



**The Funeral:
A Service of Witness to the Resurrection
Planning Guide**

First Presbyterian Church

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*I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me,
Even though they die, will live.
John 11:25*



Funeral Planning Guide

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Funerals in the Context of Christian Faith

Services on the Occasion of Death

Christians and Death

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians' attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the gospel. We remember and celebrate the life of the person who has died, but more importantly, we give thanks for the hope given to us by Jesus Christ through the resurrection. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

Planning Arrangements

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the session encourages church members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements with family members and clergy, including decisions about the Christian options of burial, cremation, or donation for medical purposes. These plans should provide for arrangements, which are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central. The session is responsible for establishing general policies concerning the observance of services on the occasion of death.

Setting of the Service

The service on the occasion of death ordinarily should be held in the usual place of worship in order to join this service to the community's continuing life and witness to the resurrection. The service shall be under the direction of the pastor. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. This service may be observed on any day. A request to observe such a service as a part of the Lord's Day service or to celebrate the Lord's Supper as a part of a service on the occasion of death requires the approval of the session.

Role of the Pastor

The pastor's role on the occasion of death is to remind the family of the love of God in Jesus Christ. Through prayer and visitation, the pastor offers loved ones, family, and friends of the deceased comfort and hope. The pastor works with the family to make necessary arrangements concerning services of worship. As a shepherd tends his flock lovingly and with care, the pastor tends to the family when death occurs.

Fees

Please consult the funeral home director about specific fees for their services. There are no fees for the services of the pastor or the director of music. Honorariums are left to the family's discretion. Fees for the church's organist and/or special musicians are to be arranged either through the funeral home or directly with musician(s).

Formal Arrangements For Funerals and Memorial Services

Family Matters

Names and Relationship of Survivors

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Funeral Home/Mortuary to be used: _____

Will the service be at the church? _____ at the mortuary? _____ elsewhere? _____

If at the church, do you prefer the main sanctuary or the chapel? _____

In the case of earth burial, in which cemetery will burial take place? _____

In the case of cremation, where will the cremains be deposited? _____

Financial

Do you have a will? Is it current? Have you remembered the church in your will? Do you have a living will? Please attach a copy to this form and give it to your pastor.

Flowers and Memorial Gifts

Flower arrangements can be used at the church for your funeral. Would you like memorial gifts offered to the church or another charitable organization? _____

List Pallbearers

Planning the Service

Favorite Scripture Passages _____

Favorite Hymns _____

Receive friends? _____ Time/Day _____

Life Remembrances

List the most important contributions made to church and society. _____

List the things most enjoyed about life. _____

Briefly describe the journey of your life. _____

List any subjects to avoid mentioning in the service during a time of life remembrances. _

List the most desirable personal qualities. _____

List any disappointments that should be mentioned. _____

List academic degrees. _____

List significant civic or military awards and/or special achievements. _____

List positions of service and leadership to the church. _____

Do you desire others in addition to the pastoral staff at First Presbyterian to be invited to participate in this funeral or memorial service?

Name & Phone #

Friends _____

Family _____

Will this be a funeral (with the body present, casket closed) or memorial service (with the body absent)? _____

Will the committal service be held before or after the worship service? _____

Please feel free to offer additional information that may include favorite stories or lessons from life, references to well loved works of art, literature, or film and/or anything appropriate or significant you would like the pastor to know about you.

O Lord, support us all the day long

until the shadows lengthen

and the evening comes

and the busy world is hushed,

and the fever of life is over,

and our work is done.

Then, in your mercy,

grant us a safe lodging,

and a holy rest,

and peace at the last;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.