

# The Christian Funeral or Memorial Service

## **The Christian Funeral or Memorial**

The minister works in cooperation with the family to plan a service that is faithful to God and meaningful to the family and other mourners. The purpose of the service is to worship God and to comfort the mourners.

Normally the word “funeral” indicates that the body is present in some form. A memorial service indicates that a body is not present.

It is appropriate to start talking with the pastors about a funeral/memorial service before the time of death. The pastors can help facilitate a conversation with a loved one and his/her family to ensure a service that is meaningful for those who grieve and reflect the wishes of the loved one. Please contact the church office if you would like to schedule a time to talk with one of the pastors (283-1305).

## **At the Time of Death**

When death occurs, we ask that you contact the either of the pastors (Won Ho Kim, 752-3914 or Trish Lisa, 340-3354) and/or the church office. (283-1305). The church would like to support you in your loss and remember you and your loved one in prayer. We are also here to work to create a meaningful service for your loved one.

Family members, friends, or members of the congregation may be invited by the minister to share in the service.

This order that follows is intended for use with the body or ashes of the deceased present, but it may be adapted for use as a memorial service. The committal of the body/ashes may follow or precede this service, as preferred.

When the body is present, the coffin should be closed before the service begins so that worshippers may focus on their help in God. The casket may be covered with a white funeral pall.

-from the PCUSA, Book of Common Worship

**NORMAL OUTLINE FOR A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE (WHICH CAN BE ADAPTED TO BEST FIT YOUR WISHES)**

*Prelude* – music that allows people to gather and pray

*Call to Worship* – normally a brief Scripture reading

*An Opening Hymn* is a sung affirmation of Christian faith

*Opening Prayer* is offered for the comfort of all who are bereaved

*A Confession of Sin* acknowledges that we all fall short of God's plan for humankind

*An Assurance of Pardon* declares the mercy of God's forgiveness

*Scripture Readings*, normally 1-2 from both the old and the new testaments, are read

*A brief tribute* appropriate for Christian worship may be offered

*A homily* recalls elements of the deceased person's life, recalls our hope in the resurrection and offers encouragement for faithful living

*A Christian hymn* may be sung at this point

*A Prayer of Thanksgiving* is offered for the life of the one who has died

*A Prayer of Commendation* entrusts to God's care the one who has died

Using *the Lord's Prayer* we pray as Jesus taught

*A Christian hymn* affirms God's mercy and our hope is sung at the conclusion of the service

*A Benediction/blessing* is offered to the people

When a celebration of the deceased military service cannot be celebrated the evening prior to the funeral, a brief service may be held at the cemetery at the time of the committal.

*The Committal of the body to its final resting place* – often follows or precedes the service immediately.

*A funeral luncheon* or a *reception* may follow.

**POSSIBLE SCRIPTURE READINGS**

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 40:28-31 Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 18-19, 25 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you

Isaiah 44:6-8 I am the first and the last

Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-13 Ho, everyone who thirsts

Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11 The spirit of the Lord is upon me

Isaiah 65:17-25 I create new heavens and a new earth

Lamentations 3:19-26, 31b-32 The Lord's steadfast love

Daniel 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 heart

*At the loss of a child:*

Zechariah 8:1-8 Children playing in the streets of the city  
Isaiah 65:17-25 I create new heavens and a new earth

*For those whose faith is unknown:*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 For everything there is a season  
Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-23 The Lord's steadfast love

**Psalms**

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

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  
1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20a Christ raised from the dead  
1 Corinthians 15:20-24a In Christ shall all be made alive  
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 50, 53-58 Death is swallowed in victory  
1 Corinthians 15:35-44 The natural body and the spiritual body  
1 Corinthians 15:50-57 We shall all be changed  
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1 Visible things are temporary, invisible things eternal  
2 Corinthians 5:1-10 From God we have a house not made with hands  
Ephesians 1:11-2:1, 4-10 Saved by grace through faith  
Philippians. 3:7-11 Knowing him and the power of his resurrection  
Philippians. 3:20-21 Our citizenship is in heaven  
Colossians 3:1-17 Set your minds on the things that are above  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 The comfort of Christ's coming  
2 Timothy 2:8-13 If we died with him, we shall also live with him  
Hebrews 2:14-18 Christ was tested in every way  
Hebrews 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  
Revelation 7:2-3, 9-17 These are they who have come out of the great tribulation  
Revelation 14:1-3, 6-7, 12-13 Rest for the saints  
Revelation 21:1-4, 22-25; 22:3-5 A new heaven and a new earth  
Revelation 22:1-5 The Lord God will be their light

***For those whose faith is unknown:***

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

Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12a The Beatitudes  
Matthew 11:25-30 Hidden from the wise, revealed to infants  
Matthew 25:1-13 Wise and foolish bridesmaids  
Matthew 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:**

Matthew 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:**

Matthew 25:31-46 As you did it to one of the least of these

**MUSIC AT A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL**

Music is often meaningful in a funeral/memorial service. If the service is held in the Sanctuary, typically music begins 10-15 minutes prior to the service. You may select the music (either piano or organ are options); or our organist can select appropriate music. Additionally, music may be played or hymns may be sung during the worship service. Again, you may choose one that was meaningful to your loved one or to the family; suggestions below.

When the funeral happens at the funeral home, the family arranges with the funeral director for any music to be played before and/or after the service.

The following hymns are offered as suggestions for the Christian funeral service.

*A Mighty Fortress*  
*Abide with Me*  
*All Glory Be to God on High*  
*All People That on Earth Do Dwell*  
*Be Thou My Vision*  
*Breathe on Me, Breath of God*  
*Christ the Lord Is Risen Again*  
*For All the Saints*  
*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*  
*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*  
*God of Grace and God of Glory*  
*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*  
*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*  
*If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*  
*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*  
*Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*  
*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*  
*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*  
*O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*  
*Of the Father's Love Begotten*  
*Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*  
*The Church's One Foundation*  
*The King of Love My Shepherd Is*  
*The Lord's My Shepherd*  
*The Strife Is O'er*

#### **GATHERING BEFORE A SERVICE AND DEPARTING FOLLOWING THE SERVICE**

Normally, families gather before the service in the Parlor down the hall from the sanctuary. Immediately before the service begins, the family is escorted into the sanctuary and is seated in the front of the sanctuary.

If there will be a burial or interment immediately following the service, the family is escorted from the sanctuary following the benediction. They may then either lead the group to the burial/interment. If this concludes the Memorial Service, the family may choose to remain in the sanctuary (or Parlor) to continue to greet visitors.

## OTHER ELEMENTS/CONCERNS

**Picture Board** – a display of pictures of the deceased person may be displayed at the reception following the service. Otherwise, such a display is best arranged with the funeral director for the time of visitation.

**Family Tributes** may be included in the service; please speak with the pastor about your wishes.

**Poetry or other readings** – are appropriate as they capture characteristics of the person remembered at the service. They should be appropriate for Christian worship and are normally shared with the pastor for inclusion during the meditation.

**A Picture of the person or other items capturing the character of the person** who is honored at the funeral - may be present in worship.

**Cremation** – The cremains may be present in the funeral service.

**Bulletins** – list the order for the worship service. Bulletins are provided for most funerals/memorial services held in the sanctuary of the church. Families can choose to provide a photo and/or the obituary to be included in the bulletin.

**Guest books** – may be secured from the funeral director and placed on the way in to the Parlor and/or Sanctuary.

**Flowers** – are appropriate for funeral/memorial services and can be arranged with local florists. The family makes arrangements with the funeral for the disposition of any flowers brought to the sanctuary from the funeral home. Flowers that remain two days following the service are disposed of by the church.

**A reception** with light refreshments is available to members and families of members, provided by the Presbyterian Women's Organization. Please talk with the pastors, who can put you in contact with the current organizer of the receptions. While the church generally cannot provide a full meal following a service, we can provide space for a meal.

**Scheduling a Funeral/Memorial Service** – Normally a funeral service is held several days following a death. A memorial service can be held at the time most convenient for the family and the church. We rarely ever do a funeral service on Sundays.

## FEES

Because funeral work is not included in the compensation our organist, families are requested to pay the organist:

\$100 – for funerals with no soloists or instrumentalists

\$150 – for funerals requiring a rehearsal with soloists or instrumentalists

Because funeral preparation and clean-up are not included in the custodian's compensation, families are requested to pay the custodian

\$100 – when the Sanctuary is used

\$150 – when both the Sanctuary and Parlor are used