

*Witness to
the Resurrection*



Funeral Planning Guide
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Durham, NC

Funeral Planning Guide

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3639 Old Chapel Hill Road
Durham NC 27707

Phone (919) 489-4974
Fax (919) 493-4553
www.wpcdurham.org

Minister
Chris Tuttle
chris@wpcdurham.org

Minister of Music/Organist
Monica Umstaedt Rossman
monica@wpcdurham.org

Administrative Assistant
Barb Schmidt
bschmidt@wpcdurham.org

Table of Contents

A Letter from the Pastor	3
Introduction	4
Making Arrangements at the Time of Death	5
The Service	6
Type of Service	7
Order of Worship	8
The Scriptures	9
The Music	10
Opening Hymns	10
Closing Hymns	12
Organ Music	13
Flowers	14
The Pall	14
Photography/Recording	14
The Bulletin	14
The Memorial Garden	15
Receptions or Meals	15
Expenses to the Family	16
Memorial Gifts	16

We hope this information will be of help to you. Our clergy invite you to discuss with them any of the information and considerations mentioned and to talk about any plans that may be appropriate for you.

A Letter from the Pastor

Friends,

The death of a loved one is a time filled with pain and confusion. We want to make sure we are supporting you in every possible way as you grieve, and as we remember God's promises for us all. Especially at death we remember God's claim upon us – a claim sealed at our baptism, a claim that surrounds us throughout our earthly life and beyond. Death is not the end. Death does not have the final say. Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, demonstrates to us God's ultimate power. Alleluia! Alleluia!

The purpose of this guide is two-fold. It is offered as a tool to those in the midst of grief, to offer guidance to families as they meet with pastors and talk together about the way to worship God and celebrate the life of someone they love. It is also offered to begin a conversation – between you, your family, and the church – about those things you value most in life and in death. As we have sought to live faithfully, so we must also plan faithfully for our memorial service, that we may honor the God who keeps “our going out and coming in” forever.

If you would like us to keep your thoughts on file at the church, please read this booklet and complete the End of Life Wishes form included in the booklet. When you have considered your choices, call to schedule a brief appointment with a pastor to share your wishes and create your file. We hope it will help you and your family to know we want to honor your wishes as we celebrate your life of discipleship.

It is a privilege for us to walk with you through this journey.

Grace and peace,



Chris Tuttle
Pastor

Introduction

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians affirm with tears and joy the hope of the Gospel even in the face of death. Because of the incarnation – of God coming to earth as Jesus Christ – we affirm that we are not alone, that God is present with us, that God calls us into communities to worship and serve. We must not bear grief alone, but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve.

We are called to be faithful as we claim God's promises in all areas of our lives, even as we think about our own death, and the deaths of our loved ones. Planning in advance for our death, especially for the way the community commends us to God's loving care, can be a gift we can give to those we love. The pastor(s) will direct the service of worship, 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.

The time of death is emotional, stressful, and filled with decisions. Your prior planning will help ease the burden on loved ones and ensure that your wishes are carried out. The purpose of this guide is not to complete every detail, but to help begin a conversation between you, your family, and the church about what is important to you. After you have read this information and completed the accompanying form, make an appointment with a Westminster pastor to discuss your decisions and initiate a special file. Your appointment will be most welcomed, and the decisions made will be honored with sincerity, dignity, and confidentiality. The file will contain the written information about you and your family's choices so that, at the time of death, plans can be put in motion smoothly and quickly.

Making Arrangements at the Time of Death

An appointment with a funeral home/mortuary counselor can help you decide what 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 an obituary for newspapers, completion of appropriate documents, and arrangements with the cemetery or memorial garden.

Please contact Westminster Presbyterian Church if you plan to use the Sanctuary for the service of worship. In addition, Westminster's Memorial Garden is available for the cremated remains of members, former members, and their families. Cemeteries throughout the area will also provide you with tours and plot purchase information if you do not have a family plot elsewhere.

The Service

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

Often called a funeral or memorial service (see p. 7), this 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 above all else, a funeral is a service of worship to God.

The Book of 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.

The Location of the Service

It is appropriate to have the funeral or memorial service in the church. It is in the church that we are baptized and married. It is here we make promises as we baptize children. It is here 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 most fitting to recognize the end of our earthly life and celebrate our resurrection to eternal life in this same place.

Type of Services

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

The Service of Witness to the Resurrection is the primary worship service held a few days after death, often in the Sanctuary at the church. One important decision is whether you choose a memorial service or a funeral service. At a memorial service the body is not present. A Service of Committal has either preceded the memorial service or will take place at a later time. A 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, and ordinarily draped in a pall (see p. 16). Having a loved one cremated does not necessarily preclude the body being present at the funeral service, unless a Service of Committal immediately precedes or follows. The funeral home you choose and the pastors can help with this piece of the decision.

The Service of Committal (often referred to as 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 (memorial or funeral) is held, the Service of Committal may take a longer form. You are welcome to be in conversation with the pastors about whether the committal occurs before or after the worship service.

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 other location.

Order of Worship

The service is based on the Lord's Day Service as outlined in the Presbyterian Church Book of Order. A funeral or memorial service in the Reformed tradition usually follows this order of worship:

- Organ Preludes
- Greeting with Words of Scripture
- Call to Worship
- Hymn
- Confession and Pardon
- Unison reading of Psalm 23
- Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments
- Homily and Celebration of Life
- Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession
- The Lord's Prayer
- An Affirmation of Faith
- Commendation (if a funeral service)
- Closing Hymn
- Benediction
- Closing Voluntary

The Scriptures

Favorite Scriptures of the deceased are always appropriate. For assistance in choosing Scripture, see the following list. Your preferences for Scripture should be part of your file. The pastor may choose for you if you prefer.

Old Testament	Job 19:23-27 Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 Isaiah 40:1-11 Isaiah 40:28-31 Isaiah 65:17-25
Psalms	Psalms 23 Psalm 46:1-5, 10-11 Psalm 90:1-10, 12 Psalm 103 Psalm 121 Psalm 130
Epistles	Romans 8:31-39 Romans 14:7-9, 10b-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, 22-25, 23:3-5
Gospel	Matthew 18:1-5 Luke 23:33, 39-43 John 11:17-27 John 14:1-6, 25-27

The Music

The sacred music selected for a funeral or memorial service at Westminster is a source of comfort and hope for all worshippers. Taped or prerecorded music cannot be used. Our Minister of Music will provide music for the service in consultation with the pastors and the family. Soloists and additional musicians may be requested, but they must be approved and coordinated with the Minister of Music.

For assistance in choosing hymns, and for examples of recommended organ music, see the following list. All hymns will ordinarily be chosen from the Presbyterian hymnal. We welcome conversations about music or guest musicians that would be special to your family, understanding that these things may be hard to accommodate with limited preparation time.

Opening Hymns Appropriate for Memorial Services

A psalm or hymn of praise is appropriate at the beginning of the service (or these may be placed elsewhere in the service). The family may select from the following list or others from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (2013):

- 1 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
- 4 Holy God, We Praise Your Name
- 12 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
- 35 Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty
- 39 Great is Thy Faithfulness
- 45 I to the Hills Will Lift My Eyes
- 49 The God of Abraham Praise
- 65 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
- 267 Come, Christians, Join to Sing
- 275 A Mighty Fortress is Our God

305 Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!
321 The Church's One Foundation
329 God is Our Refuge and Our Strength
331 God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand
363 Rejoice! The Lord is King!
366 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
394 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation
436 God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us
463 How Firm a Foundation
620 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
624 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art
625 How Great Thou Art
643 Now Thank We All Our God
686 God of Our Life
687 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
730 I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
801 The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want
802 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
803 My Shepherd Will Supply My Need
804 Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!
806 I'll Praise My Maker
815 Give to the Winds Thy Fears
816 If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee
830 Jesus, Priceless Treasure
833 O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

Closing Hymns Appropriate for Memorial Services

Hymns focusing on the resurrection and/or eternal life are appropriate for the end of the service (these may be placed elsewhere in the service as well). Easter hymns, affirming the resurrection, are especially appropriate at the end of the service. This is also a good place to include funeral hymns, which are specific to the occasion and which affirm a life well lived.

- 233 The Day of Resurrection!
- 236 The Strife is O'er
- 238 Thine is the Glory
- 246 Christ is Alive!
- 248 Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!
- 269 Lead On, O King Eternal!
- 326 For All the Saints
- 485 We Know That Christ is Raised
- 676 Day is Done
- 772 Live Into Hope
- 818 By Gracious Powers
- 819 Be Still My Soul
- 821 My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep From Singing?)
- 822 When We are Living
- 824 There is a Place of Quiet Rest (Near to the Heart of God)
- 825 Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
- 826 Lift High the Cross
- 828 More Love to Thee, O Christ
- 829 My Faith Looks Up to Thee
- 834 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- 835 Just a Closer Walk with Thee
- 836 Abide with Me

- 837 What a Fellowship. . . (Leaning on the Everlasting Arms)
 838 Standing on the Promises
 839 Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!
 849 When Peace Like a River (It is Well with My Soul)
 841 God is My Strong Salvation

Organ Music for Funerals and Memorial Services

Note that these are just a few examples of composers' works especially well-suited for Memorial Services. There are literally hundreds of other possibilities, far too numerous to list in detail here. For more ideas and recommendations, please consult with the Minister of Music.

Bach, J. S.	Selected Chorales from the <i>Orgelbüchlein</i> (Little Organ Book), the Great 18 Chorales, the <i>Schübler</i> Chorales, & others
Bach, J. S.	Selected Preludes and Fugues
Brahms, Johannes	Selections from Eleven Chorale Preludes, op. 122
Buxtehude, Dietrich	Selected Chorale Preludes
Held, Wilbur	Selected Hymn Preludes
Manz, Paul	Selected Chorale Preludes & Hymn Improvisations
Mendelssohn, Felix	Slow movements from the Six Organ Sonatas
Mendelssohn	Prelude and Fugue in G
Peeters, Flor	Selected Hymn Preludes for the Liturgical Year
Vaughan Williams	Preludes on <i>Rhosymedre</i> & <i>Hyfrydol</i>
Willan, Healey	Selected Hymn Preludes & Chorale Settings
Wood, Dale	Selected Hymn Preludes

Additional Details

Flowers. Floral decorations shall be limited to one arrangement of flowers on the table behind the communion table. No casket spray – or other flowers – can be used. Flowers that are to be used or have been used for Sunday worship are sometimes available for use. During Lent, Advent, and Thanksgiving, the arrangements will remain in place. If they desire, family members may provide other flowers for the reception in the Parlor afterward. Flowers sent to the funeral home may be placed in the Parlor. The two candles are a part of our worship and will be lit before the service.

The Pall. The church has a pall available for Funeral Services. A pall is a large cloth that covers the casket during the service. The pall reminds us of our confidence in the resurrection and symbolizes our having put on the robe of Christ's righteousness in baptism. It reminds us that in death all believers are equal. The pall shall be placed on the casket upon entry into the Narthex and removed before the casket exits the Narthex. While the pall is the normal cover for the casket, it is allowable for the casket of a veteran to be covered in the United States flag. The pall may also be used on the casket during viewing or visitation at the funeral home.

Photography and recording. No photographs may be taken in the Sanctuary from the time worshipers begin to arrive until the service is over. Videography is permitted in the Sanctuary from the balcony only, provided no additional lighting is used. No photographs of the deceased or other memorabilia shall be displayed in the Sanctuary or Narthex. These are welcome in the Parlor during the reception.

Bulletin. A printed bulletin will be provided. The information form with this book will provide the details for the bulletin. The standard format will be discussed when the pastor meets with the family at the time of death. All music listed should first be cleared with our Minister of Music. The church staff will prepare and print this bulletin.

The Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden is a place of interment for church members and their immediate family who choose cremation. It provides a quiet, dignified place of peace and beauty for loved ones to meditate and pray. This garden fulfills, in an urban location, the traditional church function of providing space on the church grounds for disposition and identification of the earthly remains of those who have shared the faith and fellowship. Toward the end of the service the ashes are deposited directly into the ground, joining the ashes of others who have gone before, thus fulfilling the biblical words, "From dust we came, and to dust we shall return." Please ask one of the pastors if you have more questions.

The Service of Committal in the Memorial Garden is a service of worship and is often conducted immediately before or after the funeral service.

Information is available in the church office as to the cost of plaques for the wall in the Memorial Garden.

Reception or Meals

The Funeral Committee, a subcommittee of the Worship Committee, may provide a reception for the family. A committee member will contact the family to ask about specific preferences. The family is welcome to receive friends in the Parlor in the Holderness Mission Center following the service.

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 Minister of Music. Costs to the family related to the memorial or funeral service will be for flowers and additional musicians or soloists the family may request.

Memorial Gifts

If friends and loved ones wish to designate a memorial that reflects the interest of the deceased, our church offers numerous opportunities for gifts to existing funds. Each contributor and the family receives acknowledgement of any memorial gift. This is an important stewardship opportunity, so that you or your loved one's ministry may live on, far beyond their physical presence among us.

Notes

