



Funeral Guidelines

Pre-planning and Planning

Compiled by the Worship and Music Committee
Adopted by the Session on September 20, 2016

Letter from Pastor

We at First Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, believe in the promises of Jesus. Jesus has gone ahead to “prepare a place for us” and in his father’s house there are “many rooms.” The creeds of the church also assure us of the resurrection of the body to life eternal. These promises from Jesus give us hope and assurance in the time of death.

One of the greatest gifts you can give your loved ones is to plan ahead for your funeral or memorial service. Just as we seek to live faithfully, we too should plan faithfully for our time of death, whenever that may be. Whether you are reading this in planning or right after your loved one has passed away, we hope these guidelines will help you.

If you would like to meet with me or another pastor, we would love to talk through things with you and create a file to keep here at FPC. We hope this will help you and your family to know that we want to honor your wishes and celebrate your life.

Our prayers are with you always. Please let us know how we can be there for you!!!

Fight the Fight, Run the Race, Keep the Faith (2 Tim 4:7),

Peter Thompson (Pastor)

A Special Note to Families and Friends

Our congregation joins you in prayer that God will provide you with wisdom and peace as you reverently and thoughtfully plan your funeral. We are always available to help you. Please call the church office (434-384-6231) if you have questions.

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Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Because the resurrection is essential to a living faith, Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the Gospel even in the face of death. The *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reminds us that 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 (W4.10001).

The Book of Order encourages members to plan in advance for the time of death. The pastor(s) will direct the service, which generally includes scripture, music, prayers, the proclamation of God’s power over death, and words of remembrance of the deceased. It ends with the commendation of the one who has died to the care of the eternal God and bears witness to faith in the resurrection from the dead. While preparation for the worship service is key, many other decisions must also be made.

Prior Planning

The time of death is emotional, stressful, and filled with decisions. Your prior planning will help ease this burden on loved ones and ensure that your wishes are carried out. If you would like to make an appointment with a First Presbyterian pastor to discuss your decisions and initiate a special file, we would love to make plans with you. Your file can be a compilation of written information of your choices so that, at the time of death, plans can be put into motion smoothly and quickly.

Making Arrangements at the Time of Death

Speaking with a funeral home or mortuary counselor can help you decide what you feel you and your family need from the many services available. The funeral home can coordinate details about transportation to and from services, visitations, preparation of obituary for newspapers, completion of appropriate documents, and arrangements with the cemetery or memorial garden.

The First Presbyterian Church Columbarium is available for the cremated remains of members and former members and their families.

Scripture

- Old Testament: Job 19:23-27
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
Isaiah 40:1-11
Isaiah 40:28-31
Isaiah 65:17-25
- Psalms: Psalm 23
Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11
Psalm 90:1-10, 12
Psalm 103
Psalm 121
Psalm 130
- Epistles: Romans 8:31-39
Romans 14:7-12
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-38, 42-44, 50, 53-58
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Revelation 21:1-4, 2-25; 23:3-5
- Gospels: Matthew 18:1-5
Luke 23:33, 39-43
John 11:17-27
John 14:1-6, 25-27

Hymns

- #580 Holy, Holy, Holy
- #210 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
- #260 A Mighty Fortress is Our God
- #263 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- #276 Great is Thy Faithfulness
- #482 Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty
- #464 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- #442 The Church’s One Foundation
- #467 How Great Thou Art
- #526 For All the Saints
- #376 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- #555 Now Thank We All Our God

Notes

Cemeteries throughout the area will also provide you with tours and plot purchase information, or you may already have a family plot elsewhere.

Contact Information for Funeral Homes and Cemeteries

Tharp Funeral Home and Crematory
220 Breezewood Drive
P.O. Box 4726
Lynchburg VA 24502
434-237-9424
866-237-9424 Fax: 434-237-9426

Diuguid Funeral Service
811 Wiggington Road
Lynchburg VA 24502
434-385-8900

Whitten Funeral Home
1336 Park Avenue
Lynchburg VA 24501
434-845-4521

Heritage Funeral Service and Crematory
427 Graves Mill Road
Lynchburg VA 24502
434-239-2405

*These are just a few local options.
You are welcome to choose others you may be more familiar with.*

The Service

A funeral is a worship service and should be comforting to those who mourn as well as bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. The concern of gathered friends does minister to our grief, but essentially a funeral is a service of worship to God. The *Book of Church Order* gives these guidelines: “The funeral should be a service of worship in which God’s people witness to their faith in the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, and in which also assurance of God’s love and salvation in Christ is ministered especially to the bereaved.” Since a funeral is a service of worship, all that takes place should be consistent with this principle.

Location

It is appropriate to have the funeral or memorial service in the church, using either the Sanctuary or the Chapel. It is in the church that we are baptized and married. It is here that we make promises in the baptism of our children. It is here that the congregation worships week by week. Here we open our lives to the Lord, find forgiveness, take the bread and the cup, and join with our families and friends in a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is fitting to recognize the end of our earthly life and celebrate our resurrection to life eternal in this same place.

Type of Services

The following are types of services most used in our church and community:

- **The Funeral Service** is a service where the body is present either in a casket or an urn. Usually the funeral service is concluded with a service of committal at the burial site. When a casket is present, it shall be closed.
- **The Memorial Service** is a service where the body is not present. Interment of the remains in a service of committal has either preceded the memorial service or will take place at a later time. By having the interment before the funeral, those who gather are free to turn their thoughts to God, celebrate the life of the deceased and the resurrection to eternal life, and thus leave the worship service with reassuring and comforting thoughts.

Important Information

Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Maiden Name (if applicable):

Family Contact Information (Next of Kin):

Name:

Location:

Phone:

Email:

Member of FPC Lynchburg since _____.

Deacon: Y or N Elder: Y or N

Special Memories of FPC, Committees Served, Community Relations:

Scripture(s):

Hymn(s):

Special Music:

If you wish to have a larger gathering, the Fellowship Hall (capacity 375+, with seating for 200) is also available for a reception. To use the Fellowship Hall, arrangements should be made with the business director at the time the funeral is scheduled. Any food provided must be catered or arranged for by the family. Please remember that alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property. Be sure to make arrangements for the care of gifts, coats, and other personal possessions. Punch bowls and cups are available. Church custodians are available to work at the reception for an additional charge.

Other Types of Services

The following are other types of services, in addition to the traditional Funeral and Memorial Service:

- **The Service of Committal** (often called a graveside service) occurs at the interment site where the remains of the deceased are laid to rest. It is usually brief. If no other service (funeral or memorial) is held, the service of committal may take a longer form. Interment before the funeral service is a procedure that is being followed more and more by Presbyterians. In this case, the service of committal is often a private service for the family. The family can then gather with the congregation for the memorial service. This practice was followed by early Christians and by early American Protestants.
- **Fraternal or Civil Rites** are not a part of our worship to God, and therefore it is appropriate for these organizations to pay tribute to their deceased members at the gravesite or another location.

Officiating Pastor(s)

You and your family are free to choose which pastor(s) you would like to officiate the service, or you can let the church make the decision at the time of death. One common question is about the use of non-First Presbyterian clergy in officiating the service. The overall policy is that leading funeral and memorial services is the privilege and responsibility of the First Presbyterian pastors available at the time of death. However, if there is another pastor you would like to invite to participate, please discuss your desires during your appointment with a First Presbyterian pastor.

Music

The music for a funeral or memorial service shall be sacred music that is appropriate for a service of worship at First Presbyterian Church. Selection of music will be done with the family at the time of planning with the pastor. Taped or prerecorded music may not be used in a funeral service at First Presbyterian Church. Our music director/organist will provide music for the service in consultation with the pastor. Soloists and additional musicians may be requested, but they must be approved and arranged for by the music director.

Flowers

Our sanctuary and chapel do not require elaborate decorations. The florist that you select is asked to follow these guidelines:

The cross may not be removed or hidden by flower arrangements. Only permanent, oil-filled candles (provided by the church) are to be used in the chancel. Oil-filled candles (provided by the church) may be placed in the windows as long as they are covered by glass globes to comply with the fire code. No candles are to be attached to the pews.

Please do not use nails, wires, tape, or any other means of supporting floral arrangements that might damage the church or its furnishings. It is our custom to use fresh floral decorations, and the florist is asked to contact the church office to schedule times for decorating. The chancel furniture must stay in place, with exception of the Communion Table.

Flowers used for a funeral or memorial service may be used for Sunday worship if there is not already a scheduled arrangement. Please contact the church office if you would like to confirm. Otherwise, we ask the family to please take all floral arrangements with them upon departure.

Contact Information for Florists

Bloom by Doyle's
4925 Boonsboro Road
Lynchburg VA 24503
434-846-6581

Leo Wood Florist
2482 Rivermont Avenue
Lynchburg VA 24503
434-845-2309

Kathryn's Flower and Gift Shop
3261 Fort Avenue
Lynchburg VA 24501
434-846-6494

*These are just a few local options that we are most familiar with.
You are welcome to choose others you may prefer.*

Bulletins

A printed bulletin will be provided. The standard format of the bulletin will be discussed when the pastor meets with the family at the time of death. The church office administrator, in consultation with the pastor and music director, will prepare and print this bulletin.

Nursery

Nursery care for infants, toddlers, or preschoolers during funerals and memorial services is not provided by First Presbyterian Church. We are prohibited from providing this because of the daily use of our nursery facilities by our Weekday School.

Memorial Gifts

If friends and loved ones wish to designate a memorial that reflects the interests of the deceased, our church offers numerous opportunities for gifts to existing funds. Each contributor and the family receive acknowledgement of any memorial gift. If you would like to know more, please talk with the pastor or business director.

Expenses to the Family

For church members, there are no charges for use of the church's facilities or for the services of the pastor(s) and music director. Costs to the family related to the memorial or funeral service will be for flowers or additional musicians or soloist that the family may request. If you feel led and would like to compensate the pastor and music director, an honorarium of \$100 each is suggested and should be given directly to the pastor and music director.

Funeral Receptions

It is often the wish of a family to be able to receive family and friends following the funeral or memorial service. Families may request to use the Narthex or the Fellowship Hall for this gathering.

The Narthex is a gathering space at the entry doors of the sanctuary and is a wonderful place to greet one another and not travel too far. There is a small kitchen attached to the Narthex to allow for light refreshments. One of our bereavement teams will be honored to provide light refreshments of cookies and punch in this space.