Serving Through Care Connect

Care Connect offers eight areas of service, with flexible opportunities that allow volunteers to participate according to their interests, abilities and availability.

We believe that **serving others is often as much a blessing to the volunteer as it is to the person receiving care.**

The program is supported by four Care Coordinators and volunteer Service Leads who work together to connect members with appropriate care.

Care Coordinators

- Diane Brooks
- Pam Bush
- Janet Bustin
- Brooke Messer

Service Lead: Jill Fleming & Alecia Jenkins

Grief Support Ministry

Provide compassionate support and continued connection to members and families experiencing the loss of a loved one.

Description of Service

The Grief Support Ministry extends the compassionate presence, care, and support of University Park United Methodist Church to members and families experiencing the loss of a loved one. The ministry seeks to surround grieving individuals with prayer, practical assistance, spiritual guidance, and ongoing connection during one of life's most difficult transitions.

Through coordinated efforts among clergy, staff, lay leaders, and congregational care volunteers, the ministry provides support from the initial notification of a death through funeral or memorial service planning and the months that follow. The goal is to ensure that no member walks through grief alone and that families experience the love of Christ through the care of their church community.

The ministry may include:

- Pastoral care and prayer
- Funeral and memorial service planning assistance
- Reception support through the Bereavement Committee
- Meal support

- Condolence cards and ongoing correspondence
- Congregational outreach and support
- Follow-up care during the grieving process
- Resources for end-of-life planning
- Grief Support
- Personal invitations to Grief/Healing Services
- One year anniversary of death outreach

A "Life After Death" planning booklet may be made available to members and families to assist with advance planning and decision-making before a loss occurs.

How the Service Will Be Delivered

When the death of a church member or an immediate family member of a church member becomes known, the Grief Support Ministry is activated to provide timely and coordinated care.

The ministry response may include:

Within the First 24 Hours

- A member of the clergy team contacts the grieving family to express condolences, offer prayer, and provide information about available church support services
- When appropriate, an in-person pastoral visit may be arranged
- The family is offered a Life After Death planning booklet and information regarding funeral or memorial service planning

Within 24 to 48 Hours

- A Lay Leader or designated congregational care volunteer contacts the family by phone, email, or text to offer prayers, support, and assistance on behalf of the congregation
- The family is informed of available congregational care ministries, including meals, visitation, prayer support, and other resources

Funeral and Memorial Service Coordination

- The staff member responsible for funeral and memorial service planning reaches

out directly to the family to offer assistance and schedule planning meetings
- The coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for service logistics and communication
- Timely responses are provided to family questions and requests whenever possible
- Once plans are finalized, appropriate church staff and volunteers are notified and coordinated, including musicians, ushers, congregational care volunteers, hospitality and bereavement teams, and other participants as needed

Ongoing Care

- Follow-up support is provided according to the family's needs and preferences
- Meal support, prayer ministry, card ministry, visitation, and other congregational care services may be offered
- Additional pastoral care referrals are made when appropriate

PLEASE DOWNLOAD THE "UNDERSTANDING GRIEF HANDOUT"