

***Infant Memorial Service  
Handbook  
Divine Mercy Care  
2018***

# *Suggested Preparation Timeline*

## **4-6 Months Ahead**

**Book the church and clergy.** Divine Mercy Care tries to alternate between Catholic and non-Catholic churches since the Memorial Service is an ecumenical Christian service extended to all faiths. It is also important to make sure to have two different clergymen to ensure an ecumenical service.

**Make/check inventory of memory boxes.** Memory boxes are handcrafted boxes of various sizes. They are used to store items of the lost child, such as sonogram pictures, baby blankets, memorial service program, photos, etc. Ideally, there should be one memory box per deceased child. Divine Mercy Care typically enlists volunteers to make memory boxes.



**Make/check inventory of crosses or angels.** Each cross or angel is used to represent lost children and has a tag with the baby's name on it. Divine Mercy Care is now blessed by the talents of a very talented and generous donor who makes the lace crosses. Previously we ordered crosses/ angels to represent each child lost.



**Determine the theme for the event and design for the invitation, program, flyers & certificates of life.** Divine Mercy care typically goes with a floral theme. It is not recommended to have a theme

featuring babies, baby items etc. since that can unnecessarily exacerbate grief reactions.

Examples of Invitations:



Interdenominational  
*Memorial Service*

For any who mourn a child lost through miscarriage,  
premature birth, stillbirth, abortion, or infant death.

**Saturday, May 13, 2017**

7:00pm

St. Leo the Great Catholic Church  
3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030

*prayers • candle lighting • music • readings • crosses to honor  
each child • optional times to share your personal story*

Any are welcome, including friends and children, regardless of when  
the child was lost. Light refreshments to follow the service.



RSVP at [divinemercycare.org](http://divinemercycare.org) by May 4  
to have the child's name included in the program.

For more info: 703-934-5552 or [cmullins@divinemercycare.org](mailto:cmullins@divinemercycare.org)

The Infant Memorial Service is a program of Divine Mercy Care presented in  
association with the Kristen Anderson Perinatal Hospice Program of Tepeyac OB/GYN.



Interdenominational  
**Memorial Service**

For any who mourn a child lost through miscarriage,  
premature death, stillbirth, abortion, or infant death.

Saturday, May 12, 2018  
7:00 pm

Truro Anglican Church  
10520 Main Street  
Fairfax, VA 22030

RSVP at [divinemercycare.org](http://divinemercycare.org) by May 4  
to have child's name included in the program.

For more info: (703) 934-5552 or [cmullins@divinemercycare.org](mailto:cmullins@divinemercycare.org)

All are welcome, including friends, family, and children.  
Prayers, candle lighting, music, readings, and crosses to honor  
each child, with optional times to share your personal story.

Light refreshments to follow the service.

The Infant Memorial Service is a program of  
Divine Mercy Care presented in association with the  
Kirsten Anderson Perinatal Hospice Program of Tepeyac OB/GYN.



**Example of Program**

[https://www.divinemercycare.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FINAL2018PROGRAM\\_CDM\\_050918.pdf](https://www.divinemercycare.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FINAL2018PROGRAM_CDM_050918.pdf)

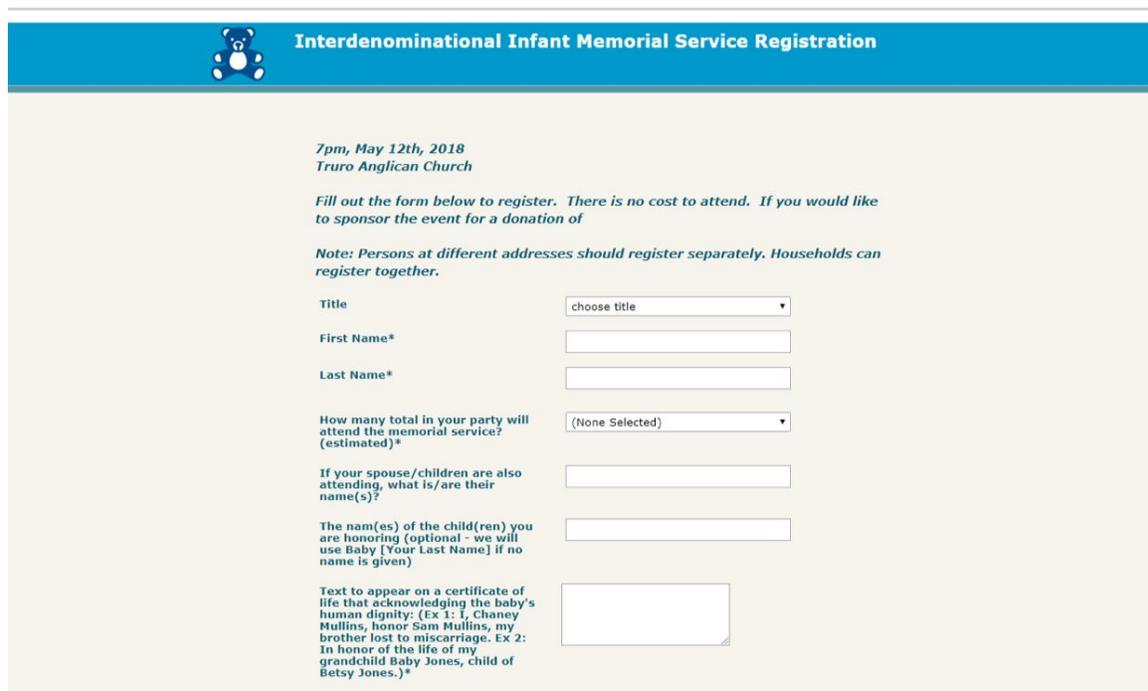
**Find a graphic artist or volunteer(s) to create templates for the invitation, flyer, program, & certificate of life.** The graphic artist or volunteer should ideally be able to make each of these materials with the same theme. If possible, ask to have the flyer and invitation ready 3 months before the event and the program and certificate of life ready one month before the event. Note that the certificate of life should have a blank space to print/write in the name of each baby to be remembered.

## **3 Months Ahead**

**Find musician(s) and determine music for event.** (See Appendix A for song suggestions.) It is ideal to at least have a cantor and pianist/organist.

**Make an online registration page for attendees to RSVP at.**

Below is an example of an online registration form:



The screenshot shows a registration form titled "Interdenominational Infant Memorial Service Registration" with a teddy bear icon. The event details are: 7pm, May 12th, 2018, Truro Anglican Church. It states there is no cost to attend and provides instructions for sponsorship and registration. The form includes fields for Title, First Name, Last Name, number of attendees, spouse/children names, child name, and a text area for a certificate of life.

**Interdenominational Infant Memorial Service Registration**

7pm, May 12th, 2018  
Truro Anglican Church

Fill out the form below to register. There is no cost to attend. If you would like to sponsor the event for a donation of

*Note: Persons at different addresses should register separately. Households can register together.*

Title

First Name\*

Last Name\*

How many total in your party will attend the memorial service? (estimated)\*

If your spouse/children are also attending, what is/are their name(s)?

The nam(es) of the child(ren) you are honoring (optional - we will use Baby [Your Last Name] if no name is given)

Text to appear on a certificate of life that acknowledging the baby's human dignity: (Ex 1: I, Chaney Mullins, honor Sam Mullins, my brother lost to miscarriage. Ex 2: In honor of the life of my grandchild Baby Jones, child of Betsy Jones.)\*

**Make an ad to put in the local newspaper and bulletins of nearby churches.**

Determine newspaper/bulletin deadlines and when it would best suit your event to advertise.

Designate a staff member/volunteer to submit the ads when appropriate.

**Request to add event to local online calendars and local churches' events schedule.**

**Start advertising** via social media, flyers near center/clinic, eblast to donors, email to churches to encourage to advertise and put in bulletin,

**Determine guest list.** The memorial service is public, but it is best to send invitations as well to help advertise and to encourage potential guests to attend. The list of people to whom invitations should be sent of course includes patients/clients whom you know have lost a child within the last 3 years. (Sometimes, parents may not be ready to attend a memorial service right after their child dies.)

Additionally, attendees from past infant loss memorial services should also be invited in case they would like to continue remembering their lost infant and/or support other grieving parents by attending. Other clients, donors, volunteers etc. can also be invited because you never know who may have lost a child. (Invitations can even be slipped into the envelopes of regular mailings the donors receive.) Finally, it is a good idea to send invitations to other local pro-life organizations, healing groups, mom's groups etc. because the group might want to send representatives and/or refer members/clients to the event.

**NOTE:** Divine Mercy Care typically sends invitations to everyone in their database.

**Determine where to have invitations, programs, flyers, and certificates of life printed.** If your budget allows it is easiest and typically most visually attractive to have these professionally printed. Be sure to know the deadlines that proofs have to be submitted in order to be printed in time for the ceremony!

**Have invitations and flyers printed.** It is best to have these printed earlier so you can start inviting guests and advertising well in advance of the event.

**Put up flyers.** Display at least one flyer up in your organization. Divine Mercy Care has found that putting a flyer in a nice frame draws attention to it. Ask if flyers can be displayed at local OB/GYNs, churches, women's groups etc.

**Send invitations.** Divine Mercy Care has found that handwriting the mailing addresses for the invitations and using envelopes colored/decorated to match the theme of the event has increased attendance. This is probably due to the personalized feel of the invitations, which has encouraged potential attendees to actually open the invitation.

## **1 Month Ahead**

**Determine if press is desired at event.** If so, contact the local paper, pro-life publications etc, to see if there is any interest in covering the event.

**Find donors to pay for and/or volunteers to provide food and drink.** Divine Mercy Care has had donors pay for catering at one service and had volunteers cook food for another.

**Determine menu.** Divine Mercy Care typically has cookies, fruit, non-alcoholic beverages, and sandwiches.

## **Week-Of**

**Submit programs and certificates of life to printer.** It is best to do this closer to the date of the event so you have a more realistic estimate of the number attending. Also, the certificates of life should be custom-printed for each child to be remembered so you will be able to print more personalized certificates if you wait until closer to the event.

**If necessary, contact or visit venue to ensure they know proper placement of tables.** The registration table should be near the entrance and the table for the candles and roses and memory box table should be at the front of the sanctuary/near the altar.

**Decide who is bringing/ordering each menu item.**

**Determine who is bringing each of the items necessary for the event and ensure that the tasks associated with each item are completed.**

**NOTE:** It is generally a good idea to plan for 20 extra babies to be remembered because there will likely be walk-ins. So, plan to have at least 20 extra Certificates of Life, crosses, memory boxes, roses, candles/sticks to be lit. It is ideal to have one of each of these items for each deceased child, but if there are too many walk-ins, this can be modified to one per family.

1. **Name tags for staff members/volunteers** (if desired.)
2. **Certificates of Life and Programs.** Be sure to have extra of each for any walk-ins.
3. **Crosses:** Attach a tag to each cross where the name of the lost baby can be written.
4. **Memory Boxes**
5. **Roses:** Determine who is picking up roses and when they will be picked up (typically the day of or night before).
6. **Sticks to be lit, stick bin and sand OR candles.**
7. **Matches**
8. **Calligraphy pens or nice fine tip pens:** Used to write babies' name on tag for crosses and certificate of life for walk-ins.
9. **Table Cloths:** Don't forget to iron them!
10. **Thank you gifts for clergy**
11. **Vases:** One big vase from which a volunteer will give a rose to each attendee. The attendees will then place their rose in the vase(s) on the table by the altar.
12. **Individual Tissue Packets:** Individual tissue packets should be placed in the pews as well as at the registration desk
13. **Candles:** They can be laid out in a cross design on the table near the altar.
14. **Artificial tree or potted live sapling** to hang crosses/angels on.
15. **Extra registration forms** for walk-ins.

**Send a reminder email to attendees and volunteers.**

## **One-two hours before Event**

**Prepare packets for each family:** The certificate(s) of life and cross (es) for each child the family lost should be in the packet. It is suggested to put the last name of family on the front and to alphabetize the packets to help speed up the check-in process.

**Create master list of baby names:** Record all baby names for the registered families. Be sure to leave room for the baby names of walk-in attendees and write in these names as necessary.

**Set up tables.**

*Registration table:* Have a pre-registered and walk-in section. Families will receive their packet with the crosses/angels and certificates of life here. Make sure to have extra crosses, blank certificates of life, and calligraphy/fine tip pens to write the names on the certificates and crosses for walk-ins. Also, have a master copy of baby names on hand so you can add the baby names in for walk-ins.

*Memory box table:* Display memory boxes by the registration table and/or near the entrance

of the sanctuary for attendees to pick up before or after the service.

*Candle and roses table:* This table should be at the front of the sanctuary/near the altar. It should have the necessary number of candles/sticks to light (at least one per deceased baby, but it is a good idea to have at least 20 extra candles on or by the table for walk-ins) and a vase(s) to place the rose(s) in.

During the service, each child's family will be called individually during the service to come forward. The family member will be handed a rose on their way to the altar/front of the sanctuary. The family members will place their rose(s) in the vase and then light the candle(s) on this table.

**Prepare greeters:** Greeters should be given programs to hand to guests and be prepared to direct them to the registration table, give some details about the event, and to comfort any guests who are uncomfortable/emotional.

## **Post-Event Tasks**

### **Report**

Post pictures of the event on social media and/or put in your newsletter.

Remove online registration forms and website/online advertisements.

Write a list of what you did well and what you might improve next time.

### **Data Tracking**

Record volunteer names and hours into your recording system.

Add data on volunteers, attendees etc. to an individual chart so you can track yearly changes.

### **Mail**

Mail certificates of life and crosses with a note of condolence to anyone who registered but did not attend.

Send Thank You Notes to attendees, volunteers, or clergy (if desired).

## **Appendix A: Music Suggestions**

### Prelude

Rescue  
Pour Out My Heart  
Holy Spirit You are Welcome Here  
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring  
Pie Jesu and Amazing Grace

### Opening Song

The Lord's My Shepherd  
You are Mine  
10,000 Reasons  
Great is Thy Faithfulness  
You are Mine

### Reading 1

Isaiah 40:1-11  
Isaiah 25:6-9  
Jeremiah 31:15-17  
Romans 14:7-9

### Reading 2

Romans 14:7-9  
Psalm - 73:1-5  
Psalm 4  
Romans 4:16-25  
John 6:37-40  
John 10:7-16

### Reflective Song

Blessings  
I am Not Alone  
Truly Loved  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is  
In You Alone

### Closing Song

O God Beyond All Praising  
Amazing Grace  
Love has Come  
Spirit Song  
Draw Me Close to You