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Quarterly Newsletter

Clement L.

PANTALONE FUNERAL HOME, INC.

CELEBRATING 55 YEARS... TOGETHER

For 55 years, Pantalone Funeral Home has had the privilege of serving the families of Westmoreland County with compassion, dignity, and personalized care. We are deeply grateful for the trust our community has placed in our family since my father, Clement L. Pantalone, first opened our doors in 1971.

As we celebrate this milestone, we invite you to celebrate with us at our 55th Anniversary Open House. Over the years, countless people have asked about the beautiful home that has become such a familiar Greensburg landmark. This anniversary gives us the perfect opportunity to welcome you inside, share its history, and offer a behind-the-scenes look at a place that has meant so much to our family and to the community we are honored to serve.

While you're here, be sure to read our special feature, "More Than a Funeral Home," where I share the story of the house, why I jokingly call myself the "failure to launch," and how this remarkable home has been such an important part of my life since I was four years old.

From Melanie, our staff, and me, thank you for your continued trust and support throughout the years. We look forward to celebrating **55 years of serving our community** and welcoming you into our home.

In this newsletter you can expect:

- Grief Corner
- Clergy Corner
- Green Burials
- Upcoming Events
- Tips for Cooking for One
- Recipe Corner
- Helpful Hints

More Than a Funeral Home

For most people, Pantalone Funeral Home, Inc. is a place they visit during one of life's most difficult moments. For our family, however, it has always been something much more—it has been home.

Long before it became a funeral home, this beautiful 33-room residence was built in 1906 by Mr. and Mrs. Wilson on what was known as Greensburg's historic "Millionaire Row." In 1971, my father transformed this residence into Pantalone Funeral Home while continuing to make it our family's home.

I often joke that I am the family's "failure to launch" baby. I moved into this house when I was four years old with my parents, three brothers, and younger sister. After my mother moved out, I simply relocated about fourteen feet across the hall into the master bedroom. I've never really left.

Growing up here gave me a unique appreciation for this home. I watched families gather here for viewings and funerals, celebrated holidays here, raised our own family here, and learned from my father what it truly means to welcome people into your home with compassion, kindness, and genuine care.

Some of my favorite memories are the simple ones. I remember sleeping on the floor in the waiting room while my dad slept on the couch during the summer because we did not have air conditioning. I remember using the funeral home to host holiday dinners because the large rooms gave our family the space to gather together.

Over the years, we have worked hard to preserve the home's character and craftsmanship. While modern heating, air conditioning, technology, and other necessary improvements have been added, we have made every effort to maintain its original beauty and architectural details. Much of that work has been a labor of love, completed alongside our children and talented contractors who have become great friends. Every project has been another opportunity to care for a home that has cared for so many others.

One of the questions we hear most often is, "What does the rest of the house look like?"

This year, we are excited to answer that question. As part of our 55th Anniversary Open House, we will be opening areas of the home that have never before been available for public tours. We will share stories of its history, point out many of its original features, and explain how this remarkable house has evolved over the past 120 years while remaining, at its heart, a family home.

We hope you will join us—not just to tour a beautiful historic house, but to visit the place where our family has lived, worked, laughed, grieved, celebrated, and dedicated our lives to serving this community for the past 55 years.

We look forward to welcoming you into our home.

Grief Corner

Grief and the Healing Power of Nature

So many experts throughout history have told us of the healing powers of nature. And when it comes to grief and grieving this is especially true. Connecting to nature can help you in your grief journey. I know because it definitely helped me through mine. And on more than one occasion. In fact, I find my body now automatically craves the outdoors when I am grieving or dealing with a difficult chapter in life.

Fresh air is great for our lungs and sunshine is great for our bodies and our moods. These doses of oxygen and Vitamin D make our bodies work better. But did you know great healing can also take place by just getting close to trees, walking barefoot in the grass, hiking into a forest or walking along the beach? All these activities are great ways to help you regulate your nervous system, which becomes out of whack when someone is grieving. Grief increases the stress hormones that automatically put you in the “fight or flight” mode, or make you numb out or freeze (shut down).

These are some scientific reasons why getting out in nature can help you as you grieve.
But let me add one often overlooked healing benefit that spending time in nature provides. And that is the power of Spiritual Connection. Many feel like they can better connect to God when they spend time outdoors. But you don’t necessarily have to believe in God to feel connected to something bigger than yourself when you are out in nature. And that majestic feeling is healing.

Have you ever felt awestruck when you stood next to a very tall tree, taken in a mountain view or floated in a body of water? That feeling that something bigger than us exists in this world, the feeling of being a tiny piece of it, somehow makes it a bit easier to process our grief. The cycle of the seasons reminds us that just as everything is born and blooms, it also fades and dies. But what always comes after winter? Spring. Every single year. That natural cycle in a nutshell is hope. And hope is what is truly needed as we grieve.

Following the death of my father, I found myself heading out to the local park every single day just to walk, clear my head, take in the sights and sounds of nature and of course talk to my dad and talk to God. While my body got the benefits of exercise, fresh air and sunshine, my soul got the benefit of feeling closer to God and to the spirit that once was my dad. And eventually my heart began to feel hope filled again.

So if you find yourself feeling out of sorts, feel like your grief is getting too heavy to carry, take it outside for a while. Allow Mother Nature to nurture you. Summer is the perfect time to start this practice. Start small. Take a walk or better yet, take off your shoes, walk in the grass, and sit in the shade of a beautiful tree and just breathe in and out a few times. See if you start to feel a little bit better. I’m betting you will!

Sherrie Dunlevy is founder of the Graduating Grief community on Facebook and host of the Graduating Grief Podcast. For more information go to graduatinggrief.com

Clergy Corner

At almost any Christian funeral service the following words of Jesus Christ are bound to be mentioned:

I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

For centuries, these particular words have been the hope and strength of countless Christians who have placed their faith in God's great mercy seen in Jesus Christ. The words point to the assurance that since Christ has been raised from the dead, so shall we live.

This belief is not based on some kind of immortality of the soul, which the Bible does not allude to, but rather because of the merciful and gracious action of God in Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. Because Christ lives, we shall live also. I have found great assurance in these words and so have generations of Christians who are mourning the death of a loved one or contemplating the meaning of life and death. Such assurance speaks directly to our fears.

Truth be told, there is much that we could fear in life; much that could cause us to despair and lose hope. In fact, I could list a litany of specific fears that might just be paralyzing to human life and to our enjoyment of God's precious gift of life, but I have no need to create such a litany; we are all well-acquainted with our own personalized lists of such dreads. Certainly, fears and anxieties are a part of human existence.

However, the simplest, yet most profound message delivered in scripture is the encouragement that we need not fear in this life; that we need not despair. This sustaining belief is due not to some perceived empowerment of the self; that we are capable and able to handle anything. Rather it is directly due to the assurance that we receive in the witness of the resurrection. Because Christ lives, we can know that we shall live too; that God is with us. For this reason, we need not fear!

Here is the simple yet greatly needed and warmly cherished affirmation that is at the base of our Christian faith. In Jesus Christ, we have been assured that we have nothing to fear from life or from death. God is here in life with us and God goes with us into death. There is no place from which we can hide ourselves from this gracious and everlasting presence that we have seen fully witnessed in the one Jesus of Nazareth. There is no place that God does not go with us or in which that God is not present already. This is the assurance that we all need in life and beyond

Rev. Ankrum,
First Presbyterian Church, Greensburg, PA

Green Burial and Traditional Orthodox Christian Burial Practices

There is a growing awareness of, and choice to use, Green Burial practices in laying to rest our beloved departed with both gentleness and dignity. While these practices may be new to some, they are actually a return to a more traditional way of preparing and committing the bodies of the deceased. One example of this can be seen by a simple comparison of Green Burial principles with traditional Orthodox Christian preparation and burial practices.

Respect for the Body

Both Green Burial and Orthodox Christian practice seek to honor the body of the deceased. Green Burial asks that the body not be embalmed and that it be buried in a simple, biodegradable shroud or casket. This lets the body return to the earth naturally. Traditional Orthodox Christian burial practices also treat the body with care as the body is washed, anointed, dressed simply, prayed over by the priest and family who desire to participate. In the Orthodox Christian understanding, the body is important because it is made by God along with our soul. Combined, they bear the image of God, and through our baptism and chrismation serve as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Caring for the earth

Green Burial is primarily interested in caring for the environment by avoiding the use of chemicals and materials that harm or contaminate the earth. This concern is not lost on Orthodox Christians who believe that God made the world very good and charged all human beings with its stewardship. The Bible begins by saying that God created all things: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), and that we are responsible “to tend and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15) The Bible also reminds us of our own return to the earth: “for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:19) In these ways the Green Burial movement and traditional Orthodox Christian practices complement each other when Christians choose burials that care for the earth while also honoring the body of our beloved departed.

Family Participation and Religious Ritual

Both Green Burial and Orthodox funerals involve people working together to care for their loved one and praying together for their peaceful repose. In Green Burials, family and friends often help with the burial preparations as well as witness, or participate in, the return of the body to the earth. In traditional Orthodox Christian practice, all family members who desire to participate share in the preparation and care of the body, supported by a burial team, as those gathered read the Psalms, pray, and sing songs of resurrection while supporting the grieving family. In this way we “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ [love].” (Galatians 6:2) In both traditions, the family members do not grieve alone but are supported and cared for in ways that honor the departed and the earth to which they are returned.

Hope Beyond Death

Both approaches point beyond the grief of death to hope. Green Burial’s return-to-earth idea can be seen as showing how life continues in nature even as our loved one was reposed. The Orthodox Christian Church teaches hope in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come (Nicene Creed). Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” (John 11:25) Orthodox Christians believe that our body will participate in the resurrection and will be combined once again with our soul. This is also why Orthodox Christians do not cremate but choose rather this ‘green’ approach to burial, showing both care for the earth and faith in the resurrection.

We all do the best that we can to honor our departed loved ones, working together with caring professional funeral directors and sometimes Orthodox burial societies, while caring for the earth as the home that God has given us to steward for the good of all.

Fr. David Hyatt, St. Michael Orthodox Church, Greensburg, PA

Tips for Cooking for One

1. Set a day once a week such as Sunday to plan your meals for the coming week. It will make grocery shopping easier and it will keep you from buying unnecessary items that may go to waste.

2. Consider meal preparation for a few days at a time to cut down on time in the kitchen.

3. Label your foods and date and consider using sectioned containers that you can have an entire meal ready.

4. Buy smaller portions of meat at the meat counter as opposed to buying multiple pieces in a container. If buying multiple pieces of chicken, per se, consider baking all pieces at the same time and then individually wrapping and freezing portions for future meals.

5. Frozen vegetables and fruits have nearly the same nutritional value as fresh and will cut down on the cleaning time, cutting and the waste of unused fresh vegetables and fruits.

6. If you enjoy fresh vegetables and fruits, consider going to a farmers' market where you can usually purchase smaller amounts. (of course this is seasonal in our area)

7. Consider purchasing smaller appliances that are more conducive to small portion cooking such as air fryers, toaster ovens that are a combination of convection, toaster and air fry.

Upcoming Events

- 09/12 Open House, Saturday 2 - 5pm Pantalone Funeral Home
- 09/23 WCAAA Health and Education Expo, Wednesday 10-2pm Westmoreland Mall
- 09/30 Lunch & Learn, Wednesday 11:30-1pm The Boulevard
- 10/17 Annual Fall Family Night, Saturday 2-4pm Pantalone Pavilion
- 12/2 Annual Holiday Memorial Program, Wednesday 6pm Rizzo's Banquet Center, Crabtree

Recipe Corner

Mississippi Pot Roast

Ingredients:

·One 3- to 4-pound boneless beef roast, your choice of cut
·1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter
·1 package dry Italian Dressing Mix
·Pepperoncini peppers or banana pepper rings, number to your liking, and a little juice

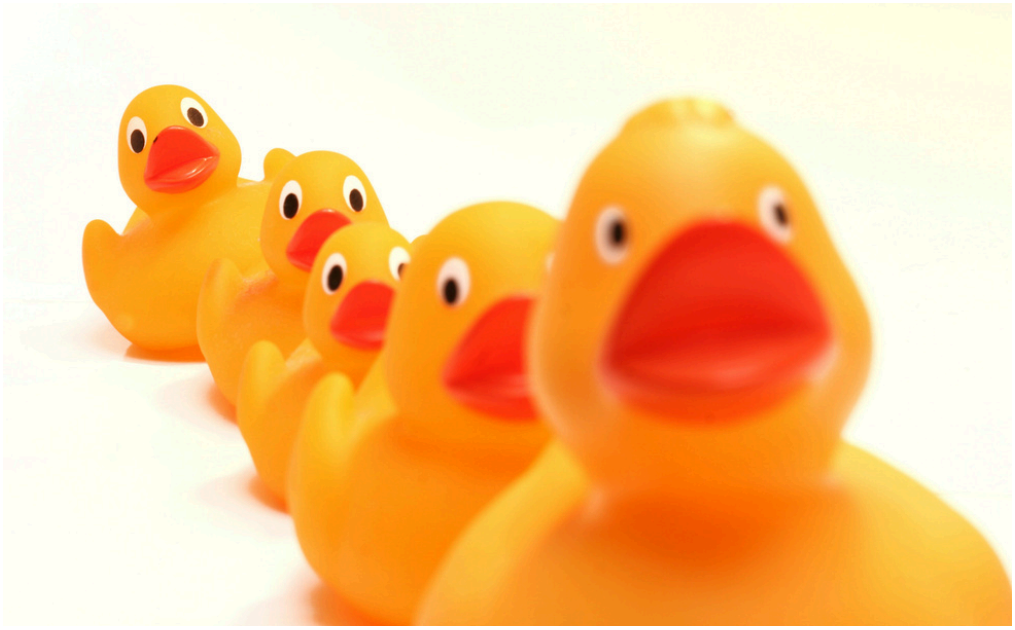
Directions:

1. Sear roast in pan
2. Put the roast in a slow cooker. Add the butter, Italian dressing mix and peppers and some juice.
3. Cook on low until tender, about 8 hours.
4. Shred meat and enjoy.

From the Kitchen of Rick Hoyle

Helpful Hints

- Check and test smoke detectors and CO detectors; replace batteries twice a year with Daylight Saving Time.
- Use space heaters only when at home; keep at least 3 feet from flammable materials.
- Keep flashlights and fresh batteries for power outages; avoid candles if possible.
- Keep a phone within easy reach of the bed.
- Install non-slip surfaces in showers and bathtubs (mat, decals, or non-slip mat).
- Install a sturdy grab bar in tub/shower (not a towel rack).
- Use non-skid backing on throw rugs if used.
- Use a sturdy step stool with a grab bar, not a chair.
- Ensure stairways have sturdy handrails.
- Install outside lighting at all home exits.
- Post emergency numbers near the phone and list medications and dosages.
- When cooking, keep pot/pan handles turned inward.
- Store fire extinguishers in accessible locations: under the kitchen sink, and in the garage, living room, laundry room, and each bedroom.



Are Your Ducks in a Row?

Life isn't a straight line, but planning ahead can bring real peace of mind. At Pantalone Funeral Home, Inc., our preplanning services are thoughtful, straightforward, and designed to respect your wishes—and your family.

By preplanning, you can:

- Ease the Burden: Put your preferences in writing so loved ones aren't left guessing.
- Personalize Your Service: Music, readings, and special details that celebrate your life.
- Peace of Mind: The confidence that your wishes are honored provides comfort for you andt hose who matter most.
- Simple, Clear Process: Guidance every step of the way, at a pace that fits you.

Why now? Proactive planning can reduce stress for families and ensure your wishes are carried out just as you envision.

Call us at 724-837-0020 or visit pantalone.com to start the conversation today.

Thank you for reading!

Clement L. PANTALONE Funeral Home, Inc.

Ph 724.837.0020 pantalone.com

409 West Pittsburgh St. Greensburg, PA 15601

Natale N. Pantalone, Supervisor