

First Presbyterian Church of Mahopac: Funeral Planning Guide

From the Directory for Worship, Book of Order (2019-2021), Presbyterian Church (USA)

W-4.07

Death and Resurrection

W-4.0701 Witness to the Resurrection

In Baptism each Christian shares in Christ's dying and rising, and receives the promise of eternal and abundant life in him. We understand the Christian funeral to be the completion of Baptism. In the face of death, we affirm with tears and joy the good news of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection. We do not grieve in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and community of faith.

W-4.0702 Policies for Funerals

The session may establish general policies concerning services on the occasion of death, providing for funerals that are simple, dignified, expressive of good stewardship, bear witness to the resurrection hope, and convey the centrality of Christian community.

W-4.0703 Setting for the Service

The service of witness to the resurrection is most appropriately held in the congregation's usual place of worship, demonstrating continuity with the community's faith, life, and hope. When there are important reasons not to hold the service in the usual place of worship, it may be held in another place, such as a home, funeral home, crematorium, or graveside. It may be observed on any day, and may, with the approval of the session, occur as a part of the Service for the Lord's Day. The service may take place before or after the committal of the body. The service under the direction of the minister of Word and Sacrament of the congregation in which it is held. Others may be invited to share in leadership at the discretion of the minister of the Word and Sacrament.

W-4.0704 Order of Worship

When a member of the community dies, the body of the deceased will be buried, cremated, donated for medical use, or otherwise disposed of in a responsible and reverent manner. Ordinarily the family of the deceased, members of the community, and the pastor(s) of the church will accompany the body of the deceased to the place of disposition, engaging in prayer, blessings, and other acts of worship.

As a part of accompanying the body to the place of disposition, or at another time before or after this takes place, a more full service of worship may be held. The service begins with sentences of Scripture, bearing witness to the resurrection and the living hope we have in Christ. Worshipers may sing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs that affirm our faith in the resurrection, everlasting life, and the communion of saints. The act of confession and pardon may be included as an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Scripture is read and the Word is proclaimed, expressing our trust in the risen Lord; an affirmation of faith may follow. Prayer is offered: giving thanks to God for life in Christ, the promise of the gospel, the life and witness of the one who has died, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the community of faith; making intercessions for those who grieve, those who minister to the bereaved, and all who suffer loss; asking for faith and grace in this time of loss; and concluding with the Lord's Prayer (if not included in the eucharistic liturgy). The Lord's Supper may be celebrated, with the approval of the session. The service ends by commanding the one who has died to the care

of the eternal God, committing the body of the deceased to the place of disposition (unless this is performed at another time), and sending the people forth with God's blessing.

The casket or urn may be covered with a pall, a symbol of being clothed with Christ in Baptism. The service may begin at the baptismal font. If using a paschal candle is part of the practice of the congregation, it may be placed near the casket. Music directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Flowers and other decorations reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultural context, provided that these actions do not distract from the Christian understanding of death and resurrection. Fraternal, civic, or military rites are to be conducted separately.

An Outline of the Funeral: A Service of Witness to the Resurrection
(Sample)

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Gathering

Greeting
Thanksgiving for Baptism
[Procession]
Opening Sentences
Prayer
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song
Confession and Pardon

Word

Prayer for Illumination
Scripture
Sermon
Affirmation of Faith
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song
[Expression of Gratitude for the Deceased]
Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession

Eucharist

Invitation to the Lord's Table
Great Thanksgiving
Breaking of the Bread
Communion
Prayer after Communion

Sending

Commendation
Blessing
Procession

*Book of Common Worship (2018)

List of Some Suggested Readings for Funerals

Old Testament

- Job 19:23-27
- Isaiah 25:6-9
- Isaiah 26:1-4, 19
- Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31
- Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
- Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-23

I know that my redeemer lives
 God will swallow up death forever
 God will keep them in peace
 Comfort my people
 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you
 For everything there is a season
 The Lord's steadfast love

Psalms

- Psalm 23
- Psalm 42:1-6a
- Psalm 121
- Psalm 130
- Psalm 145

The Lord is my shepherd
 As a deer longs for flowing streams
 I lift up my eyes to the hills
 Out of the depths I cry to the Lord
 I extol you, O God my King

Epistles

- Romans 5:1-11
- Romans 6:3-9
- Romans 8:14-23, 31-39
- Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12
- II Timothy 2:8-13
- Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-16; 12:1-2
- I John 3:1-3
- Revelation 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13

Hope does not disappoint
 Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him
 Nothing can separate us from the love of God
 Whether we live or die we are the Lord's
 If we died with him, we shall also live with him
 Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses
 We are the children of God
 Rest for the saints

Gospels

- Matthew 5:12
- John 3:16-21
- John 5:24-29
- John 11:17-27
- John 14:1-6, 25-27

The Beatitudes
 God so loved the world
 Whoever hears and believes has eternal life
 I am the resurrection and the life.
 Let not your hearts be troubled

List of Some Suggested Hymns for Funerals

Opening Hymns of Praise

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	260
Holy God, We Praise Your Name	460
The Church's One Foundation	442

Resurrection to Eternal Life

Christ Is Alive!	108
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!	113
Lift High the Cross	371
The Day of Resurrection!	118

Saints Who Have Gone Before

For All the Saints	526
I Sing a Song of the Saints of God	364

God's Presence and Comfort

Abide with Me	543
Amazing Grace	280
Great Is Thy Faithfulness	276
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	383
Precious Lord , Take My Hand	404

Suggestions for A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

(Please return to the office so a copy may be kept on file.)

To those who will make decisions for my funeral/memorial service:

I have given prayerful thought to the service worship following my death. The following are my preferences. I realize that circumstances may apply which will make it impossible to fulfill every suggestion. I offer these preferences as a gift to those who will worship God at my funeral.

My full name and date of birth: _____

I would like the following to serve as pallbearers (if applicable): _____

I would like the following to serve as readers: _____

I hope the following scripture passages will be read: _____

I would like the following to be sung as a solo or anthem: _____

I would like the following hymns or psalms to be sung by the congregation: _____

I wish the service to be held at: _____

I desire a memorial service in which my remains **ARE NOT** present: Yes No

I desire a funeral service at which my remains **ARE** present: Yes No

I desire the committal (burial or entombment) to take place at: _____

I prefer that both the funeral and committal take place at the graveside: Yes No

I would prefer that memorial gifts be made to:

- First Presbyterian Church of Mahopac
- Others: _____

Other preferences and information important to those who plan my funeral:

Signature: _____ Date: _____