



Bluestem

Sample Order of Service

Participants at Bluestem have asked for guidance on how to prepare a graveside service. With the assistance of other death care professionals, we produced this template for families to refer to in crafting a burial service befitting their loved one and family's needs. Prior to your loved one's service, we ask for a copy of the order of service so that we and our volunteers can best support you.

Arrival at Bluestem

Guests are welcomed at the front gate and directed to parking by a Bluestem volunteer.

Gathering at Bluestem

Depending on where the service is being held, cars are parked either at the front gate or alongside Bluestem Road in a designated area. Family and friends can gather in one place and process to the service area/gravesite together or they can walk independently to the gravesite or to one of our natural sanctuaries. Volunteers are prepared to service as guides. A golf cart is available for transporting guests with mobility needs.

Musical Selection

Welcome

Service leader welcomes family and friends in a manner appropriate to the person and occasion.

Gathering Prayer/Poem/Land Acknowledgement

Service leader opens the sacred space.

Eulogy/Remembrances

Leader invites family and friends to share memories of the loved one.

Blessing of the Grave

Leader invites family and friends to walk to the gravesite. A blessing can be given if appropriate. Guests can take a minute to pause in reflection. Biodegradable materials such as flowers, natural items, messages on paper can be placed in the grave.

Preparing for the Grave

Amending the Ashes (ash burial only)

Family, friends or Bluestem staff take the ashes from the urn and pour them into a galvanized tub, already filled with Bluestem's amending soil. Family and friends can mix the ashes with the amendment or ask for assistance from staff. The amended ashes are then poured directly into the grave. Urns are returned to the family. No urns are buried at Bluestem.

Lowering into the Grave (natural burial only)

Jeff invites willing family and friends to take hold of the burial ropes beside the casket/shroud and in unison, raise the casket/shroud so the burial crew can remove the slats from the top of the grave. Once

the slats are removed to the side, family and friends (or burial crew) slowly lower the beloved into the grave.

Moment of Quiet

Song/Reading

Closing the Grave

Bluestem staff invite family and friends to lay wildflowers, cedar boughs, any other natural materials on top of the casket. Handfuls of dirt can be poured into the grave. Shovels are offered to anyone who wishes to help close the grave. Once family and friends have participated as much as they wish, Bluestem volunteers take over closing the grave. (In rare instances, due to weather, Bluestem staff may elect to use equipment to close the grave. This option will be reviewed with the family ahead of time.)

Placing the Grave Marker

Once closed, pine straw is placed over and around the mound. In the grasslands, wildflower seeds are offered to guests to scatter over the grave. In the woodlands, ferns may be arranged graveside, depending on the season. A family member (or friend) places the grave marker in the center of the grave and guests are invited to lay flowers on top of the mound before departing.

Final Blessing/Ringing of Bell/Music

Service leader offers final prayer and closes the space. Guests can linger at the gravesite or walk the pathways, visit the pond, or simply, stay awhile.

Depart

Bluestem staff facilitate the service, encouraging family and friends to participate as much as they are comfortable, and keeping a low profile in the background. However, if desired at any point before or after the service, we are happy to offer a few words describing how your loved one's choice of burial at Bluestem contributes to the sanctity of the cemetery and its community conservation mission. Please let us know how we can support you with your service.