

Funeral Planning Guide



First Presbyterian Church

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Dear Friends,

In life and in death we belong to God. God cares for us before we are brought into this world, sustains us through all our earthly days, and holds us with everlasting arms when this life is over. For a Christian, death should not be feared. Nonetheless, planning one's funeral is not something most of us relish.

In the Presbyterian Church, funerals and memorial services are services that witness to the resurrection hope we have in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they are not dreary, mournful affairs, but an opportunity to give thanks to God for life and to look ahead to that time when God's reign will be fully realized and we will be with God.

I hope you will take the time necessary to complete the questionnaire contained within this booklet, and if you are comfortable doing so, to discuss your wishes with your family. If I can be of assistance to you, please let me know. When completed, please send me a copy of your wishes and they will be kept in a confidential place in the Church Office.

Know that it is the desire of all your staff at First Presbyterian Church to be of assistance to you.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Christine Coy Fohr

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

THEOLOGICAL BEGINNINGS

The Directory for Worship section of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has this to say about “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.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

“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 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.

“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;
- (8) for faith and grace for all who are present, concluding with the Lord’s Prayer.

“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.

SCHEDULING A FUNERAL AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The minister welcomes opportunities to work with individuals and families to plan funerals before the time of death. The minister encourage individuals to communicate their wishes and desires with family and friends. Whenever possible, these wishes and desires should be put in writing – preferably using the First Presbyterian Church Funeral Form – and filed with the responsible parties as well as the church office.

WHEN DEATH OCCURS

The pastor should be notified as soon as possible when a death occurs. Our pastor is available to offer prayer and comfort, as well as assist with the practical realities of dealing with grief and loss. Funeral and memorial services are always under the direction of the church pastor.

MAKING FORMAL SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

Please contact the minister or church office before making formal arrangements. The minister will visit with the family to offer pastoral care and guidance, and to begin the process of planning the funeral service. The minister will work with the family and funeral home to ensure your loved one's funeral is handled with the utmost dignity and respect.

FUNERAL HOME INVOLVEMENT

It is very important that the church minister and staff work with the funeral home directors as a team. If you have not yet contacted the church when you begin working with the funeral home, please ask the funeral director to call the church immediately. Please do not schedule a funeral without first contacting the church and speaking with the minister.

VISITATIONS

On occasion, families request that a visitation be held at the church. Ordinarily, the event is held in the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall.

PLANNING THE FUNERAL SERVICE

It is strongly encouraged that all members fill out the “Funeral Planning Form” (found on p. 15) when they are able. By doing so, individuals will have the opportunity to share their wishes with the minister and their loved ones prior to their time of death.

For a list of commonly used Scripture readings, see page 7.

For a list of commonly used hymns, see page 11.

For a sample funeral service outline, see page 13.

For a sample committal/graveside service outline, see page 14.

The minister of First Presbyterian Church will officiate at each funeral and/or committal held on church property. Additional ministers, family members, friends and members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to assist with the service.

The bulletin, or printed order of worship, will ordinarily be produced by the church office staff. Special requests should be made as early as possible.

MUSIC

The Director of Music will coordinate music for funerals held at First Presbyterian Church. Liturgically appropriate music includes hymns, psalms and spirituals. All music must be approved by the minister and/or Director of Music. Any guest musicians, including soloists and guest organists, must be approved by the minister and/or Director of Music.

Any musical rehearsals must be scheduled through the church office.

FLOWERS

When placing flower arrangements on the steps or chancel, special attention must be given to ensure that the chancel area is accessible to worship leaders.

CASKET

When a casket is present in the sanctuary, it may be covered with a pall as deemed appropriate by the pastor. Special attention must be given to ensure that the chancel area is accessible to worship leaders.

CIVIL AND MILITARY CEREMONIES

When requested by the family as they work with the pastor to plan the service, an American flag may be used as a pall. However, civil and military ceremonies may take place only outside the sanctuary, or at a cemetery. In the event of inclement weather, these ceremonies could take place in Fellowship Hall.

RECORDING THE SERVICE

At the family's request, an audio recording of the service held in the Sanctuary will be made. When making service arrangements with the pastor, please indicate your desire for an audio recording and indicate the number of cd copies you would like.

RECEPTIONS AND MEALS

The Congregational Care Committee of First Presbyterian Church offers the following options for receptions and meals:

- A meal for the family at the church before or after the funeral
- A meal for the family delivered to the family's home

At the reception, a table can be set up for memorabilia to be displayed. A projector and screen can also be made available for a slideshow.

COMMITTALS AND INTERNMENT

Committals and internments may be held before or after a funeral, upon arrangement with the minister.

COLUMBARIUM

The columbarium at First Presbyterian Church is located in the church narthex, which is just outside the sanctuary. This space provides a special place for Christian burial where deceased loved ones can be remembered and celebrated. For information concerning reserving a space and inurnment in the columbarium, contact the church office, or read the Columbarium Guide found on the church's website.

HONORARIA AND FEES

The clergy and staff of First Presbyterian Church believe that funerals are a part of the life and ministry of a congregation. They count it both as a great responsibility and great privilege to be with families in their moment of need, offering through their words, work and witness the life and love of Jesus Christ. **As such, clergy and staff do not expect or require any fees as part of their ministry with church members.**

Nonetheless, some families wish to honor church leaders with an honorarium. As many families are uncertain about an appropriate amount and often contact the church office to ask with is customary, the following are suggested as general guidelines for those wishing to provide honoraria.

Officiating Pastor \$200

Director of Music \$150

Organist \$100

Sound Engineer \$50

Please note: It is at the family's discretion as to whether or not they choose to provide an honorarium to the participating church clergy and staff. It is also at the family's discretion, should they choose to provide an honorarium, to follow the guidelines suggested above or to determine other amounts they deem appropriate.

If non-staff musicians are hired to provide special music, the following fees are customary. These fees may be waived at the discretion of the officiating pastor, in consultation with the Director of Music.

Special Musician \$75

NON-MEMBER FUNERALS

In order for First Presbyterian Church to hold non-member funerals and memorials, their loved ones must work through a funeral home. The cost for using the church space is \$100, with all additional payment arrangements for staff being handled through the funeral home. Non-member funerals and memorials may be held Monday – Friday, unless special arrangements are made with the minister.

COMMONLY USED SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19:23–27	I know that my redeemer lives
Isa. 25:6–9	God will swallow up death forever
Isa. 26:1–4, 19	God will keep them in peace
Isa. 40:1–11, 28–31	Comfort my people
Isa. 40:28–31	Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength
Isa. 43:1–3a, 18–19, 25	When you pass through the waters, I will be with you
Isa. 44:6–8	I am the first and the last
Isa. 55:1–3, 6–13	Ho, everyone who thirsts
Isa. 61:1–4, 10–11	The spirit of the Lord is upon me
Isa. 65:17–25	I create new heavens and a new earth
Lam. 3:19–26, 31b–32	The Lord’s steadfast love
Dan. 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

Some have found this passage from an Apocryphal book useful in certain circumstances:

Wisdom of Solomon

3:1–7, 9; 5:15–16 The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God

At the loss of a child:

Zech. 8:1–8 Children playing in the streets of the city

Isa. 65:17–25 I create new heavens and a new earth

For those whose faith is unknown:

Ecccl. 3:1–15 For everything there is a season

Lam. 3:1–9, 19–23 The Lord’s steadfast love

PSALMS

The following psalms are appropriate for singing or reading in the service.

Ps. 16:5–11	The Lord is my chosen portion
Ps. 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Ps. 27:1, 4–9a, 13–14	The Lord is my light and my salvation
Ps. 39: 4–5, 12	Lord, let me know my end
Ps. 42:1–6a	As a deer longs for flowing streams
Ps. 43	Give judgment for me, O God
Ps. 46:1–5, 10–11	A very present help in trouble
Ps. 90:1–10, 12	Teach us to number our days
Ps. 91	The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Ps. 103	Bless the Lord, O my soul
Ps. 106:1–5	O give thanks to the Lord
Ps. 116:1–9, 15	The Lord has heard my voice
Ps. 118	Open the gates of righteousness
Ps. 121	I lift up my eyes to the hills
Ps. 130	Out of the depths I cry to the Lord
Ps. 139:1–12	Where shall I go from your spirit?
Ps. 145	I will extol you, O God my King
Ps. 146	Hallelujah! praise the Lord, O my soul

EPISTLES

Rom. 5:1–11	Hope does not disappoint
Rom. 6:3–9	Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him
Rom. 8:14–23, 31–39	Nothing can separate us from the love of God
Rom. 14:7–9, 10b–12	Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's
1 Cor. 15:3–8, 12–20a	Christ raised from the dead
1 Cor. 15:20–24a	In Christ shall all be made alive

1 Cor. 15:20–26, 35–38, 42–44, 50, 53–58	Death is swallowed in victory
1 Cor. 15:35–44	The natural body and the spiritual body
1 Cor. 15:50–57	We shall all be changed
2 Cor. 4:16–5:1	Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal
2 Cor. 5:1–10	From God we have a house not made with hands
Eph. 1:11–2:1, 4–10	Saved by grace through faith
Phil. 3:7–11	Knowing him and the power of his resurrection
Phil. 3:20–21	Our citizenship is in heaven
Col. 3:1–17	Set your minds on the things that are above
1 Thess. 4:13–18	The comfort of Christ’s coming
2 Tim. 2:8–13	If we died with him, we shall also live with him
Heb. 2:14–18	Christ was tested in every way
Heb. 11:1–3, 13–16; 12:1–2	Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses
1 Peter 1:3–9	Without seeing Christ, you love him
1 Peter 3:18–22; 4:6	Christ’s ministry to the spirits in prison
1 John 3:1–3	We are children of God
Rev. 7:2–3, 9–17	These are they who have come out of the great tribulation
Rev. 14:1–3, 6–7, 12–13	Rest for the saints
Rev. 21:1–4, 22–25; 22:3–5	A new heaven and a new earth
Rev. 22:1–5	The Lord God will be their light

For those whose faith is unknown:

Rom. 2:12–16	The law written on the heart
Rom. 14:7–9, 10c–12	None of us live to ourselves

GOSPELS

Matt. 5:1–12a	The Beatitudes
Matt. 11:25–30	Hidden from the wise, revealed to infants
Matt. 25:1–13	Wise and foolish bridesmaids
Matt. 25:31–46	The Last Judgment
Luke 7:11–17	Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain
Luke 18:15–17	We enter the kingdom only as children
Luke 23:33, 39–43	Today you will be with me in Paradise
John 3:16–21	God so loved the world
John 5:24–29	Whoever hears and believes has eternal life
John 6:37–40	Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away
John 6:47–58	Whoever believes in me has eternal life
John 11:17–27	I am the resurrection and the life
John 11:38–44	Lazarus raised from the dead
John 14:1–6, 25–27	Let not your hearts be troubled

At the loss of a child:

Matt. 18:1–5, 10	The greatest in the kingdom of heaven
Mark 10:13–16	Let the children come to me

For those whose faith is unknown:

Matt. 25:31–46 As you did it to one of the least of these

COMMONLY USED HYMNS

14	For the Beauty of the Earth
15	All Creatures of Our God and King
39	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
65	Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
81	Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
250	In the Bulb There Is a Flower
275	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
306	Blest Be the Tie That Binds
326	For All the Saints
366	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
367	Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
375	Shall We Gather at the River
438	Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
450	Be Thou My Vision
488	I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry
611	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
625	How Great Thou Art
649	Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
687	Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
817	We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight
824	Near to the Heart of God
825	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
833	O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
834	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
836	Abide with Me

SAMPLE FUNERAL SERVICE

Opening Words

Call to Worship

Prayer

Hymn, Psalm or Spiritual

[Confession and Pardon may also be said]

[Remembrances or Eulogies may be offered]

Readings from Scripture

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

[Hymn may be sung]

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication and Intercession

[Lord's Supper may be celebrated]

Lord's Prayer

Commendation

Hymn, Psalm or Spiritual

Blessing

Procession

SAMPLE COMMITTAL/GRAVESIDE SERVICE

Opening Words

Committal

Lord's Prayer

Prayers

Blessing

FUNERAL PLANNING FORM

The data on this form will be useful for those who plan the funeral or memorial service or who write an appropriate obituary. Although this is not a legal document, it is recommended that a copy of your completed form be given to a family member or a close friend and, if pre-arrangements have been made, to a funeral home.

By completing as much of the attached form as you are comfortable with, you will, as one Presbyterian church stated it, "have dealt with some arrangements that are usually only done under immense pressure and by persons who may or may not know all of your wishes. You will thus have the assurance that your wishes are made known and that you have taken the burden of a lot of unnecessary decision making off of the ones you love."

Your completed form will be kept confidential in the church office to be used by the pastor at the appropriate time.

General Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Signature _____

Worship Requests & Information

1. For the service witnessing to the resurrection (funeral)

___ I do not wish to have a funeral or memorial service

___ I would like a funeral or memorial service as detailed below.

___ I would like my funeral/memorial service to take place in the church.

___ I would like my funeral/memorial service to take place at the funeral home.

___ I would like to have a committal/graveside service.

2. I would like the following minister(s) to lead the funeral service:

3. I would like the following Scripture(s) to be read. (Choose up to four passages)

4. I would like the following hymns to be sung. (List up to three hymns.)

5. I _____ would/ _____ would not like to have the Lord's Supper celebrated at the service.

6. Are there any stories of your life or faith that you would like to have shared at this service? (Please attached separate sheets of paper, if necessary.)

7. Is there anything that you would like people to know as they worship at this service? (Please attached separate sheets of paper, if necessary.)

Family Information

If your family does not know your last wishes, you may want to address the following. Please note that this is not a legal document, but a record to convey your final wishes. One copy should be given to family or a friend, and one copy to the church.

1. Name(s) of preferred individual(s) to assist in arrangements (relatives, friends, pastor, attorney):

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

2. Pastor to be called:

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

3. Funeral Home to be called:

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Other Information

Please check the following, if it is your desire:

4. Treatment of my body

___ My body is to be sent to such medical, social, or scientific center as will accept it

___ My body be made available for autopsy

___ My body be cremated ___ with embalming ___ without embalming

5. Funeral home, Funeral, Memorial Service

___ There ___ will/ ___ will not be a viewing

___ There ___ will/ ___ will not be a visitation

___ Visitation be held at a ___ church/ ___ funeral home

___ The funeral service will be ___ public/ ___ private

___ The funeral/memorials service will be held at (name of location)

___ I have discussed/instructed my family/friends as to the kind of casket and other arrangements, including cost

6. Final disposition

___ My ashes be preserved or disposed of in the following manner and place:

___ My body be buried in the following location: _____

___ It is my wish to donate whatever organs/parts of organs that are useful to the living

7. Contributions/Flowers

___ Flowers are desired

___ Organizations to which contributions may be sent: _____

Death Certificate Information

The following information is required for the death certificate. By filling this form out now, you can spare your family an additional responsibility at the time of your death.

Name: _____

First

Middle

Last

Social Security #: _____

Date of birth: ____/____/____

Sex: ___M ___F Race: _____

Citizen of what country: _____

Birthplace: _____

Armed Services: _____

___ Married ___ Never Married ___ Widowed ___ Divorced

Usual residence:

City

County

State

Country

Current street address:

(Street)

(City, State, Zip)

Type of work done during working life (even if currently retired):

Father's name _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Obituary

Writing your own obituary can be part of your life and end-of-life planning. The way you would like to be remembered is part of a careful arranging for yourself should you not be in the best of health or life. This is your chance to say what you want others to know about you. It can be helpful to you, providing peace of mind that you have had your say; and it can be helpful to your family and friends, helping them during a difficult time.

Eight steps to writing your obituary include:

1. **Begin with the announcement.** It should include who the person is, the date they died, and where they died. The cause of death is optional. Be short and concise. All this can be typically included in one sentence.
2. **Write a short biographical piece about your life.** This should include where and when the person was born, where they lived throughout their life, notable awards and times in their life, important hobbies, where they went to school, and anything else of personal or familial importance.
3. **Include who you are survived by.** Include, in this order, immediate family members (spouse and children or parents and siblings step-children) and secondary family members (aunts, uncles, grandchildren, close cousins). You can include spouse names such as Mary (John), John (Anna), ...
4. **Use baptism names for Relatives.** Nicknames should be added in quotes, such as "Bud."
5. **Deceased relatives should be listed last with the phrase "the late..."**
6. **Note where and when important ceremonies will take place, such as memorial services, grave-side burials, etc.**
7. **Tell people where they can make donations in remembrance of the person who has died.** This is a very common practice in the United States and should always be noted so as to avoid an influx of calls to the bereaved family.
8. **Remember, this is the main research tool for the family tree so try to include everyone.** Include a photo, too!

Appendix

Here is a list of things that are good to arrange as part of life as well as end-of-life planning:

- life and disability insurance,
- critical illness / long-term care insurance,
- health care directive (“living will”),
- power of attorney,
- up-to-date will,
- executor,
- guardian for minor children,
- organ donations,
- ethical will,
- list of financial accounts,
- list of Internet account usernames and passwords,
- wishes for a funeral or other service (or not),
- bequests and requests for charitable donations,
- wishes for interment, and
- a start on your own obituary.

When form is complete, copies may be filed at the First Presbyterian Church, the funeral home you wish to use, and a copy given to a family member.

Feel free to make an appointment to speak with Rev. Christine Coy Fohr (270.684.1467 or 270.570.3462) if you’d like assistance completing this form. Your funeral home of choice will also be able to provide you with additional information to be used in making final arrangements.