

**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 commending 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 I know that my redeemer lives
- Isaiah 25:6-9 God will swallow up death forever
- Isaiah 26:1-4, 19 God will keep them in peace
- Isaiah 40:1-11, 28-31 Comfort my people
- Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 For everything there is a season
- Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-23 The Lord's steadfast love

### Psalms

- Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd
- Psalm 42:1-6a As a deer longs for flowing streams
- Psalm 121 I lift up my eyes to the hills
- Psalm 130 Out of the depths I cry to the Lord
- Psalm 145 I extol you, O God my King

### Epistles

- Romans 5:1-11 Hope does not disappoint
- Romans 6:3-9 Baptized into Christ's death, raised to live with him
- Romans 8:14-23, 31-39 Nothing can separate us from the love of God
- Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12 Whether we live or die we are the Lord's
- II Timothy 2:8-13 If we died with him, we shall also live with him
- Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-16; 12:1-2 Faith, the pilgrimage, the cloud of witnesses
- I John 3:1-3 We are the children of God
- Revelation 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13 Rest for the saints

### Gospels

- Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes
- John 3:16-21 God so loved the world
- John 5:24-29 Whoever hears and believes has eternal life
- John 11:17-27 I am the resurrection and the life.
- John 14:1-6, 25-27 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: \_\_\_\_\_