Memorial Meetings for Worship
at Midlothian Friends Meeting (MFM)
Updated June 24, 2021

1. *Midlothian Friends Meeting* only arranges a *Memorial meeting for worship* for deceased Friends who were associated with *Midlothian Friends Meeting* either recently or in the past. They are also arranged at the request of Friends associated with *Midlothian Friends Meeting* who have a deceased loved one for whom they would like to hold a *Memorial meeting for worship* (no matter whether that deceased loved one was a Quaker or not).
2. Any *Memorial meeting for worship* arranged by *Midlothian Friends Meeting* is open to attendance by all Friends associated with the meeting. The general public may also attend if desired. Private *Memorial meetings for worship*, where the family invites chosen individuals only, are not arranged by *Midlothian Friends Meeting*; although if the deceased or members of the family have current or past association with *Midlothian Friends Meeting*, they may use the meetinghouse at no charge.
3. At *Midlothian Friends Meeting*, unlike non-Quaker "funerals", some bit of time elapses after the death of a loved one before the *Memorial meeting for worship* is held. This Quaker tradition allows the family some time to grieve privately and not be rushed in the arrangements for the *Memorial meeting for worship*. Since this special worship is a celebration of the life of the deceased, the casket or cremains are not present during the *Memorial meeting for worship*. Often, pictures or other lifetime mementos are present, as well as a small simple flower arrangement near a registry for those attending the Memorial Worship.
4. Quaker *Memorial meetings for worship* are conducted primarily as unprogrammed meetings for worship, where those present speak out of the silence as moved by the Spirit with messages and memories about the deceased. Some families choose to have brief elements of programming as well; such as music, singing, or other elements of programming that are meaningful to them.
5. Whenever anyone at *Midlothian Friends Meeting* is contacted about arranging a *Memorial meeting for worship*, a *Care Coordinator* should be immediately involved as the official contact on behalf of *Midlothian Friends Meeting*. That *Care Coordinator* should immediately enter into a discussion with the family of the deceased. It is best to do so in person if possible and acceptable to the family. If desired the *Care Coordinator* may ask another Friend to accompany him or her. During the discussion the *Care Coordinator* should:
    a. Determine who will be the point of contact for the family, and what is their contact information.
    b. Determine the desired date for the *Memorial meeting for worship* (an estimated date at this initial discussion is acceptable).
    c. Explain items 1 – 4 listed above to the family.
    d. Explain that an ad-hoc committee will be established by the meeting to make sure the *Memorial meeting for worship* unfolds in a way that is satisfactory to the family, and that someone from that committee will contact the family's point of contact to work through the details.
    e. Before closing this initial discussion, the *Care Coordinator* should make sure the family has the contact information for her or him.
6. After this initial discussion with the family the *Care Coordinator* should proceed to form an ad-hoc committee to handle the details of the *Memorial meeting for worship*, using one of the following two methods:

    a. If the *Memorial meeting for worship* timing allows, a request should be brought to *Meeting for Discernment* for an ad-hoc committee to be formed in order to arrange the *Memorial meeting for worship*, and to gather information about a deceased member of meeting (recorded or non-recorded) in order to create a memorial minute that will be approved and minuted at a later *Meeting for Discernment*.

b. If the *Memorial meeting for worship* will be soon and bringing the request for an ad-hoc committee to *Meeting for Discernment* will not be doable, the *Care Coordinator* should work with the *clerk of meeting* to quickly establish the ad-hoc committee in order to arrange the *Memorial meeting for worship*, and gather information about a deceased member (recorded or non-recorded) of meeting in order to create a memorial minute that will be approved at *Meeting for Discernment*.

7. In either of the above situations, two or three Friends should comprise the ad-hoc committee that is created. It is best to select Friends who knew the deceased, if at all possible. Someone not associated with *Midlothian Friends Meeting* should not be selected. The *Care Coordinator* should convey to the ad-hoc committee, once it is established, the family's preliminary wishes, the contact information for the family's point of contact, and the approximate timing of the *Memorial meeting for worship*.
8. Once the ad-hoc committee is establish, someone from the ad-hoc committee should immediately contact the family's point of contact to inquire about the particulars of the impending *Memorial meeting for worship*, such as:

    a. What is the exact date and time for the *Memorial meeting for worship*?
    b. What is the location for the *Memorial meeting for worship*? If it will be held at the meetinghouse, will it be inside the meetinghouse, in the Meditation Garden, in the Memorial Garden, or somewhere else on the meetinghouse grounds?
    c. Will the meetinghouse or its grounds be used for a reception after the *Memorial meeting for worship*, or will that be held elsewhere, or not be held at all?
    d. What (if any) elements of programming would the family like to include in the *Memorial meeting for worship*, and who will ensure these happen according to the desires of the family?
    e. What should be done if the meetinghouse, grounds, and parking lot does not hold all those attending?

9. Also, the following should be explained to the family by someone from the ad-hoc committee:
    a. A member of the ad-hoc committee will explain Quaker unprogrammed worship near the beginning of the *Memorial meeting for worship*. Also, a simple pamphlet or handout with an explanation may be made available.
    b. Optionally, a memorial minute that was approved at *Meeting for Discernment* may be read early in the *Memorial meeting for worship*, if one was created.
    c. Burial or the scattering of ashes may precede or follow the *Memorial meeting for worship*. It may be done with everyone invited to witness the burial or scattering, or with only invited family and close friends. The burial or scattering of ashes may constitute the only observance of a *Memorial meeting for worship*; however, in this case *Midlothian Friends Meeting* would only need to be involved in the planning of the *Memorial meeting for worship* at the burial or scattering of ashes if the entire meeting is welcomed to attend the burial or scattering of ashes. **Important Note:** The *MFM Historian* must be notified by submitting a registration ***anytime*** ashes are buried or scattered in the *MFM Memorial Garden* or on the MFM meetinghouse grounds. To do so, click on this link to submit the registration using Google Forms: Cremains Registration at Midlothian Friends Meeting Memorial Garden - Google Forms.
10. The ad-hoc committee should ensure that:
    a. If the *Memorial meeting for worship* will be at the Midlothian Friends meetinghouse and/or grounds, that these are available by contacting the *MFM Scheduler* to reserve these.
    b. The Ad-hoc committee members are assigned tasks to complete in preparation for the *Memorial meeting for worship* with expected completion dates.
    c. One of those tasks should be the creation of the Memorial minute if the deceased was a member (recorded or non-recorded) of *Midlothian Friends Meeting*. This should be done before the *Memorial meeting for worship* if at all possible and approved at *Meeting for Discernment* and minuted. If the

deceased was active in Yearly Meeting affairs, the memorial minute should be forwarded to Baltimore Yearly Meeting by the *clerk of Midlothian Friends Meeting*.

d. Someone on the ad-hoc committee is frequently reviewing, as needed, with the family's point of contact, the ad-hoc committee's progress on the preparation of the *Memorial meeting for worship*. Also, if family members are arranging some tasks (such as elements of programming during the *Memorial meeting for worship*), discreetly check on their progress or decision to change anything from what was originally discussed.