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EVAN W. SMITH
Funeral Services

BULLETIN

Articles of Help & Healing for our Delaware Community



2

Funeral or Celebration of Life: What's Right for Your Loved One?

When a loved one passes away, it is important to honor their life with a memorable final goodbye.

Keep Your Cool this
Summer with These
Clever Tricks

3

Vacation-bound?
Five Indispensable
Home Security Tips

4

Seven Ways to
Reduce Your Risk
of Stroke

5

Budget Decorating:
Create a Stylish
Home for Less

6

In the Community
Mississippi Mud
Cake

7-8



I hope you enjoy the Spring issue of our quarterly "Bulletin."

Be sure to subscribe to our email list so you get monthly articles and announcements as well.

Thank you and God bless.

- Evan W. Smith

Funeral or Celebration of Life: What's Right for Your Loved One?



In the past, society has turned to funeral services based on religious or cultural traditions to pay tribute to the departed. But as the world becomes more mobile and less connected to formal religious doctrine, these commemorative events have taken on a personalized, casual approach. That's largely why celebrations of life have rapidly grown in popularity in recent years. If you are struggling to define the perfect final farewell for a loved one, please read on for some important information about traditional funerals and celebrations of life to help you make the best decision.

What is a celebration of life?

This ceremony is designed to joyfully commemorate the life of the departed and all of their special qualities. It typically does not follow particular religious rites or requirements, and the body is not present. There are no prescribed rules for when or where to hold the event or what elements to include. They may be held in a church or funeral home, but often they are conducted at meaningful locations to the departed, such as a favorite park or restaurant. Celebrations of life are intended to be customized affairs that reflect the preferences and personality of the one who passed away.

What is a funeral?

A traditional funeral is a formal ceremony where the body of the departed is usually present. The tone is quiet, subdued, and reverent. Funerals commonly occur within a few days of the person's passing and take place at a house of worship or

funeral home. The ceremony follows an order prescribed by faith or custom, although there is room for flexibility. The elements commonly include a visitation period, followed by the funeral service, interment (burial), and the reception or repast.

How are funerals and celebrations of life different?

Funerals tend to be formal affairs that emphasize specific religious and cultural rites, while celebrations of life are casual gatherings with a festive vibe. It is important to note that, although celebration of life ceremonies are typically more relaxed, the etiquette rules for funerals still apply. Lateness, disrespectful remarks, ultra-casual attire, and boisterous behavior are never appropriate.

Which is better?

As time goes by, there is less and less distinction between these two types of ceremonies. It is not uncommon to find hybrid services that include elements of both the traditional funeral and the more carefree celebration of life. When it comes to designing an end-of-life ceremony, there is no right or wrong answer. The best service is the one that is right for you, your family, and the departed.

If you're undecided about the final farewell for your loved one, turn to the caring professionals at Evan W. Smith Funeral Services. We will explore the funeral service options with you in detail and help you create the perfect end-of-life tribute.

Keep Your Cool this Summer with These Clever Tricks

When summer strikes, rising temperatures often equal rising cooling costs.

Whether you lack air conditioning or just want to use it less this season to save money or for environmental reasons, there are many ways to beat the heat and cool your home. Best of all, you probably already have everything you need on hand.

- **Keep the curtains closed.** Sunlight coming through windows can heat up the inside of your home quickly. During the day, keep your window shades and curtains drawn to keep things cool. If your curtains are dark, line them with lighter fabric or hang a lighter-colored sheet on the side that faces the window. This will help to better reflect the light.
- **Use fans strategically.** Turning on a ceiling fan can help circulate air inside your home, offering a nice breeze and relief from the heat. However, you'll want to turn them off when you leave the room since they don't cool rooms. Box and portable fans work best when the air outside is cooler than the air inside. Use these fans at night near an open window to pull cooler air in from outside.
- **Go low.** If you live in a home with more than one story, spend more time on the first floor or even the basement. Because heat rises, these rooms tend to be naturally cooler than those above them.
- **Keep the stove and oven off.** Opt for foods that you can eat directly from the refrigerator and that naturally contain lots of water. Salads, fruits, and sliced vegetables are examples of light summer fare that will keep you hydrated and won't add to the heat in your home.
- **Drink up.** Don't wait until you feel thirsty to reach for a glass of water. It's important to keep your body hydrated throughout the day to replenish any water you may have lost by sweating. You can enhance the cooling sensation by adding a sprig of fresh mint or a squeeze of lemon.

- **Use a cold washcloth.** Taking a cool shower can provide you with instant relief from the heat but you can also get a similar benefit by using a wet washcloth. Dampen the washcloth in cold water and put it in the freezer for a few minutes. Then, apply it to pulse points on your body (the back of your neck, under your armpits, on your wrists, or groin area). Doing so will cool your body down more efficiently.

Remember that extreme heat is no joke. Overheating is especially dangerous for children under four and adults over age 65. Be sure to check in with people you know who are in these vulnerable populations, particularly amid a heatwave. If you suspect that you or someone you know is suffering from heat exhaustion or potential heatstroke, consult with a medical professional or call 911 in the event of an emergency.



Vacation-bound?

Five Indispensable Home Security Tips

You're at the airport, about to embark on a long-awaited summer getaway with the family. And then you start to worry. Did I lock all of the doors? What if something happens while we're gone? Take plenty of time to secure your home before you leave so you can travel with maximum confidence and peace of mind. The following home security tips will help to ensure that you won't return to any unpleasant surprises.



Don't advertise that you're leaving.

Never put anything on your voicemail, answering machine, email autoreply, or social media to indicate that you'll be away from home. It may be tempting to post your gorgeous vacation photos the moment you take them, but the safest bet is to wait until you return home. Keep your usual voicemail or answering machine message, and if you opt to use a personal or work email autoreply message, keep it vague.



Ask a trusted neighbor or friend to keep an eye on your house.

Even if you put a hold on newspapers and mail, you can't predict when random flyers or deliveries will be left at the front door. By having a trusted friend or family member stop by every day or two, you can avoid unexpected packages from being left outside. They should also check for any signs of attempted entry, damage, or other home concerns. Be sure to compensate your helpful neighbor or friend for their time.



Unplug all nonessential electronics.

Unplugging your TVs, computers, coffee maker, lamps, etc. will reduce the risk of fire and deliver savings, too. The power consumed by plugged-in electronics while they're not in use, known as phantom or vampire power, accounts for nearly 10% of residential energy use. Unplugging devices also protects them against electrical surges, which can short-out expensive equipment and even cause a fire.



Place a hold on your mail and newspapers.

Overflowing mailboxes and newspapers piled in the driveway are dead giveaways that you aren't home. Be sure to contact your newspaper service well in advance to stop deliveries and file complete a mail-hold form at the post office.



Deter would-be thieves with ample lighting.

An outdoor sensor light is a smart investment in safety. These motion-sensor flood lights can also prove to be useful year-round for general home security, whether you are home or not. Set up some timers for indoor lights to give the impression that your house is occupied.



Following these home security tips before you leave for vacation will make it much easier to relax and enjoy your time away.

Bon voyage!

Seven Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Stroke

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. and it is more prevalent among African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans than other races.

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted or reduced, preventing tissues from getting necessary oxygen and nutrients, which kills the brain cells. Although you can't do anything about some risk factors like age and family history, many associated factors are well within your control. And there's more good news because health experts say that nearly 80% of strokes can be prevented through lifestyle adjustments. Here are seven easy, practical ways to reduce your risk of stroke.

1. Monitor and control your blood pressure.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a major risk factor for stroke, doubling or even quadrupling the risk if it is not controlled. Get your blood pressure checked by a medical professional at least once a year and work with them to lower it if your readings are high.

2. Treat cholesterol imbalance.

Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL) carries cholesterol, a fatty substance, through the bloodstream and delivers it to cells. Excess LDL can cause cholesterol to build up in blood vessels, leading to atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis causes blood vessel narrowing, which leads to heart attack and stroke. If your LDL cholesterol is high, your medical provider can help you create a plan to reduce it. Treatment includes proper diet, exercise, and medication, if necessary.

3. Stay within a healthy weight range.

Being overweight or obese raises your odds of having a stroke. Talk to your doctor or find a body mass index (BMI) calculator online to get an idea of what a healthy weight is for you. If you are overweight, losing as little as ten pounds can have a significant impact on your stroke risk.

4. Get moving. Exercise contributes to losing weight and lowering blood pressure, two primary stroke risk factors. Aim to exercise at a moderate intensity (e.g. brisk walking) for approximately 30 minutes most days of the week.

5. If you drink, do it in moderation.

Drinking a little alcohol is okay and some data shows moderate alcohol consumption (about one drink per day) may even decrease your risk of stroke. However, once you exceed two drinks per day, the risk rises sharply. If you drink alcohol, use it sparingly.

6. Treat and manage chronic illnesses.

Neglecting chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes and heart disease can dramatically increase your risk of stroke. High blood sugar, for example, damages blood vessels over time, making clots

more likely to form inside them. If you have any chronic conditions, work with your doctor to develop a treatment plan. Eating a balanced diet, exercising, and managing stress, along with taking any prescribed medications, are common elements of treatment plans.

7. Quit smoking. Smoking accelerates clot formation by thickening the blood and it increases the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries. Along with a healthy diet and regular exercise, smoking cessation is one of the most powerful lifestyle changes for reducing stroke risk. If you smoke, ask your doctor for advice on the most appropriate way for you to quit.

Education is key when it comes to stroke prevention. If certain risk factors are sabotaging your health and possibly predisposing you to stroke, take the necessary steps to correct them.



Budget Decorating: Create a Stylish Home for Less

Even if you're pinching pennies, there's still plenty you can do to make your home more attractive and inviting.

To give your living quarters a fresh, appealing look without breaking the bank, here are seven clever, low-cost decorating ideas to consider.

1. Become a bargain treasure hunter.

There are all kinds of wonderful decorative items to be found if you use your imagination. For example, check out local yard sales, thrift stores, vintage shops, and flea markets for budget-friendly pieces of furniture that you can paint to match your décor. Stop by the dollar shop from time to time for candles, picture frames, and knick-knacks.

2. Upgrade old, worn-out fixtures.

A quick and easy way to decorate on a dime is by updating your fixtures, especially in the kitchen. Knobs, handles, drawer pulls, and light switch plates are small, inexpensive details that can instantly give your home an upscale vibe.

3. Add a chair rail. Who knew importing high-end design features could be a cinch? Stick-on molding makes it easy and inexpensive to bring elegance to any room with a chair rail. After it's applied, paint the areas above and below the molding in two different shades of the same color for added panache.

4. Update your throw pillows. Here's an easy DIY project even for those who don't sew. Inexpensive throw pillows can readily be found at discount stores, outlets, and online. Swap them out each season to keep your space feeling fresh and current. Another option is to keep the cushions and simply replace the covers from time to time.

5. Add an area rug. It may sound like a big investment at first, but you'd be surprised by how many affordable, attractive rug

options can be found at retailers like Target and Amazon. A colorful area rug can add definition to any space, making it feel cozier and more intimate.

6. Enhance any space with a strategically placed mirror. Mirrors have an amazing ability to expand and brighten a room because of their reflective properties. A mirror placed across from a window or in a corner of a tight space will help it feel larger and airier.

7. Go green. Few decorating items can make as big an impact as greenery, so don't skimp on the ferns, succulents, flowers, and other indoor plants. They are affordable and offer the added benefit of improving indoor air quality.



Community Focus

Helping Grieving Families Find 'A Healing Place'

Funeral providers are called upon to provide comfort for the grief-stricken, offering compassionate care, helpful resources, and access to qualified professionals amid times of great suffering.

To that end, Evan W. Smith Funeral Services is now offering grief counseling and other mental health services to the greater Dover and Wilmington communities in collaboration with Leslie Holley, a celebrated, nationally-certified Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

"A Healing Place" is a series of workshops offered on a quarterly basis during which Ms. Holley will facilitate sessions to help participants learn about the grief cycle and how to move through the grieving process in a healthy way.

Leslie Holley is a Nationally Certified Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC - MD, IL) (LPC - MO, DC, VA) (NCC) who earned her Masters in Community Counseling from DePaul University where she also taught masters level clinical counseling courses as an adjunct professor. Currently, she works with clients at her private practice, Healing-Circle, LLC in downtown Silver Spring, MD and provides mental health presentations throughout the D.C., Maryland, Virginia (DMV) area.

Leslie offers counseling for adults and couples suffering from trauma, anxiety, depression, post baby issues, co-dependency, life transitions, and addiction. She helps clients establish boundaries and practice

healthy communication strategies through their mental health journey. She specializes in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Internal Family Systems (IFS), and has been extensively trained in trauma and how it affects the brain.

Moreover, she completed her Masters thesis, with distinction, on the help seeking behaviors of African American men.

Leslie has presented on mental health topics for the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Illinois Counseling Association (ICA), Northwestern University, DePaul University and the Maryland Counseling Association Multicultural Division (MAMCD), to name a few.

Leslie has shared her mental health knowledge on Chicago WGN Radio and on the online radio show, Let's Stay Together, during their monthly mental health segment. She has been a contributing writer for about.com and UrbanBalance.com, covering her work with couples in counseling, anxiety coping tools, and understanding depression to name a few.

Some of the many topics she has presented on include therapy 101, anger management, trauma in children and adolescents, how to manage a crisis, conflict resolution, bullying in the workplace, assertive training, and thriving in a multigenerational workforce. She is the Past President of the Maryland Counseling Association Multicultural Division.

A Healing Place

With Leslie Holley, MA, LCPC, NCC

In collaboration with Evan W. Smith Funeral Services

- Grief Counseling & Mental Health Services
- Quarterly Workshops (in-person & virtual)
- Monthly Blog Articles
- Weekly Social Media Posts & Videos





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Featured Recipe:

Mouthwatering Mississippi Mud Cake

In this tempting cake, a fudgy brownie-like base is topped with luscious marshmallow creme and a nutty frosting. It's bound to be popular with kids of all ages!

CAKE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1-1/2 cups self-rising flour
- 1/2 cup baking cocoa
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow crème

FROSTING INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons baking cocoa
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 4 to 5 tablespoons 2% milk
- 1 cup chopped pecans

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes.
2. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. Combine flour and cocoa; gradually add to creamed mixture until blended. Fold in the pecans.
4. Transfer to a greased 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake at 350° until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 35-40 minutes.
5. Cool for 3 minutes (cake will fall in the center). Spoon the marshmallow creme over cake; carefully spread to evenly cover the top.
6. Allow cake to cool completely.
7. For frosting, in a small bowl, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy.
8. Beat in the cocoa, vanilla, and enough milk to achieve frosting consistency. Fold in pecans.
9. Spread evenly over the cooled cake, on top of the marshmallow crème.
10. Store finished cake in the refrigerator.

YIELD: 16-20 servings

Two locations to serve our Delaware community:



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Wilmington
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Wilmington, DE 19805
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