

Kempton New Church

AT THE TIME OF A DEATH

(Rev. 9/2026)

- How the KNC Pastor's Office can help
- Interment and Resurrection Service Guidelines
- How the KNC Cemetery Committee can help
- Cemetery Policies and Plot Selection
- Some Further Practical Information



*And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee
in all places whither thou goest.*

Genesis 28:15

(Cover art: Jacob's Dream by William Blake; 1905)

And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac...And, behold, I am with thee in all places whither thou goest...for I will not leave thee...And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not...This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of the heavens!

Gen 28: 10-17

When a man dies, he simply passes from one world into another.

Heaven and Hell 445

The spirit of a man in the other life is seen to be in a human form precisely as in the world. There he also has the power to see, hear, speak, and feel, just as in the world; and he is fully endowed with power to think, will and act, as in the world. In a word, he is a man in every detail... It is this continuation of life that is meant by resurrection.

Arcana Coelestia 10594-5

AT THE TIME OF A DEATH

These pages outline the ways in which the Kempton New Church Pastor's Office, as well as the KNC Cemetery Committee (*unless there is to be no burial in the cemetery*), can help a family at the time of a death. They also contain some practical information that is not church related. Can be viewed at kemptonnewchurch.org or obtained from the KNC office.

- KNC: P.O. Box 140; 583 Hawk Mountain Road; Kempton, PA 19529
- Secretary at KNC Office: 610-756-6140, Ext. 200; society@knccs.org
- Rev. Brett Buick, KNC Pastor: 610-756-6140, Ext. 211; 215-421-2487 (cell); brett.buick@gmail.com
- Cemetery Committee members are listed on the KNC phone directory. The KNC office can also provide this information.

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A. Initial/immediate contacts to make upon a death, depending on the circumstances

- It is generally advised to ask someone to come be with you at the first best opportunity, if you are alone and want support (family, friend, neighbor).
- **Death at home – following hospice care. Call the hospice nurse.** The nurse will pronounce death and report it to the coroner.
- **Death occurring outside a hospital or nursing home – due to any cause. Call 911.** This includes someone who has been ill at home but NOT on hospice. Calling 911 summons emergency medical services (EMS) and the police, who will summon the coroner. (If you tell 911 you don't want sirens, they *may* be able to accommodate you.) *Some may be concerned about being revived against their wishes if an ambulance is called. If EMS providers can be handed an out-of-hospital do-not-resuscitate order issued by the person's doctor, this should allow them to withhold CPR in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest.*
- **If death occurs in a hospital or nursing home,** the institution will guide you through the protocols that follow.
- **Whole-body / organ donation.** Immediately call the organization with which this was pre-arranged, as it is time-sensitive. *Those with doctrinal questions about donation are welcome to talk with a minister.*
- **Notify family and friends who need to know about the death right away –** before it appears on social media. At some point, consider what you might want to post on social media yourself, and when.
- **Contact a minister for comfort and help** if and as soon as you would like to. He will come to offer support, whether or not he is the person you ultimately ask to officiate at a resurrection service; it is the *officiant* with whom you will confer about resurrection-service details, including date and time.
- **At some point, contact the deceased's employer if necessary. Within about a week, notify the Social Security Administration** if the deceased was a Social Security beneficiary (the funeral home may offer to do this for you).

B. Call a funeral home.

The undertaker will guide you through the protocols. See *Funeral Homes and Associated Information* (page 6) for some options and more details.

C. Ask a minister to officiate at the resurrection (and interment) service if this has not already been established.

The minister will confer with the family about the details.

D. Contact the KNC office.

Contact information is given at the top of page 1.

The office will contact the Kempton Society via email to communicate:

- news of the death
- date and time of a public resurrection service
- invitation to a public reception after the service if there will be one
- in the case of a reception, whether or not attendees are invited to bring refreshments
- who to contact with questions about a reception if someone is in charge of one

The office can contact the society more than once; the family might want to share news of the death right away, while plans for a service may take extra time.

E. Contact the head of the Cemetery Committee (REQUIRED) if wanting

1) to choose a plot and/or

2) to proceed with grave excavation whenever it may be needed (it may be delayed). Also see *Cemetery Policies* (page 8) and *SUMMARY* (page 10).

Committee contact information is given at the top of page 1. The head or another representative will meet with the family and guide the plot-selection process, after which the church will send the cemetery fee notice to the family.

Grave excavation

Family is responsible for the cost of an excavation, the details of which are between the family and the excavator, who will bill them directly. Excavators must be approved by the committee, and a committee representative will put the family and an excavator in touch with each other. (If approved by a representative, a family could do an excavation for cremated remains themselves, though the ground in the cemetery is quite difficult.)

The head of the committee must be consulted first when any excavation is planned.

- *If excavation is required immediately*, the family will already be in communication with a representative, having just chosen a plot.
- *If burial has been delayed*, such as with cremated remains, the family must contact the head of the committee again whenever planning to proceed.

F. Planning an interment service

The officiating minister can/will help plan, though it is not required that a minister officiate. Interments are usually private but do not have to be. An interment is usually held 30 – 60 minutes before a resurrection service, though it could happen at any time, especially in the case of cremated remains.

Procedural things to consider:

- In what ways might the family like to take part? (Songs, flowers, readings?)
- Communicate any procedural preferences to the minister and the funeral director as needed. With a coffin, for instance, should it be –
 - resting over the grave (on supports) when people arrive;
 - lowered as part of the service – or after people have left; or
 - in the ground and covered (or not covered) when people arrive?

Practical things. Family can delegate any or all of the following to others:

- If choosing pallbearers, select four to six. Ask them to arrive at the cemetery 20 minutes before the burial, unless determined otherwise. Generally speaking, a funeral home can provide pallbearers (at a cost). Be clear with the funeral home about your preferences.
- Inform the undertaker of the time and place (unless an undertaker is not involved, as is sometimes the case with cremated remains).
- Arrange transportation to the cemetery, if needed, and/or provide directions.
- Have chairs arranged for, if needed.
- Have loose flowers available for the grave, if desired. Bring them yourself or ask someone to obtain them for you if no volunteers come forward.
- Arrange for all items to be gathered up after the service.

G. Planning a resurrection service – Confer with the minister AND the office.

The minister will help with assembling the Order of Service.

- If there are to be printed copies, provide any picture(s) or photo(s) you would like to have included.
- Select hymns.
- Select whatever special music (live or recorded) is to be played as preludes, interlude(s), and postludes. If you would like help, the pastor or church office can direct you to volunteers who keep a library of recorded music for church.

Please review selected special music with the pastor.

Let the minister or the church office know which of the following items you will want (it *may* be that the office will contact you before you've been able to contact the office):

- **Reserved seating.** (Eight people to a pew, two pews in a row.)
- **Pianist.** The church will secure a pianist, unless family would prefer to do it themselves or does not need one.
- **Player of recorded music.** The church will secure someone, if desired. The family will need to confer with this person ahead of time about the selections.
- **Live-stream operator.** The church will secure someone to live-stream the service, if desired. (The church will secure a sound-system operator.)
- **If there will be a reception, will you want a sound system for remarks?**
- **Parking attendant(s).** The church can secure if the family expects a large number of attendees. Sometimes a funeral home may offer (or expect) to direct traffic, in which case be clear with them about your preferences.

FLOWERS – placing and removing

Family is responsible for flowers (wherever they are placed), financially and otherwise. If volunteers offer to help in some way, everyone can confer. All flowers need to be removed afterward even if a Sunday follows the resurrection service, because chancel flowers are usually pre-arranged for Sunday services.

H. Planning a reception at the church

The family may host a gathering after the service if they would like to and should do what suits them; it need not be elaborate. They can arrange for someone to be in charge if they desire. As described in Section D, the church office can, if asked to, 1) refer any volunteers to whoever may be in charge, and 2) let the congregation know if they are invited to bring food if they would like to.

The family is responsible for –

- Setup and cleanup
- Food and/or drink. Wine may be served and consumed by those 21 years-old or older (arrange for servers, if needed).
- Paper goods (plates, cups, napkins, flatware, etc.)
- Letting the church office know if a sound system will be needed for remarks
- Laying out photos or arranging a slide show, if desired
- Choosing a master of ceremonies, if desired
- Thinking about where to place a reception line, if desired

I. Costs / Gratuities (There is no charge for the use of the church or society room.)

- \$400 cemetery fee
- Grave-excavation. Discuss with excavator.
- A minister will not expect to be paid for conducting a service but offering him a gratuity or gift would be a thoughtful gesture. NOTE: If the minister does not live in Kempton, the family should cover his travel expenses.
- Consider offering some form of payment, gratuity, or gift to anyone not employed by the church who helps in some way.

J. Contact the Head of the Cemetery Committee (REQUIRED) if/when planning to have a HEADSTONE installed.

Also see *Cemetery Policies* (page 8), *SUMMARY* (page 10), and *Acquiring a Headstone* (page 11). How to contact the committee is given at the top of page 1.

Consultation with the head of the committee ensures that –

- the installation will be done properly, with the required foundation being laid,
- the headstone will be installed in the right place and face the right direction, and
- the excavation will be done by 1. a monument provider experienced in headstone installations, 2. by an approved excavator, or 3. by the family, if approved by the committee. (Either an approved excavator or the family could end up doing excavation in conjunction with the headstone provider.)

A headstone can be installed in undisturbed ground at any time, depending on the season. If the ground has been disturbed, it is recommended to wait six months for it to settle first.

FUNERAL HOMES and ASSOCIATED INFORMATION

A note to those wanting to spend extended time with a deceased loved one: If a person passes away under natural circumstances at home, according to current Pennsylvania law the body may remain there until the time of burial. Even if a family did not want to delay the removal from the home for that long, armed with knowing how they would handle the body and with the help of an accommodating undertaker, they could afford themselves quite a bit of time. If a family member wants to take on all the things performed at the present day by a funeral home – legal transport of the deceased and the creation of the death certificate among them – we understand this to be permitted. Because few families take on these things themselves, the details are not outlined here, but those interested can educate themselves on these matters prior to a death if they wish.

Some funeral home options:

Robert S. Nester Funeral Home

8405 Kings Highway (Rt. 143), New Tripoli, PA 18066

810-756-6006; www.nesterfuneralhome.com

The Nester family have long been flexible, helpful, and understanding of what have generally been New Church customs (not dictates) of no embalming or viewing. They can arrange a cremation.

Ludwick Funeral Homes, Inc.

333 Greenwich St., Kutztown, PA 19530; 610-683-8311

25 E. Weis St., Topton, PA 19562; 610-682-2434

www.ludwickfh.com

For more information, this site may help: www.us-funerals.com

The death certificate

- The funeral home will assemble this (in collaboration with other officials). You will be asked for the deceased's date and place of birth, parents' names, Social Security number, etc.
- The undertaker will give you certified copies when complete. You can seek advice on the number of copies to request (anywhere from 15 to 25 seems to be recommended). A certificate is required for many things, such as closing financial accounts, claiming insurance and veterans' burial benefits and airline bereavement refunds, and more.
- There is a charge for certificates, which are illegal to duplicate oneself.
- There is a period during which you can return to the undertaker for additional copies (after which you must go to the state).

Jewelry

Remember to ask for jewelry the deceased may have been wearing if it was not removed previously and you would like to have it.

Burial benefits available to veterans

Contact the US Department of Veterans Affairs. If military honors are desired, the funeral director will request them on behalf of the family (*a copy of the veteran's original discharge papers will be needed*). To obtain a headstone at no cost through the department, see *Acquiring a Headstone* (page 11).

Obituary / Death notice

Most funeral homes have a website where an obituary can be posted. An obituary – as well as a death notice (more utilitarian than an obituary) – can also be posted in a newspaper (at a cost). An undertaker is usually able to arrange such things with a newspaper if asked to.

The undertaker may offer to contact the Social Security Administration for you if the deceased was a S.S. beneficiary – or you can ask them to. You can also do it yourself. This should be done within a week or so after the death.

KNC CEMETERY POLICIES

The church's desire is to accommodate families' wishes as much as possible.

Please contact the head of the Cemetery Committee with any questions.

(Committee members are listed on the KNC phone directory, available through the church office.)

The Head of the Cemetery Committee must be contacted for plot selection and prior to all excavations (see *Site Preparation*, below).

Eligibility

In general, eligibility for burial is limited to members of the Kempton New Church (KNC) congregation. Anyone whose spouse is buried or is eligible to be buried in the cemetery may be buried there.

Ownership

The cemetery is owned and maintained by KNC; the cemetery fee does not transfer ownership.

Plots

Plots must be chosen in accordance with the cemetery site-plan and with the help of a Cemetery Committee representative. In general, plots may not be reserved, but an effort is made to provide space for families to be buried together. A plot may be obtained (with no burial) for a memorial headstone.

Fee

The cemetery fee (\$400) goes toward cemetery maintenance. It is charged for each burial within a single plot and for a plot being used for a memorial headstone. The fee notification is sent by KNC upon selection of a plot. Payment is due within 90 days.

Burial Within a Single Plot

A single plot (4' x 10') may accommodate: a single burial; a full burial and one of cremated remains (if the full burial happens first); or two burials of cremated remains. Not permitted: two full burials.

Site Preparation (Excavation) for Both Graves and Headstones

- *Family must contact the head of the Cemetery Committee prior to any excavation.* The head will be aware of any burial scheduled to follow a plot selection immediately, but burial is sometimes delayed, and *the family must contact the head again at that time.*
- The excavator must be approved by the committee. Family is responsible for the cost of an excavation, the details of which are between the family and the excavator, who will bill them directly. A committee representative will put the family and an excavator in touch with each other. With approval, a family themselves may excavate for the burial of cremated remains, though the ground is challenging.
- The excavation for a headstone may be done by 1. a monument provider experienced in headstone installations, 2. an approved excavator, or 3. the family, if approved. (Either an approved excavator or the family could end up doing excavation in conjunction with a headstone provider.)

Coffins are not required for full burials by either the State of Pennsylvania or the Kempton New Church.

Headstones

- Headstones are not required.
- A headstone can be installed in undisturbed ground at any time, depending on the season. If the ground has been disturbed, it is recommended to wait six months for it to settle.
- A concrete foundation is required for a headstone.
- *Those planning the installation of a headstone must first contact the head of the Cemetery Committee (see Site Preparation, above).* This consultation ensures that an approved excavator/installer will do the work, the required foundation will be laid, and that the headstone will be installed in the right place and face the right direction.
- Headstones should be of simple design and made of natural stone of natural color to help maintain a tranquil sphere in the cemetery. Flat, slant, and upright (machined) stones are all fine, as are natural (found) stones.
- For a single plot: Headstone to be no taller than 36" (in the case of a long slab or very large boulder, the height would need to be kept far lower than 36"). Width, including the foundation, should not exceed 36" (side to side).
- For two plots side by side (husband and wife): One headstone may be centered above two graves. To be no taller than 36". Width (side to side), including foundation, not to exceed 48".

Stone Marker (with no foundation) placed by the Cemetery Committee

It serves the functioning of the cemetery to have burials marked. If a headstone is not installed by family within three to six months, the committee will place a natural stone at the head of the grave. If and whenever a headstone is installed, the committee will store away its own marker, which otherwise remains in place.

Permitted and Restricted

Concrete vaults are not permitted. Natural mementos may be left at a grave if in keeping with the surroundings. The planting of simple, non-invasive plants (annuals and perennials) is fine if maintained by the family, but are subject the unpredictability of wildlife, weather, and mowing. The Cemetery Committee reserves the right to remove any plantings that become troublesome. Not allowed: Railings, walls, fencing, urns, vases, potted plants, grave blankets, artificial flowers, trellises, arbors, trees, shrubs, and vines. **Note:** Non-conforming decorations may be left at a new burial site for a month.

Flags

A veteran's grave may be marked with a single recognized national flag not to exceed 12" x 18".

SUMMARY

Consolidation of basic information regarding Plot Selection, Excavation, and Headstone Installation

(Committee members are listed on the KNC phone directory, available through the church office.)

It is required to CONTACT THE HEAD OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE if wanting –

- 1) **to select a plot**, whether or not excavation and burial are imminent,
- 2) **to proceed with the delayed burial of cremated remains**, having selected a plot earlier,
or
- 3) **to proceed with the installation of a headstone.**

Plot Selection. The head of the committee or another representative will meet with the family and guide the selection process, after which KNC will send the (\$400) cemetery fee notice to them. Payment is due within 90 days. The fee is charged for each burial within a single plot and for a plot being used for a memorial headstone only.

Site Preparation (Excavation) for Both Graves and Headstones

FAMILY MUST CONTACT THE HEAD OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION. A committee representative will put the family and an excavator in touch with each other.

- **EXCAVATOR DETAILS.** The excavator must be approved by the committee. Family is responsible for the cost of an excavation, the details of which are between the family and the excavator, who will bill them directly. With approval, a family themselves may excavate for the burial of cremated remains, though the ground is very challenging.
- **For a BURIAL.** The head of the committee will be aware of any burial scheduled to follow a plot selection immediately, but burial is sometimes delayed, and *family must contact the head again at that time.*
- **For a HEADSTONE.** Contact the head of the committee. Excavation for a headstone may be done by 1. a monument provider experienced in headstone installations, 2. an approved excavator, or 3. the family, if approved. (Either an approved excavator or the family could end up doing excavation in conjunction with a headstone provider.)
 - Consultation with the head of the committee ensures that the required headstone foundation will be laid, and that the headstone will be installed in the right place and face the right direction.
 - A headstone can be installed in undisturbed ground at any time, depending on the season. If the ground has been disturbed, it is recommended to wait six months for it to settle first.

Stone Marker (with no foundation) placed by the Cemetery Committee. It serves the functioning of the cemetery to have burials marked. If a headstone is not installed by family within three to six months, the committee will place a natural stone at the head of the grave. If and whenever a headstone is installed, the committee will store away its own marker, which otherwise remains in place.

ACQUIRING a HEADSTONE

A monument company can create and (most often) install a headstone, if desired. (Cemetery policies require a concrete foundation to be installed.) Some options follow in no particular order.

Womer Memorials

8588 Kings Highway, Kempton, PA 19529
610-756-6033

Lehigh Valley Granite Studio

6295 Route 309, New Tripoli, PA 18066
610-760-6366

Earl Wenz Monuments, Inc.

9038 Breinigsville Road, Breinigsville, PA 18031
610-395-2331

Elizabethville Monument Company

Serves the Amish/Mennonite communities and general public.
26 E. Broad Street, Elizabethville, PA 17023
717-362-1166; www.monumentcompany.com

Richard Show

Stone carver in Bryn Athyn, Penna. Arranging for a local installer to do the installation could be a cost savings, but Richard may be willing to travel from Bryn Athyn to do one.
P.O. Box 585, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
267-250-0923
richshowba@hotmail.com; Rich@Showgardensandcrafts.com; Rich.show@ancss.org

Jens Langlotz

Master stone carver at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. (Jens made the Ten Commandments tables that flank the KNC's front door.) Jens is willing to work with a suitable stone provided by the family. Arranging for a local installer to do the installation could be a cost savings, but Jens may be willing to travel from Bryn Athyn to do one.
215-740-4644; jenslanglotz@yahoo.com

Available to Veterans at No Cost

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will furnish a free headstone or marker/medallion for the unmarked grave of any eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of the date of death. An application must be accompanied by a copy of the deceased's discharge papers.
1-800-827-1000 or www.va.gov