



**Allen  
Temple**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

**CELEBRATION OF LIFE  
PLANNING GUIDE**

**Bereavement Ministry**

**510-544-8915**

**[www.allen-temple.org](http://www.allen-temple.org)**

**8501 International Blvd. Oakland, Ca. 94621**

**A Message from Our Pastor**

Most assuredly, the death of a loved one brings grief and sorrow to us all. When we love others, we experience pain when they suffer and grief when they enter the ultimate passage that we call death. However, as Christians, our grief is not an experience of defeat or futility, for we know "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Our faith teaches that the human body is an earthly tent, a temporary residence, and if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands (2 Corinthians 5:1). Therefore, let us remember the assuring words of our Lord, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). As you make final arrangements for your loved one, we offer this guide to assist in planning for the Celebration of Life Service. We are committed to helping you coordinate and experience a service to honor your loved one and Jesus Christ. May God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit comfort you as you engage this process.

***Reverend Dr. Jacqueline A. Thompson, Senior Pastor***

## **Planning Guide**

The Allen Temple Bereavement Ministry is available to assist you. This guide outlines the planning steps for the Celebration of Life Service and Repast. It is the policy of Allen Temple Baptist Church to support its members who have lost a loved one and to support the families in need. Please note that Allen Temple provides funeral services for those as indicated below:

Members of Allen Temple Baptist Church. The husband, wife, child, father, mother, foster child, the legal guardian of a foster child, or family member residing in the same household of a member of Allen Temple Baptist Church.

## **Celebration of Life Service**

The Celebration of Life Service is held in the sanctuary. It is a worship service intended to thank God for the life and legacy of the deceased and support the family. As such, the service includes music, prayer, fond remembrances, and a message of faith.

## **Step I: Notification of Bereavement**

When loved ones are called home to Glory, please notify your assigned Deacon. If you do not know your assigned Deacon, please contact the Church office at one of the following numbers or email us.

**Church Office:** 510-544-8910

**Congregational Care:** 510-544-8915

**Bereavement Ministry:** 510-544-8929

**Email:** [info@allen-temple.org](mailto:info@allen-temple.org)

## **Step 2: Contact Bereavement Ministry Team**

Upon notification, the Bereavement Ministry Team members serve as first responders on behalf of the Pastor and the Church by extending condolences and praying with the family. Immediately, a Funeral Coordinator will be assigned to the family.

The Funeral Coordinator will refer the family member to the Allen Temple Pastoral Team, Family Deacon, and the grief minister as needed.

## **Step 3: Family Meeting with the Funeral Coordinator**

The Funeral Coordinator will meet with the family to plan the Celebration of Service and coordinate other ministry services.

Please identify for the Funeral Coordinator the legal “next of kin.” or designated family spokesperson. The Funeral Coordinator will meet with the designated person to avoid conflicting instructions and information.

The Funeral Coordinator is prepared to guide the family throughout this process and will ask pertinent questions or request information to ensure excellence in planning and execution.

Funerals are generally held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday of any given week. (Exceptions will depend on staff availability and extenuating circumstances) Please consider several options for the date of the Service, The Funeral Coordinator will consult with the Events Coordinator to ensure the availability of the church, other campus venues, and ministry staff.

## **Step 4: Draft of the Celebration Program**

The Funeral Coordinator will provide a template (copy enclosed for your use in creating the Celebration program. The template should be followed as laid out. If you have questions, please direct them to your Funeral Coordinator.

Please secure a printing service for program printing as Allen Temple does not offer printing services. However, we will assist you with any questions about completing the template. Two significant things to remember are that the Celebration of Life services are to be ninety minutes long and viewing your loved one (if desired) will occur at the beginning of the Service. The Funeral Coordinator should review your draft of the Order of Service prior to printing.

### **Planning Protocols**

Schedule for Celebration Service: Celebrations of Life are scheduled on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday and generally begin at 11:00 a.m.

### **Place of Family Gathering**

The Funeral Coordinator will advise the family where they will assemble before the beginning of the service.

### **Music and Media Services**

The Music Ministry will provide the organist, and the family is free to bring in their selected soloist(s) or utilize the soloist (s) provided by the Church.

The Media Ministry will provide basic audio (sound) services for the service. However, fees may apply for additional media services requiring equipment rental or other staff. These fees are outlined in the media request form that will be completed by the funeral coordinator should special requests. Please alert the Funeral Coordinator of any special requests, recordings or video presentations in advance to ensure the Media Ministry can accommodate the request.

## **Speakers for Special Remarks**

Speakers identified on the program are to limit their remarks to two minutes.

When families elect not to designate individuals to give expressions, they may desire to open the floor for people in the audience who are desirous of sharing. Each speaker is also limited to a maximum of two minutes. The officiating minister may stipulate the number of speakers that time will permit. If desired, families may elect not to have anyone make expressions.

## **Clergy Services**

The Officiant presiding over the Service, must be a member of the ATBC Pastoral Team.

The Eulogist is generally the Senior Pastor of Allen Temple or a member of the Pastoral Team whom the Pastor has approved. Requests for other eulogists must be pre-approved by the Pastors' Office.

## **Resolutions**

Resolutions to be read or acknowledged during the Service must be received and approved in the Church office before the day of the Service. Resolutions that are not hand-delivered may be emailed to [info@allen-temple.org](mailto:info@allen-temple.org)

## **Viewing**

Time is provided for viewing your loved one, at your discretion, during a one-hour time frame before the start of the Service. After the processional, when the family has finished viewing and seated, the casket will be closed, and there will be no further viewing.

## **Repast Guidelines**

If the bereaved family requests a repast, the Deaconess Chairperson or appointee will contact the designated family representative immediately after the family has met with the Funeral Coordinator. All questions regarding repasts will be directed to the Chairperson or designee. The Deaconess Ministry provides repast meals for up to 50 members of the family without cost. Families who elect to use catering services should advise their Funeral Coordinator for detailed information on procedures and eligibility of caterers.

## **Security**

When Security services are necessary for a Celebration of Life: The Security Guard shall be from the current Allen Temple security contractor list.

The guard will be required from 60 minutes before the Service until 30 minutes after the Service and repast. The family is responsible for the cost of the security guard except where the deemed the cost be covered as an act of benevolence.

## **Conclusion**

We pray that this guide answers your questions regarding the planning and conducting a Celebration of Life and Repast at Allen Temple Baptist Church. We are committed to assisting the families of this Congregation

in their time of grief. If you have questions, not addressed in this guide or are confronted with extenuating circumstances as you plan the Celebration, please be assured that the Bereavement Ministry Team will prayerfully work with you to answer your question.

## ***Mission Statement***

***In obedience to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19- 20, given to us by the founder of the Church, Allen Temple Baptist Church seeks excellence in the ministry of Jesus by evangelizing all persons to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, by educating all Christians to grow into the moral and spiritual likeness of Jesus Christ through the aid of the Holy Spirit, and by enlisting all Allen Temple members in personally extending the message and mission of God's love in Christ, throughout the world.***