

# **FUNERAL/MEMORIAL POLICY**

## **Services on the Occasion of 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. 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.

## **Planning Arrangements:**

Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the session should encourage members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death, 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 decedent's 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 Minister. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the Minister. This service can be done on any day agreed upon by the family and minister. The minister has the final say. 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.

## **Form and Order:**

The service begins with scriptural sentences. It is appropriate for worshipers to sing hymns, psalms, spirituals, or spiritual songs which affirm God's power over death, a belief in the resurrection to life everlasting, and the assurance of the communion of the saints. Scripture shall be read; a sermon or other exposition of the Word may be proclaimed; an affirmation of faith may be made by the people. Aspects of the life of the one who has died may be recalled. Prayers shall be offered, giving thanks to God:

1. for life in Jesus Christ and the promise of the gospel,
2. for the gift of the life of the one who has died,
3. for the comfort of the Holy Spirit,
4. for the community of faith; making intercessions,
5. for family members and loved ones who grieve,
6. for those who minister to and support the bereaved,
7. for all who suffer loss; lifting supplications,
8. for faith and grace for all who are present; concluding with the Lord's Prayer.
9. The service ends by commending the one who has died to the care of the eternal God and sending the people forth with a benediction.

### **Alternatives and Options:**

This service may be observed before or after the committal of the body. In order that attention in the service be directed to God, when a casket is present it ordinarily is closed. It may be covered with a funeral pall. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultures when these actions do not detract from or diminish the Christian understanding of death and resurrection. The service shall be complete in itself, and any fraternal, civic, or military rites should be conducted separately. When there are important reasons not to hold the service in the usual place of worship, it may be held in another suitable place such as a home, a funeral home, a crematorium, or at graveside.

### **Service of Committal:**

Members and friends of the family of the one who has died should gather at the graveside or crematorium for a service of farewell, which is to be conducted with simplicity, dignity, and brevity. The service includes readings from Scripture, prayers, words of committal, and a blessing, reflecting the reality of death, entrusting the one who has died to the care of God, and bearing witness to faith in the resurrection from the dead.

## **FUNERAL/MEMORIAL POLICY STATEMENT**

The Funeral/Memorial Service of Witness to the Resurrection is a religious ceremony and every part has a deep significance. To insure the service is in keeping with these principles, various procedures and policies have been established by the session.

### **The Minister:**

The session has delegated to the minister the responsibility for all the services in the church. If the family desires a visiting minister to assist Faith's minister, that minister must be approved by Faith's minister and session. The visiting minister need not be from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but, again, must be endorsed by Faith's minister and session.

Any non-member requesting to have a service in the church facilities by Faith's minister or a minister of their choice must make a request to Faith's minister. All non-member services must be approved by session.

### **Pre-Service Conference:**

The pre-service conference with the minister should be held as early as possible. The conference will address, among other things, the items referred to in the Book of Order description of the funeral that is outlined at the beginning of this booklet. Please call the Administrative Assistant to make your first appointment for a meeting with the minister.

### **The Service:**

The order for funeral/memorial services to be used in Faith Presbyterian Church comes from "A Service of Witness to the Resurrection" of the Presbyterian Church that may be found in the Book

of Common Worship. The service can be held in the sanctuary and/or prayer room. The family can gather in the parlor, prior to the service.

### **Worship Committee Appointee:**

The services of the Worship Committee appointee is required for all funeral/memorials at Faith Presbyterian Church. The appointee will help with your plans and answer all questions concerning the funeral/memorial and will be present for the funeral/memorial to assist the minister and help the funeral/memorial proceed as planned. The appointee will check the church calendar to confirm your date and time for the funeral/memorial and availability of any musicians needed.

### **The Reception:**

Food and/or reception will be coordinated by the Member Care Committee which is a committee of the session.

### **The Florist:**

1. Flowers, greenery and candles (only liquid, dripless candles, or battery operated) may be used in the sanctuary to suit the aesthetic desire of the family. If you have questions about any of these, feel free to ask the appointee. If the family so desires, the flowers may be taken to the reception and/or may be left for use in the worship service of the congregation.
2. Nothing is to be placed on the communion table.
3. No tacks, pins, nails, glue or tape shall be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or to the building.
4. For security reasons, it is necessary that the florist(s) indicate to the appointee the time for delivery of flowers to the church. Deliveries are to be completed at least one hour before the service.
5. The family is expected to make decisions pertaining to the floral arrangements' placement in the sanctuary or welcome center. If personal memorabilia is used on the welcome center table and /or in the fellowship hall, the family has the responsibility to remove these items from the sanctuary, welcome center and fellowship hall immediately following the departure of guests unless arrangements have been made with the appointee. No florist equipment may be left in the welcome center, chancel or corridors.
6. In situations where there is no florist and church members are doing the decoration all of the above instructions apply. Consult the appointee.
7. It is the responsibility of the appointee to review these instructions with the florist in making plans for the service.
8. The family should inform the appointee of their floral plans.

### **Making The Reservation:**

The initial request for a reservation of church facilities is made with the minister. The exact hour of the service must be recorded at the time the sanctuary is reserved. A *Funeral/Memorial Information Form* (last page) will be filled out at that time.

Normally, funeral/memorial services are not scheduled on: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, any day during Holy Week, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Sundays.

### **The Funeral/Memorial Service Music: Organ/Piano:**

The church organist/pianist will be contacted by the appointee as soon as the service date is set to determine their availability to play. Please note that playing the organ/piano is by contract the exclusive responsibility and right of the organist/pianist. Special arrangements can be made by the family for another organist/pianist. If someone other than the church organist/pianist plays for the service, he or she must be of satisfactory skill and experience as determined by the church organist/pianist.

The purpose of music in a funeral/memorial service is to enhance the sacred aspects of the occasion, and to set the warmth and tone of the service. The organist/pianist should be conferred with as far in advance of the service as possible both to confirm the time and date for the service and also for the choice of music. Both sacred and contemporary music are permitted, and it is hoped that all music will be suitable to the occasion. The minister and the church organist/pianist will have the final authority as to the appropriateness of a particular piece.

### **Gathering Of Family:**

The parlor may be used as a gathering place for the family. The church cannot be responsible for any equipment or personal belongings after the family and guests depart.

### **Musician Fees For Member And Non-Member Fees:**

The organist/pianist fees are based upon the musicians' current contract with Faith Presbyterian Church.

### **Minister's Fee:**

1. There is no charge for the services of the minister if the family are members of the church; although an honorarium would be appropriate.
2. There is a \$250 minimum for a family that is not a member of Faith Presbyterian Church.

### **Audio Visual:**

1. Audio visual staff (microphones, video-tape, computer) will be contacted by the appointee. An honorarium would be appropriate.
2. If a slideshow is used, we request a flashdrive (3) three days in advance of the service in MP4 or PowerPoint slideshow formats. This is to ensure either format is compatible with our computer.

### **Columbarium at Faith:**

There are a limited number of niches available for purchase for church members. The Columbarium is located in the Prayer Room and also the location for the Committal Service. See the *Columbarium Brochure* for more information.

**FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE INFORMATION FORM**

FAMILY (CONTACT PERSON)

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ADDRESS

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CONTACT PHONE

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IN REFERENCE TO THE FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE:

DATE

TIME

PLACE

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MINISTER(S) OFFICIATING

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ORGANIST/PIANIST

SOLOIST

---

SPECIAL MUSIC

---

PLACE OF RECEPTION

ESTIMATED  
ATTENDANCE

---

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

---

FUNERAL HOME

---

FLORIST(S)

---

CATERER

---

OTHER INFORMATION

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