



Why Families Trust Strode To Take Care of the Service or Gathering

Memorial services are too important to leave to chance. Unlike so many other things, there will never be a “second chance” to get the service right; it has to be right the first time. Most of the families we serve ask us to take care of the service arrangements instead of doing it themselves. We are experts at handling all service details in an efficient and professional manner, since this is what we have done day-in-and-day-out for over 130 years.

Occasionally families will ask church staff to coordinate and organize the gathering. Although most churches will try to help if asked, they are often understaffed. Pastors often tell us they would much rather focus on ministering to the family instead of trying to quickly find people (often inexperienced volunteers) to be responsible for handling all the details while making sure everything goes well to ensure the family is not embarrassed.

Sometimes families tell us that they or other family members will handle all the details. Just like with churches, most people “don’t know what they don’t know” and find it incredibly stressful trying to pull together all the elements needed for a meaningful service in such a short amount of time. *It is really asking a lot of someone inexperienced to take on all that responsibility.* As a matter of fact, people often get frustrated and look to us to help coach them, essentially wanting us to handle the service but without actually asking us to do so.

Following are examples of tasks and details we can handle when we take care of the arrangements.

If Strode is not responsible for the arrangements, we will ask for the name and contact information of whoever is “in charge” so calls, e-mails, and inquiries may be forwarded to them. We will also ask for an address for floral deliveries.

Our standard charge for arranging services is \$595.

Other charges may apply depending on options selected.

What We Do, What We Take Care Of, and How We Can Help

An experienced Funeral Director can...

- Meet with the family to discuss options and ideas to make the service memorable, unique, and personal.
- Give experienced advice to help avoid unforeseen problems that will arise due to uninformed or hasty decisions.
- Minimize disagreements among family members and misunderstandings with venues and third-party providers (such as florists, newspapers, etc.). We also help keep the public aware of any changes to service plans.
- Be responsible for any deadlines, completion of all agreed-upon tasks, and providing needed updates to the family.
- Keep events organized, on-time, and within budget; deal with any last-minute changes or requests.
- Coordinate all details with officiants, third-party providers, and others involved in the service arrangements.
- Act as a “safety net” to make sure everything gets done as planned, and act as a 24-hour “gatekeeper” for phone calls, service inquiries, etc. so the family is not bothered at all hours with calls.
- Use our vast network of contacts to get things done quickly by the most qualified providers.

Tasks and details Strode can take care of:

- Contact officiant/celebrant; act as liaison between family and officiant; help officiant(s) with any service-related questions or details, and arrange payment of officiant(s).
- Prepare and coordinate order of service for officiant and all other participants.
- Arrange for military honors at the service or at a cemetery when we are in charge.
- Assist with the composing and submission of obituaries to newspapers.
- Post online obituaries and service details on our web site at no additional charge.
- Contact/arrange for musicians, sound technicians, or other professionals and arrange for payment of any honorariums or fees.
- Help provide music or musicians, or provide electronic means to play music at a graveside.
- Make sure someone competent is in charge of sound and video systems and knows how to use them.
- Assist with creation and playing any video tributes; Create service programs or bulletins; Create printed guest books, provide acknowledgement cards, prayer cards, etc.
- Contact florist and coordinate ordering and delivery of any family pieces; Receive flowers at funeral home instead of sending them to the family home.
- Provide written description of floral tributes and sender; ensure all flower cards are removed and not lost; make photocopies of cards in case originals are lost, damaged, etc.
- Provide needed display equipment (stands, racks, etc.) for flowers.
- Provide needed transportation of flowers and equipment to / from service.
- Skillfully arrange floral tributes, photos, and memorabilia at memorial service.
- Arrange for enlargement of any photographs to display at the service.

- Provide any needed easels, stands, etc., for display of photographs.
- Provide display tables for urns, centerpieces, memorabilia, etc.
- Arrange for video recording of memorial service or gathering.
- Arrange for livestreaming of service or gathering through our website.
- Set up all service-related items at least one-hour prior to event.
- Reserve needed seating for family to avoid confusion of public and embarrassment of moving attendees at the last minute; provide reserve signs.
- Make sure all family is gathered prior to the service, arrange family members prior to seating and seat them on-time in an orderly manner.
- Arrange for staff to hand out memorial programs and make sure everyone signs the guest book.
- Provide needed staff to greet guests and to seat them in an orderly manner.
- Coordinate organized dismissal of family and friends after the service.
- Gather, organize, and return all flowers, memorial items, pictures, etc. to the family.
- Handle any unexpected issues or last-minute requests.
- Arrange for burial of ashes, and supervise any gravesite service.
- Transport cremated remains to venue, cemetery, etc.
- Assist those with mobility needs, including any special seating.
- Coordinate the participation of any clubs, groups, or organizations.
- Guide guests to restrooms, answer their questions, etc.
- Remain in foyer after service starts to seat latecomers.
- Assist with any other details as requested.

If you ultimately decide not to have us be responsible for the service, you might use this list as a partial guide to help those responsible.

Please know that although we are always here to help, we must respectfully decline to assist in arranging services when we are not in charge or share contact information of those with whom we have a working relationship. We have tried to help this way in the past, but doing so causes confusion and frustration as we are often not “kept in the loop” by the family. We sincerely hope you understand.

Also, we regret we cannot rent out any funeral-service related equipment or supplies. We can offer you certain service-related items (memorial register books, etc.) for an additional fee.

Thank you for allowing us to help in any way we can.