions

Workflow card access is restricted to the Senior Pastor and the Church Secretary. The Hospitality Team Leader and Worship Team Leader receive their assigned cards through email-only assignment, without direct workflow access, to protect family privacy. AV Lead and the Director of Biblical Counseling receive cards on the same basis.

15. Annual Memorial Sunday

Mayflower observes a Memorial Sunday once each year as part of its annual rhythm. The service reads aloud the names of members and immediate family who entered glory in the past twelve months, with a candle lit for each name, and includes a brief sermon on the resurrection. The list of names is pulled from the “Memorial Sunday Honorees” smart list in Planning Center People.

Families of the deceased are invited in writing four weeks in advance. The invitation makes clear that attendance is optional, that the family will be welcomed but not put on display, and that the service exists for the whole church’s good — to teach the congregation to grieve as those with hope.

Memorial Sunday is held on the first Sunday of November or on All Saints’ Sunday, at the Senior Pastor’s discretion in consultation with the Worship Team Leader.

16. Recommended Revisions to the Funeral Planning Guide R1

Reviewing the Funeral Planning Guide alongside this procedure surfaced a small number of recommended revisions. None are urgent. All would, in the writer’s judgment, improve the pastoral fit of the guide and reduce questions during the planning meeting.

16.1 Add a brief pre-arranged-wishes field

Add a single field in Section 1 (Vital Information) labeled “Pre-arranged wishes from the deceased (if any).” Many older Mayflower members will have written down what they want long before death; capturing it explicitly at the top of the guide signals that the family’s instinct to honor those wishes is respected, and prevents a late-meeting surprise.

16.2 Expand the cremation section

Section 2 (Service Logistics) and Section 9 (Committal and Graveside) reference cremation as an option but do not address the practical questions a family routinely asks. Recommend adding a short paragraph covering: where the urn comes from (funeral home or family), where it sits during the service (chancel or absent), whether the church officiates scattering (the answer is no), and the church's standard practice for interment of cremains.

16.3 Add a flowers note

The guide does not mention flowers explicitly. Recommend adding a brief note in Section 2 that Mayflower provides faux floral arrangements as standard, that the family may bring fresh flowers if desired, and that the Hospitality Team Leader coordinates placement. This sets expectations and prevents the awkward arrival of a vase no one knows where to put.

16.4 Mention the family room

Add a sentence to Section 12 (Day of Service) noting that a small family room is reserved for the family before and during the service for prayer, composure, and quiet. Many families do not know this is available and end up standing in the narthex.

16.5 Standardize the custodial honorarium

The Suggested Donations table lists janitorial services as "Per arrangement." Recommend setting a standard suggested honorarium of seventy-five dollars, with the same hardship grace noted for the pastoral honorarium. This removes a small but real ambiguity from the planning meeting.

16.6 Add an invitation to Memorial Sunday

Add a sentence to Section 11 (Practical Care for the Family) noting that the family will be invited the following autumn to Mayflower's annual Memorial Sunday, where the deceased's name will be read. This frames the long ministry of care that extends beyond the funeral week.

16.7 Add a recording-and-livestream-access note

Section 2 already gives the family the option of livestream and recording. Recommend adding a short note that a private link to the recording will be sent to the Family Contact within seven days of the service, and that public sharing is at the family's discretion.

16.8 Add a Scripture translation preference

Add a field in Section 5 (Scripture Readings) labeled "Preferred translation." Mayflower's pulpit default is the English Standard Version; some families will prefer the King James Version (especially older members), the New International Version, or another translation for readings.

16.9 Consider sending the "Help Us Tell the Story" prompts ahead

The prompts in Section 6 are the most pastorally rich part of the guide. Recommend that the Church Secretary email these to the Family Contact ahead of the planning meeting, with a note that the family may write or simply think about them. Pre-reflection produces better stories at the meeting and gives the grieving the dignity of preparation.

16.10 Consider hosting the guide as a Planning Center People form

The guide could be hosted as a Planning Center People Form so that families with the technical fluency may pre-fill what they can. This is optional and the printed copy walked through with the pastor remains the primary instrument.

16.11 Add a Senior Pastor signature line

The final page of the guide carries a signature line for the Responsible Party. Recommend adding a parallel signature line for the Senior Pastor on the same page. The visual pairing communicates

partnership: the family signs financial responsibility; the pastor signs his pledge to walk with them.

Revision #2

Created 2026-05-17 23:21:46 UTC by Anton Brown

Updated 2026-06-02 02:41:44 UTC by Anton Brown