

Central Presbyterian Church
Guidelines for Funerals
& Memorial Services

Approved by Worship & Music: 9/21/10
Approved by Session: 9/27/10

Purpose:

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 do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The Church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve. As this is the basis of a Christian funeral defined by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the Session of Central Presbyterian has set forth the following policy on funeral/memorial services which occur at the church.

Pastor:

It is expected that primary arrangements will be made with one of Central's pastors. Typically one pastor will officiate at the service, though there are times when it will be appropriate for both pastors to participate. Requests for the participation of a "guest" pastor to assist in the service must be made to the officiating pastor; who, if it is appropriate, will extend an invitation.

Service at Church:

Church members are encouraged to use the church for funeral/memorial services. Just as we are baptized by God in church and have been nourished by God through the church, so it is wholly appropriate that thanksgiving to God for our lives should be offered in church.

A Time of Worship:

In the Presbyterian tradition a funeral/memorial service is considered a service of worship, and will be approached with the dignity and joyful celebration accorded worship. A typical order of worship will include: prelude and postlude of sacred music; hymns and songs of praise and faith; scripture lessons from the Old and

New Testaments; a message – which expresses thanksgiving to God for the life of the deceased, and reminds all of Christ’s resurrection and promise of eternal life; prayers of intercession and thanksgiving; a benediction. In consultation with the pastor, other elements, such as remarks from family members and friends, may be included in the service. The officiating pastor shall make the final determination on the elements of worship.

Type of Service:

Central Presbyterian Church enjoys both traditional and contemporary styles of worship. While it is anticipated that most funeral/memorial services will reflect a traditional approach to worship and take place in the sanctuary, a contemporary service format in the Large Fellowship Hall is also possible. While every effort will be made to accommodate a desire for the funeral/memorial service to be contemporary in style, this option ultimately depends on the availability of volunteer musicians and sound board operators; and may require the use of recorded music.

Casket/Cremaains:

The casket/cremaains of the deceased may be present for the service, and shall arrive at the church at least 45 minutes prior to the announced start time. In order that worship may focus on God, and upon the gift of resurrection, rather than upon the earthly remains of the deceased, the casket will be closed during the service. A white pall – provided by the church – will cover the casket; symbolizing our equality before God, and the joy of our inclusion in Christ’s victory over death.

Cremation:

Cremation is an appropriate alternative for Christians. Orders of worship and committal remain the same in cases of cremation, with the exception that the committal may take place on a different date from the service in the church.

Pictures & Photography:

As the focus of Christian worship is God, it is not appropriate to display pictures of the deceased in the sanctuary during the service. Photo displays of the deceased

are encouraged, and more appropriately placed in the reception area. Non-flash photography is permitted during the service from a stationary position behind the worshipping congregation (preferably the balcony).

Flowers:

The use of flowers and other forms of decoration are not required, and should be limited in order that they do not distract from the purpose of worship. One or two simple floral arrangements adequately symbolize God's gift of new life.

Visitation:

There may be occasions when it is desirable for visitation with the family to take place at the church rather than the funeral home. In such cases a reception area adjacent to the sanctuary is available.

Committal Service:

The pastor is available to lead a brief committal service at the site (locally) where the casket/cremains are to be interred. This service typically includes: scripture; prayers; words of committal; a benediction.

Military/Masonic Honors:

Such honors are not considered part of Christian worship, and are therefore more appropriately carried out at the funeral home or cemetery.

Fees:

When the deceased was a member:

- a. Organist: \$100.00
- b. Pastor: no fee, although an honorarium is acceptable

When the deceased was a non-member:

- a. Organist: \$100.00
- b. Pastor: \$150.00

Fees for other musicians should be in accordance with their normal pay scale.

Services taking place on a Saturday or Sunday will require a reasonable custodial fee based upon hours worked and custodian availability. If applicable, the pastor will discuss this fee with you.

Memorials:

Gifts given in memory of a loved one are appropriate and welcomed. Central Presbyterian Church, Central Presbyterian Foundation, or a charitable organization of the donor's choice are potential recipients of such gifts. Guidelines for directing such gifts to the church are outline in Central's Memorials & Special Gifts Policy.

Final Plans:

Members of Central Presbyterian are strongly encouraged to pre-plan their funeral/memorial service. They may do so by picking up a "Final Plan" folder in the church office (or downloading the forms from the church web site: www.centralpreschurch.org). Once completed and returned, the forms will be kept in the church's confidential files; where they will be available for revision. At the time of death, the information will be shared with family members, and the pastor with whom the service is being planned.

Service Order and Funeral Bulletin:

The typical funeral/memorial order of service is listed below. If desired, the church office will create a simple service bulletin based on this order.

A Service of Witness

To the Resurrection

Celebrating the Life of
(name of person)

Prelude

Sentences in Procession

Welcome

Call to Worship

Hymn

Old Testament Readings

New Testament Readings

(Family Memories – optional)

The Faith We Claim -- Homily

Silent Celebration

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Benediction

Postlude