

Mourning Ventures of Maine

Funeral & Memorials Terminology

A few things to consider about honoring the deceased and the living.

Funeral and memorial traditions provide ways for families and communities to honor a life, share memories, and support one another. These terms describe common services and practices you may encounter.



Death Notice

- A short announcement of a person's death, usually including service details



Obituary

- A longer written tribute, often in newspapers or online, that shares life details, accomplishments, and service information



Viewing / Visitation / Wake

- A time for family and friends to gather, pay respects, and support one another (may include the body).



Funeral Service

- A service held with the body present to commemorate and honor the deceased, often including particular cultural or religious traditions or customs



Graveside / Committal Service

- A service held at the burial site, often including prayers or words of commitment



Memorial Service

- A ceremony held without the body present to honor and remember the deceased



Celebration of Life

- A gathering that focuses on sharing stories, gratitude, and positive memories of the person's life



"We are not alone. We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world—the company of those who have loved, and lost, and are still loving"

— C. S. Lewis



Memorial (Monument or Marker)

- A headstone, bench, statue, or other marker placed in memory of a loved one



Death Rituals

- Varying cultural and religious traditions or practices that honor the deceased and provide comfort and structure for the grieving community



Funeral Celebrant

- A person who helps plan and officiate a funeral service or ceremony
- This person may or may not be a minister, funeral director, or professional celebrant



Note:

These definitions are for general education. For legal or medical guidance, consult the appropriate professional provider.

