# Deathcare Planning Guide 9

Hello beloved. This document will help you think through various pieces of your holistic deathcare, including thinking about your obituary, choosing someone to oversee your body disposition\*, figuring out your funeral plans, choosing liturgy and songs, and more.

(\*The word disposition in this context refers to the manner in which human remains are handled at the end of life)

Make sure that you save a copy of this and keep it with your important documents or with a lawyer

Also, please remember that I'm a pastor; while I've done my best to provide details and accurate information about legal issues, checking in with an affirming lawyer is always a good idea! Any mistakes made here are mine.

Sending you every blessing,

#### Pastor Kearstin

PS: If you want to reach out and talk through any of this, feel free to send me a text at 740-503-8994 or an email at <u>PastorFCCNR@gmail.com</u>

### 🖹 Preparing with legal stuff 🗐

Choose a healthcare proxy

A healthcare proxy is someone specifically designated to make healthcare decisions if/when you are incapacitated or no longer able to make them yourself. Unlike a power of attorney, a healthcare proxy can only make decisions on your behalf as it relates to medical care. If your family or partner are not affirming, make sure that you choose a healthcare proxy who will follow your wishes and affirm your gender expression and identity in these decisions.

https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/advance-care-planning/choosing-health-care-proxy

Name an agent to oversee your body disposition

If you're not married to your partner, or you're estranged from your family or next of kin, make sure you've designated someone to handle all your funeral arrangements and body disposition. Even if you've assigned a healthcare proxy, the law will still default to next of kin for funeral and physical body care (often, that's a partner, parent, or sibling) — and you want to make sure that that person will be affirming of you in death just as they were in life.

https://funerals.org/your-rights/state-by-state-rights/state-by-state-assigning-an-agent-to-control-disposition/#:~:text=The%20power%20to%20name%20a,spouse%20or%20next%20of%20kin

# Think about your memorial/funeral wishes

<b>Ø</b> A	🤌 All About You 🥙					
1.	Legal name:					
2.	Chosen name to be used throughout the service & obituary:					
3.	Pronouns:					
4.	Date of birth & birthplace:					
5.	How would you like to list your family of origin (if at all) in an obituary?					
6.	Who would you like to list as your survivors? (Chosen family, close friends, partners, etc.)					
7.	Sometimes communities will place obituaries in newspapers in other cities (if you've lived multiple places) or in other publications (like college alumni magazines, etc.). Where would you like your obituary to be shared?					
8.	Did you attend any educational settings that you would like mentioned in your obituary? List them here & why they were important to you (high school, study abroad, college, university, other training settings, etc.)					
9.	What has been your most meaningful work? (Lowercase "w" work, something that was necessary but still impactful for you)					

	etc.)
11	.Are there any organizations or movements you've been a part of that you want noted? Why were you a part of them? (Places of worship, non-profits, etc.)
12	the end? What impact do you want to have made on the world?
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15	i. Who are a few points of contact for different periods of your life? When you pass, who should family contact from work, school, a job in a specific city, a certain group of friends, etc.? (Ex: College friend Jenny, cell: email:; Former church community in upstate NY, Rev So-and-so, cell: church email:)

## All about your body

\*(\*Feel free to strike through the questions below that do not apply!)

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. 1.	1. What would you like to have happen to your body? (Not all of these are legal in all states currently, but things may change by the time you pass. If interested in alternative disposition processes, you can mark those below!)			
	1.	Cremation		
	2.	Embalming		
	3.	Donation to science		
	4.	Aquamation		
		1. AKA water cremation		
	5.	Human composting		
		AKA natural organic reduction		
	6.	Biodegradable tree urn		
	7.	Something else		
2.	. If cremation, would you like to have a witness cremation?			
	1.	This is a ceremony offered that allows folks to be present during the cremation. your community may bring a candle to light, press the button on the crematory machine to start the cremation, and then say a few words or have a moment of silence		
3.	. If cremation, what do you want to happen to your remains?			
	1.	Burial at		
	2.	Scattering at		
	3.	Other:		
4.	If emb	alming:		
	1.	Where would you like to be buried?		
	2.	Do you have a preferred set of clothing / jewelry / or other things that you would like to be buried in?		
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	3.	Would you like a:
:		1. Headstone?
		2. Plaque?
Ĵ	4.	If you would like a stone marker, what should it say?
A 🎉	II the	practical pieces of the service 🚜
1.	Would	d you like a:
	0	[] Funeral with visitation the night before & open casket at the service
	0	[] Funeral with visitation the night before & a closed casket at the service
	0	[] Just a funeral with an open casket
	0	[] Just a funeral with a closed casket
	0	[] Memorial service with cremains
	0	[] Memorial service without cremains
2.	Where	e would you like your service to take place?
	0	[] The religious community i most recently attended immediately before my passing
	0	[] Another religious community:
	0	[] Another location:
3.		I you like your survivors to hold a reception or a time of communal gathering? What Is there anything in particular that you would like them to do? Any particular location?
4.	funera what s	the community will display photos & memorabilia from their loved ones' lives at the & (optional) reception. Do you have any preferences about this? Suggestions about should or should not be used? (Photos from a particular time in your life, objects from ood or adulthood, anything that should be avoided, etc)

5. Many folks will purchase flowers to be displayed during the funeral or memorial ceremony. Is that okay with you? Would you prefer that folks purchase something else? (Live plants in

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ı	planters to be distributed to folks after the ceremony, gloves & socks to be donated to local houseless folks, packets of seeds that folks can take home, etc)					
<b>♦</b> 6.	It's becoming more popular for folks to invite surviving community to make a monetary donation in your memory, in lieu of flowers, to an organization. Would you prefer that instead of flowers, or as an additional option? If so, what organization? (Maybe a school, non-profit, mutual aid organization, art gallery, co-op, etc)					
	All abo	out the flow of the service				
script feel r	ure, etc ight for	some options for wording at various points in the service, like a greeting, invocation, c. Feel free to circle what you like, edit things to fit your desires, & cross out what doesn't you. I've tried to give options for a secular or a religious service, so you can find nat speaks to you)				
1.	Greetings					
	1.	Beloved community, we gather here in the protective shelter of healing love. in this space, we are free to pour out our anguish, release our anger, face our emptiness, and be reminded that love endures. We gather here as one community, remembering all those who have passed, and aware of our own spark of existence on earth. We come to support one another in our common loss of We gather to share stories and hear words of hope. we unite to commend back to the unending cosmos, with thanksgiving for their/her/his life.				
	2.	Beloved community, we gather here in the protective shelter of god's healing love. in this space, we are free to pour out our anguish, release our anger, face our emptiness, and be reminded that god's love endures. We gather here as god's people, remembering all those who have passed and joined the company of saints, and aware of our own spark of existence on earth. We come to support one another in our common loss of We gather to share stories and hear sacred words of hope. we unite to commend back to cosmic reunion with the creator, with thanksgiving for their/her/his time here on earth.				
2.	Comr	nendation				
	1.	We are all wading in the primordial waters of life eternal. Today, we commend to those ancient & mysterious living waters. Receive them/her/him with open arms. Allow them/her/him to flourish in cosmic reunion with the universe. And let				

them/her/him find ways to live in our hearts & guide our days ahead. Let all those

gathered say together: Let it be so.

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- 2. Into your hands, God, Christ, and Spirit, we commend your follower \_\_\_\_\_. Acknowledge them/her/him, we humbly pray, as a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your flock. Receive them/her/him into your merciful arms, into the sacred rest of everlasting peace, into the company of saints. May all those gathered say together: Amen.
- 3. Hymns or songs
  - 1. Amazing Grace
  - 2. How Great Thou Art
  - 3. Lift Every Voice and Sing (Would be good for ending the service on a note of action)
  - 4. What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong
  - 5. Lean on Me by Bill Withers
  - 6. Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen
  - 7. For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table ("God will delight when we are creators of justice & joy")
  - 8. <u>Joyful is the Dark</u> (Affirms that the Sacred can be found in darkness just as They can be found in light)
  - 9. Canticle of the Turning (A religious justice song, based on the Mother Mary's canticle)
  - 10. <u>Gustav Holst's "The Planets"</u> (You can play the music associated with a particular planet you feel connected to, or the bit for Saturn who is traditionally associated with death.

    The timestamps are included in the notes under the video at the link)
- 4. Scripture or sacred readings \*(\*All scripture is from the Inclusive Bible Translation)
  - 1. a poem by Mary Frye —

Do not stand at my grave and weep,

I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am in a thousand winds that blow,

I am the softly falling snow.

I am the gentle showers of rain,

I am the fields of ripening grain.

I am in the morning hush,

I am in the graceful rush

Of beautiful birds in circling flight,

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I am the starshine of the night.

I am in the flowers that bloom,

I am in a quiet room.

I am in the birds that sing,

I am in each lovely thing.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,

I am not there. I do not die.

- 2. Isaiah 40:28-31 Do you not know? Have you not heard? God is everlasting, the Creator of the ends of the earth. Our God does not faint or grow weary; with a depth of understanding that is unsearchable. 29 God gives strength to the weary and empowers the powerless. 30 Young women may grow tired and weary, young men may stumble and fall, 31 but those who wait for god find a renewed power: they soar on eagles' wings, they run and don't get weary, they walk and never tire.
- 3. Revelation 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice calling from the throne, "Look! God's Tabernacle is among humankind! God will live with them; they will be God's people, and God will be fully present among them. 4 The Most High will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more, for the old order has fallen."
- 4. Ecclesiastes 3:1-7 There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: 2 a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest; 3 a season to hurt and a season to heal; a season to tear down and a season to build up; 4 a season to cry and a season to laugh; a season to mourn and a season to dance; 5 a season to scatter stones and a season gather them; a season for holding close and a season for holding back; 6 a season to seek and a season to lose; a season to keep and a season throw away; 7 a season to tear and a season to mend; a season to be silent and a season to speak
- 5. The Next Place by Warren Hanson
- 5. Benediction or blessings
  - 1. For all who seek love, may love go with you. For all who embrace life, may life return your affection. For all who seek a right path, may a way be found, and the courage to take it, step by step. Go blessed, beloveds.
  - 2. May God bless you & keep you. May God's face shine upon you & be gracious to you. May God look upon you with kindness & give you peace. Go blessed, beloveds.

### Other resources that may be helpful!

https://enfleshed.com/project/funeralliturgy/

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Enfleshed is a eco-conscious, queer-affirming, liberatory liturgy resource. They have written a bunch of pieces that you might like to use in your funeral or memorial!

#### https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/

An organization focused on eco-friendly & equitable planning around death. Top notch! <a href="https://amzn.to/4aLUeLp">https://amzn.to/4aLUeLp</a> (Caithlin Doughty's book *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: And Other Lessons from the Crematorium*)

A great primer book if you're just starting to think about the American death industry. It's filled with dark humor and plenty of stories that will make you sniffle or tear up in the best ways. I highly recommend it!

## THE NEXT PLACE Warren Hanson

The next place that I go will be as peaceful and familiar As a sleepy summer Sunday and a sweet, untroubled mind.

And yet . . . it won't be anything like any place I've ever been . . . Or seen . . . or even dreamed of in the place I leave behind.

I won't know where I'm going, and I won't know where I've been As I tumble through the always and look back toward the when.

I'll glide beyond the rainbows. I'll drift above the sky, I'll fly into the wonder, without ever wondering why.

I won't remember getting there. Somehow I'll just arrive.

But I'll know that I belong there and will feel much more alive

Than I have ever felt before.

I will be absolutely free of the things that I held onto -That were holding onto me.

The next place that I go will be so quiet and so still

That the whispered song of sweet belonging will rise up to fill

The listening sky with joyful silence,

And with unheard harmonies of music made by no one playing,

Like a hush upon a breeze.

There will be no room for darkness in that place of living light. Where an ever-dawning morning pushes back the dying night. The very air will fill with brilliance, as the brightly shining sun And the moon and half a million stars are married into one.

The next place that I go won't really be a place at all.

There won't be any seasons — winter, summer, spring or fall —

Nor a Monday, Nor a Friday, Nor December, Nor July.

And the seconds will be standing still . . . While hours hurry by.

I will not be a boy or girl, a woman or a man. I'll simple be just, simply, me. No worse or better than.

My skin will not be dark or light,
I won't be fat or tall.
The body I once lived in won't be part of me at all.

I will finally be perfect. I will be without a flaw. I will never make one more mistake,

Or break the smallest law.

And the me that was impatient, or was angry or unkind,
Will simply be a memory.
The me I left behind

I will travel empty-handed,

There is not a single thing I have collected in my life
That I would ever want or bring except...

The love of those who loved me, And the warmth of those who cared. The happiness and memories And magic that we shared.

Though I will know the joy of solitude . . .
I'll never be alone
I'll be embraced by all the family and friends
I've ever known. . .

Although I might not see their faces, All our hearts will beat as one, And the circle of our spirits Will shine brighter than the sun.

I will cherish all the friendships I was fortunate to find, All the love and all the laughter In the place I leave behind.

All these good things will go with me,
They will make my spirit glow.
And that light will shine forever
In the next place that I go..