

PARK BENCH Chats

Spring is in sight... and, after another cold and grey winter, many of us are missing the warmth—the warmth of connecting with each other. So, imagine, if you will....

You are walking through a beautiful forest. Spring has brought tiny green leaves to the trees and the crocuses and tulips splash colour through the underbrush after such a dark and monotone winter. You come upon a familiar bench; a cozy blanket, some throw pillows, and hot chocolate are set out for two. You look around and see somebody walking towards you.

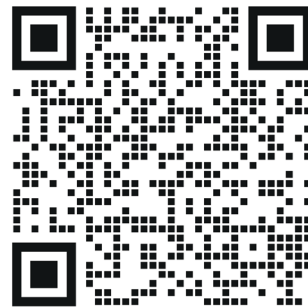
Maybe it's a loved one who has died... Maybe it's your favourite actor or

actress. Perhaps it's the teacher whose empathy and instruction greatly impacted your life's journey. Maybe there is someone newer to this life that you would call to join you at the bench so that they can meet that cherished loved one from an earlier generation. There are no limits as to who you might imagine joining you on your magical spring bench.

You have been given the gift of one hour to sit and chat with the person walking towards you.

Who would you choose to share your bench? What would you talk about? How would it make you feel?

We would be honoured to hear the stories from your magical bench chats. If you would like to participate, please scan the QR code below to find our Spring Bench blog post, where you can choose to share your story in the comments on our Facebook or Instagram platforms.



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A Message from our President

Grief can feel like a long and dreary winter. This time of year is a time of transition. There's still snow on the ground, but it's often half melted, though messy and grey with dirt. The days have more sunlight and you can feel the sun's warmth again, but it can still be quite cold outside. It's a time when nature is getting ready to change from gloomy to a beautiful kaleidoscope of colour.

For some of you who are grieving, this may give you an extra lift. You may start to smile more as you notice the signs of spring and find yourself singing along to the radio again. You simply feel lighter. Or you may find that spring brings more pressure. What do you do with your heart-break as the flowers grow again and the rest of the world feels the joy of spring's promises?

You may feel like there is nothing fresh and living in you, and in those moments, I want to gently send you a message of hope – your grief journey is your own, you are worth the journey, and you will heal on your own timeline. With this time, you will find life inside you waiting to blossom again.

Grief will still find its way into every season because when we love hard, we grieve hard. But remember — your spring will come.

Sincerely,

Kirstie

Kirstie Smolyk,
President

FGIG Returns in 2023

In May of 2019, we held our inaugural event **Finding Grace in Grief: A Full Day of Practical Grief Support** event in Edmonton. It was to be an annual event, but the pandemic held other plans. We are happy to announce that we are hosting the second Finding Grace in Grief event in September of 2023, which will include meals along with a full day of tools and information to assist you on your grief journey, while providing a safe space to join with others who are dealing with loss and grief. More details and ticket availability will follow in the coming weeks at <https://www.parkmemorial.com/fgig>.



The focus of the event is to empower our guests with practical tips and tools to help them navigate through their own unique grief process. We are humbled to be able to provide the connections and sense of community that comes from our time together, and we are so grateful to our presenters and sponsors for their help in giving our guests a day to focus on their grief and healing. We hope you will join us for this inspiring and heart-led day.

"Thank you for such an incredible day of learning and sharing. It was a beautiful day and the way it was organized was extremely thoughtful. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and I hope to attend this again in the future!"

Spring 2023

Choose an Executor & Choose Wisely!

Last Will and Testament

Some of our most critical life decisions to be made affect outcomes after we die. One of those is naming an executor in our will. Almost as important as the will itself, choosing one's executor can mean the difference between your final wishes being honoured and carried out as per your instruction, or being changed and completely disregarded.

Your executor, sometimes called personal representative, has full responsibility with regards to your funeral arrangements. If so desired, your executor can change anything with reference to those arrangements, whether it was planned at need or preplanned. This is the person all funeral homes take direction from. Even if there is a surviving spouse, the executor, by law, supersedes the spouse.

Since your executor is given access to all property in the probate of the estate, the selection of a competent and trustworthy person is very important. It is wise to nominate someone who has business experience, intelligence, and the utmost integrity and honesty to serve as your executor. Your nomination

of executor, (along with alternatives who are asked to serve if the prior nominee is unwilling or unable to act), should appear in your will. This is your chance to tell the court whom you think is best to do this job for you (since you can't speak to the court in person).

“But what if I die without a will and without naming an executor? Who is responsible for making and paying for my funeral arrangements in this case?”

According to Alberta law, if there is no executor, the authority for making funeral arrangements falls in the following order of priority:

- Spouse or common law partner
- Adult child of the deceased
- Parent of the deceased
- Guardian as named under the Dependent Adults Act, Child Welfare Act, or the Domestic Relations Act
- Adult grandchild of the deceased
- Adult sibling of the deceased
- Adult niece or nephew

- Other adult next of kin
- The Public Trustee
- An adult person having some kind of relationship with the deceased
- And finally... the Ministry of Alberta Human Services.

In today's world, family dynamics can really complicate things. Let's say you are a lawyer, with a client named Jack who's married to Jill, but it's Jack's 3rd marriage. Jack has kids from his 1st and 2nd marriages. Jack and Jill have also been living in separate homes for the last three years and Jack has been cohabiting with Jane for the last year or two. Yesterday Jack got hit by a bus and died, without a will, and everyone wants a say or thinks they're in charge. So, now what?

We see this type of situation in the funeral home all too often. Yes, there are Alberta regulations around the order of priority, but it's important to know and understand who is legally responsible for making decisions regarding a loved one's funeral arrangements and, therefore, also paying for them.

The best way to protect yourself, your estate, and your loved ones is to have an up-to-date will that names an executor... somebody worthy of your trust from all angles: making decisions, dealing with monetary implications, and honouring your wishes. Consider the impact your choice will make. If your executor isn't your spouse, the executor has the power to make decisions that your spouse may not agree with. It is also wise to have conversations with this person beforehand to detail your expectations in order to ensure they are willing and able to take on this important role.



Dr. Wolfelt Returns to Edmonton in 2023

For over two decades, Park Memorial has been bringing the wise and compassionate grief support of Dr. Alan Wolfelt to Edmonton. Author, educator, and grief counselor, Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. ... Perhaps best known for his model of “companionship” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well.

It is always a privilege to welcome and host Dr. Alan Wolfelt of the Center For Loss and Life Transition to Edmonton to deliver messages of hope and healing to those in our community who are grieving, and the caregivers who support them. Each of the two sessions (one evening session for those who are grieving, and one morning session for professional caregivers and those who support the grieving) can accommodate up to about 800 guests, giving a large sector of the community the opportunity to attend. The feedback after every event has always been very positive.

If people come expecting an evening of ‘doom and gloom’, they are instead surprised to find some soft humour amid the tips and tools for maneuvering through grief and mourning after a loss.

During the morning caregiver session, Dr. Wolfelt focuses his teachings on those in our community who care for both the dying as well as the bereaved. This is an opportunity for caregivers to not only ‘fill their cup’ but also to receive encouragement and insights to help them better care for the needs of those whom they serve. Both sessions with Dr. Wolfelt are accompanied by a ‘trade fair’ style gathering of local organizations where guests can ask questions and better understand the resources and grief supports that are available in our community, and how grief pertains to mental and physical health.

We are grateful to be welcoming Dr. Wolfelt back (in person) to Edmonton on May 10 & 11, 2023. It has been several years since we have been able to benefit from Dr. Wolfelt's wisdom and grief support in person and we know that our community is eager to attend. Further details and registration date information and tickets to attend will be available in April 2023. This will be available on our website at <https://www.parkmemorial.com/mwdw> and will also be announced via social media. There is no waiting list in place at this time, therefore we ask that you please wait to register until registration has officially been opened. We look forward to welcoming you.

I would like to continue receiving traditional and/or electronic updates and notifications from Park Memorial Funeral Home, 9709 – 111 Avenue Edmonton, AB T5G 0B2 780-426-0050. I understand that I can unsubscribe at any time.

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Socially Speaking



Our organization is present on several social media channels, and we would love for you to join our conversation. You can expect to find inspiring messaging, grief and loss support ideas, event awareness, stories of our community involvement, and other tidbits of local interest.

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