

When A Loved One Dies

(Taken from CBS Membership Directory, 2018/2019 Edition)

1. Whom to Call

Schoenberg Memorial Chapel (302) 762-0334

Rabbi Beals (302) 654-4462 (office) After hours, call home (302) 478-1127

2. Funeral

Out of respect for the deceased, services are usually held as soon as possible. Funeral arrangements must be made by the family of the deceased with both Schoenberg Memorial Chapel and the Jewish Cemetery prior to the funeral. For a local funeral service, you may choose our synagogue sanctuary, Schoenberg Memorial Chapel, or the Alan Schoenberg building at the Jewish Community Cemetery, along with graveside services, or you may choose graveside services only.

If you wish to use the synagogue sanctuary for the service, traditional Jewish funeral practices must be followed. The deceased is prepared for burial by ritual washing and dressing of the body in white linen shrouds (tachrichin) by members of the holy association (chevra kadisha). Arrangements for this preparation can be made through Schoenberg Memorial Chapel.

After the deceased is ritually prepared, and prior to burial, the traditional Jewish practice of prayerful watch by guards (shomrim) may take place. Shomrim are generally volunteers in the community who sit in the same room or building with the deceased until the time of burial. For arrangement of shomrim, you may call the synagogue or Melissa Stanley at (302) 832-0675 or (302) 373-5093.

An all wooden casket is traditionally used. It may be adorned with a Jewish star, but otherwise it is not ornamented. Jewish tradition emphasizes the equality of all people at the time of death, so the coffin should reflect this belief. Aside from a small packet of earth from the Holy Land, which is often included in the coffin, Jewish law states that nothing should be interred in the casket other than the body of the deceased.

If your loved one is not Jewish, CBS clergy may be willing to officiate at a graveside service, or to co-officiate at services with clergy of other faiths. Please contact Rabbi Beals at (302) 654-4462 to discuss.

3. Memorial Service

Loved ones whose funeral is out of town, or whose funeral service is held elsewhere, may be remembered at a memorial service at the synagogue. Memorial services typically take place after burial.

4. Newspaper Notice

The family will need to provide pertinent biographical information to Schoenberg Memorial Chapel and they will take care of this for you. Please consider adding CBS to your list of favorite charities for others to donate to in memory of your loved one.

5. Shiva

Shiva is a period of mourning lasting for seven days beginning on the day of the funeral. It is our tradition to conduct afternoon (mincha) services after the meal of consolation and evening (ma'ariv) services at the shiva house on the evening following the funeral. Additional services for the week at the shiva home may be arranged through Rabbi Beals. During this shiva period, members of the community come to the home of the bereaved to provide comfort and to provide a daily minyan at which mourners' kaddish may be recited. Although it is customary for shiva to take place in the home of the deceased or a close relative, there may be situations in which a family will choose to have shiva in the synagogue rather than at home. Families should contact the Director of Administration at (302) 654-4462 for information. One does not sit shiva on Shabbat, but it counts as one of the seven days. If a major yom tov falls during shiva, the festival terminates the shiva. A shiva candle is provided for the family of the deceased by Schoenberg Memorial Chapel.

6. Meal of Consolation

It is customary in our community to gather at the home of the family of the deceased following a funeral. A light kosher meal is usually provided for the attendees. Many congregants use ShopRite's kosher catering department for this meal. Their phone number is (302) 477-3270.

7. Shloshim

Shloshim is the 30-day period of mourning which begins the day of the funeral. Although mourners return to their usual pursuits after shiva, it is customary not to participate in any festivity during the shloshim period. Traditionally, one does not visit the grave during this time.

8. Kaddish

Mourners recite the kaddish prayer at every service for a period of 11 months, less one day. In addition to our regular Shabbat services, our morning minyan meets Sunday through Friday morning, in order to aid you in fulfilling this obligation to say kaddish.

9. Yahrzeit and Yizkor

The synagogue will send notification of the date of the yahrzeit (anniversary of death according to the Jewish calendar). Schoenberg Memorial Chapel will provide a twenty year yahrzeit calendar. A yahrzeit candle should be kindled at home on the eve of the yahrzeit date and services should be attended so that kaddish may be recited. A yizkor (remembrance) candle should be lit at four additional times during the year: on the eve of the last day of Shavuot, Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret) and Pesach, and prior to Kol Nidre services on the eve of Yom Kippur. A memorial yizkor service is held the following day on each of the holidays. An opportunity for honoring the life of your loved one is to donate tzedakah in his or her memory.

10. Memorial Plaque

A plaque inscribed with the name of your loved one and the date of death is a fitting memorial. The plaque's light is illuminated during the week of yahrzeit. Personalized plaques may be purchased through the synagogue office and is located in the CBS sanctuary.

11. Monuments

Call Cecil Vault & Memorial Company at (302) 994-3806 to discuss placement of a memorial monument at the cemetery for your loved one. It is important to work with a company which can ensure that the Hebrew inscriptions on the monument are accurate and that the monument has a proper foundation.

12. Unveiling

A monument may be unveiled any time after shloshim (30 days). The unveiling should take place prior to 12 months after burial.

13. Maintenance of Cemetery

The Jewish Community Cemetery Association is responsible for maintenance of the cemetery grounds although each family is responsible for the condition of any memorial stone that is placed at a gravesite. The JCCA makes every effort to make sure that the grounds are well kept; however, all volunteer efforts towards this goal are appreciated. The new Alan Schoenberg building on the cemetery grounds provides space for a small funeral on site, a safe and dry space to gather for graveside services during inclement weather, restrooms for those attending services, and a sanctuary for annual memorial services.

Please consider making a donation to off-set the expense of maintenance of this facility. To volunteer or donate funds, call Bob Berman, President of the JCCA at (302) 478-3984.

14. Questions

All religious questions concerning death and burial should be directed to Rabbi Beals, who can be reached through the synagogue office at (302) 654-4462.