

Funerals & Planning

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. Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

--Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., W-4.10001

Type of Service

The pastor will be present with loved ones at the time of loss and will help arrange the service. It is important to provide the name of the funeral director, if you are using one, so that the church can coordinate the day and time of the service. There are several forms of services:

- **Funeral:** A funeral service is usually conducted within days of death. It is generally held at the church although it can be held at a funeral home. The closed casket or urn may be present.
- **Memorial:** A memorial service is conducted at the church and can take place days or weeks after death. A longer timeline can allow more opportunity for friends and family to receive notice and make arrangements to attend.
- **Committal:** The committal is a short service at the graveside, columbarium or memorial garden that specifically ministers to the needs of loved ones. It consists of brief scripture readings and prayers. The committal may accompany a funeral or memorial service and be held either before or after the service. The service can be a small gathering for close relatives of the deceased person.

Order of Service

The content of the funeral or memorial service is the responsibility of the pastor and is guided by the Directory for Worship in the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Common Worship*.

The general outline for the Service of Witness to the is:

Sentences of Scripture
Psalm, Hymn, or Spiritual
Prayer
[Confession and Pardon]
[Tributes and Remembrances]
Readings from Scripture
Sermon
Affirmation of Faith
[Hymn]
Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession
The Lord's Prayer
Commendation
Blessing

This is a suggested outline. The pastor shapes the order of service in consultation with loved ones and the previously expressed wishes of the deceased.

The service is intended to be personal, while praising and thanking God that in life as in death, we are held securely in God's hands. Family and friends may participate in the service when appropriate. A limited number of people may be invited to offer brief remembrances during the service, which is arranged in advance with the pastor.

Once the service has been planned, First Presbyterian Church can print the worship bulletin or if the family would like to print their own, we can send the order of worship to a printer.

Other Elements for the Service

Scheduling a Service:

The Pastor works with the loved ones to set a date for the funeral or memorial service. The pastor helps coordinate communication with the funeral director in a timely way so that notice may be included with the obituary sent to the newspapers, with attention to publication deadlines.

Music at the Service:

Our Music Director will coordinate music for the service with the pastor and the family. By request, a soloist or special music can be arranged. It is appropriate for worshipers to sing songs that affirm God's power over death, a belief in the resurrection, and the assurance of the communion of saints. Popular favorite songs of sentimental character or secular connotation are best reserved for the reception following the service.

Floral Arrangements:

Flowers may be provided for both the service and the reception, if held on site. Additional arrangements that may arrive are placed in the sanctuary before the service. Other tributes such as photographs and a guest book may be displayed in the Narthex and at the reception.

Expressions of Sympathy and the Obituary:

Often people request that in lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy be directed to a memorial fund or a specific charity or organization. These wishes are included in the obituary and the worship bulletin.

Reception:

Loved ones may choose to host a reception following the service that gives family and friends time to visit.

- First Presbyterian Church can provide space for a reception following a Funeral/Memorial Service along with basic refreshments of coffee, tea, lemonade and cookies, with two day's notice. If additional food items are wanted, the family will need to provide them.
- If a luncheon is desired, the family needs to engage a caterer. The church office can provide names of caterers who have been used before. Our Fellowship Team would still do the set-up and, if wanted, provide cookies and the coffee /tea/lemonade.

Our Fellowship Hall will hold 200 people with most standing and a few seats available. If table seating is requested, we can accommodate approximately 100 people at round tables. If the service is being handled by clergy outside the church, the family must meet with our church staff to discuss reception plans, in order to make sure the Fellowship Team can provide what the family wishes.

Columbarium & Memorial Garden

The church has a lovely columbarium and memorial garden on its property, and the remains of members (or immediate family of members) may be interred there.

- In our columbarium, ashes of created individuals are inurned in niches within a graceful stonewall. Each niche is identified by an engraved bronze plaque which bears the name of the individual inurned there. The sacred place is located outside of the sanctuary. The cost of each niche is \$1000.
- Our memorial garden has been designed to enhance the church and the columbarium and to set aside areas where ashes may be directly placed in the earth. There is a \$300 fee to cover the cost of a bronze plaque, and to help with the cost of the garden and ground's annual maintenance.

At a time convenient to the family, a service of committal is held, and ashes are inurned in the columbarium or poured into a designated spot in the garden. Records are maintained in the church office concerning either placement of the ashes.

Honoraria and Fees

For church members (and their immediate family members), there is no fee for the use of the church facilities. Likewise, for members (and their immediate family members), there are no fees for the services of pastor. Honoraria are welcome. The fee for our music director is \$100 and fees for soloists or instrumentalists vary depending on the individuals, and these fees are the responsibility of the family. Often there is a need for our sound system to be used. The cost for our technician is \$50.

Scriptures and Hymns

The following are a selection of particularly appropriate scriptures and hymns for use in the service or for your private reflections.

Old Testament Scripture:

Job 19:23-27	I know that my redeemer lives
Ecclesiastics 3:1-15	For everything there is a season
Isaiah 25:6-9	God will swallow up death forever
Isaiah 40:1-11	Comfort my people
Isaiah 40:28-31	Those who wait for the Lord
Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25	When you pass through the waters
Isaiah 44:6-8	I am the first and I am the last
Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13	Everyone who thirsts
Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11	The spirit of the Lord is upon me
Isaiah 65:17-25	I create new heavens and a new earth
Lamentations 3:19-26, 31-32	The Lord's steadfast love
Daniel 12:1-3	Many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake
Joel 2:12-13, 23-24, 26-29	Return to the Lord with all your heart

The Psalms:

Psalms 16:5-11	The Lord is my chosen portion
Psalms 23	The Lord is my Shepherd
Psalms 27:1, 4-9a, 13-14	The Lord is my light and my salvation
Psalms 39:4-5, 12	Lord, let me know my end
Psalms 42:1-6a	As a deer longs for flowing streams
Psalms 43	Why are you cast down, O my soul
Psalms 46:1-5, 10-11	God is our refuge and strength
Psalms 90:1-10, 12	Lord, you have been our dwelling place
Psalms 91	You who live in the shelter of the Most High
Psalms 103	Bless the Lord, O my soul
Psalms 106:1-5	O give thanks to the Lord
Psalms 116:1-9, 15	The Lord has heard my voice
Psalms 118	Open the gates of righteousness
Psalms 121	I lift up my eyes to the hills
Psalms 130	Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord
Psalms 139:1-12	O Lord, you have searched me and known me
Psalms 145	I will extol you, my God and King
Psalms 146	Praise the Lord, O my soul!

New Testament Scripture:

Matthew 5:1-12a	The Beatitudes
Luke 23:33, 39-43	Remember me when you come into heaven
John 3:16-21	For God so loved the world
John 11:17-27	I know he will rise again in the resurrection
John 14	Do not let your hearts be troubled
Romans 8:14-25	All led by Spirit of God are sons and daughters
Romans 8:31-35	Nothing can separate us from the love of God
Romans 14:7-9	We do not live to ourselves
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 53-58	Where, O death, is your victory?
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1	A house eternal in the heavens
Philippians 4:4-9	Rejoice in the Lord always
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	God will bring with him those who have died

Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25, 22:3-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth

Suggested Hymns:

The following hymns, suitable for use at a funeral or memorial service, are found in the Presbyterian Hymnal.

- 171 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
- 172 My Shepherd Will Supply My Need
- 210 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
- 253 I'll Praise My Maker
- 280 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
- 281 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
- 339 Be Thou My Vision
- 383 My Faith Looks Up to Thee
- 399 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight
- 404 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- 526 For All the Saints
- 543 Abide with Me
- 555 Now Thank We All Our God
- 562 Eternal Father, Strong to Save