WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION

Planning a Funeral, Memorial Service, or Committal Service

***If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord;***

***So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.* Romans 14:8**

***Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* Matthew 5:4**

We hold funerals, memorial and committal services for members, immediate family and friends of our faith community. These services praise God for the gift of life, witness to our trust in God’s gift of enteral life in Christ, remember and celebrate the life of the departed, and minister to the bereaved.

**Advanced Planning**

Death is a natural part of life. Because it is difficult to plan or act wisely in a time of grief, it’s helpful to do some advanced planning concerning your end-of-life service and final resting place before death is imminent. The pastor of PCLT is available to discuss your wishes and help with planning. The church can keep these records and other end-of-life documents so that you or your family and friends can reference them when needed. You may also wish to keep a copy in a safe place at home.

**Ministry at Time of Death**

When a death has occurred or is imminent, please contact the church as soon as possible so that we may provide pastoral care to the dying and to family and friends. If the church office is closed, please call Pastor Laura at 512-228-6565.

**Type of Service**

Funeral: A funeral service is usually conducted within days of death. It is generally held at the church although it can be held at a funeral home. The closed casket or urn may be present.

Memorial: A memorial service is conducted at the church and can take place days or weeks after death. A longer timeline can allow more opportunity for friends and family to receive notice and make arrangements to attend. The casket or urn is not present.

Committal: The committal is a short service at the graveside or columbarium that specifically ministers to the needs of loved ones. It consists of brief scripture readings and prayers. The committal may accompany a funeral or memorial service and be held either before or after the service. The service can be a small gathering for close relatives of the deceased person.

A viewing, if desired, should be arranged to take place prior to the service.

**Order of Service**

The content of the funeral or memorial service is the responsibility of the officiating pastor with the guidance of Directory of Worship and Book of Common Worship.

The Service of Witness to the Resurrection has some basic components which include:

* Call to Worship
* Prayer of Invocation
* Readings of Hebrew and Christian scriptures
* Tributes and Remembrances (optional)
* Homily
* Pastoral Prayer
* The Lord’s Prayer
* Music, hymns, or solos (optional)
* Benediction

These components may vary somewhat. The officiating pastor shapes the order of service in consultation with loved ones and the previously expressed wishes of the deceased. The service is intended to be personal, while praising and thanking God that in life as in death, we are held securely in God’s loving arms. Family and friends are invited to participate in the service when appropriate. A limited number of people may be invited to offer brief remembrances during the service, which is arranged in advance with the pastor.

**Music Ministry**

The music for a funeral, memorial, or committal service is but a means to glorify God and edify humankind. The church will work with the family to coordinate a musician for the service and requests for soloists.

**Bulletins**

Bulletins may be prepared by the office manager after the pastor and family have planned the service. You may also prepare your own program in consultation with the officiating clergy.

**Floral Arrangements:**

The church manager can provide names of local florists who are familiar with the church. Due to space constraints, flower arrangements in the sanctuary are limited to two. Additional arrangements may be placed in the narthex and reception space. Other tributes such as photographs and guest book may also be displayed in the Narthex and reception.

**Ushers**

PCLT will arrange for ushers to participate in the service. Responsibilities of the ushers include reserving the front rows for family; helping to direct family to a private gathering place; welcoming guests and distributing bulletins; and remaining until all guests have departed.

**Reception**

You may wish to host a reception after the service. Please contact the Hospitality Committee chair to coordinate arrangements.

**Honoraria and Donations**

Funerals are a ministry of the church. The family may wish to offer an honorarium to the officiating clergy. Fees may also be appropriate for soloists and special musicians. The church graciously accept donations in memory of the deceased or towards a specific ministry of the church.

**Scriptures and Hymns**

The following are a selection of particularly appropriate scriptures and hymns for use in the service or for your private reflections.

Hebrew Scripture:

Job 19:23–27                          I know that my redeemer lives

Ecclesiastics 3:1–15                For everything there is a season

Isaiah 25:6–9                          God will swallow up death forever

Isaiah 40:1–11                        Comfort my people

Isaiah 40:28–31                      Those who wait for the Lord

Isaiah 43:1–3a, 18–19, 25     When you pass through the waters

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

Isaiah 55:1–3, 6–13               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, 31–32    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

The Psalms:

Psalm 16:5–11                         The Lord is my chosen portion

Psalm 23                                  The Lord is my Shepherd

Psalm 27:1, 4–9a, 13–14        The Lord is my light and my salvation

Psalm 39:4–5, 12                    Lord, let me know my end

Psalm 42:1–6a                        As a deer longs for flowing streams

Psalm 43                                 Why are you cast down, O my soul

Psalm 46:1–5, 10–11             God is our refuge and strength

Psalm 90:1–10, 12                 Lord, you have been our dwelling place

Psalm 103                              Bless the Lord, O my soul

Psalm 106:1–5                       O give thanks to the Lord

Psalm 116:1–9, 15                  The Lord has heard my voice

Psalm 121                               I lift up my eyes to the hills

Psalm 130                              Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord

Psalm 139:1–12                    O Lord, you have searched me and known me

Psalm 145                              I will extol you, my God and King

Psalm 146                              Praise the Lord, O my soul!

New Testament Scripture:

Matthew 5:1–12a                 The Beatitudes

Luke 23:33, 39–43               Remember me when you come into heaven

John 3:16–21                        For God so loved the world

John 11:17–27                      I know he will rise again in the resurrection

John 14                                 Do not let your hearts be troubled

Romans 8:14–25                  All led by Spirit of God are sons and daughters

Romans 8:31–35                  Nothing can separate us from the love of God

Romans 14:7–9                    We do not live to ourselves

1 Corinthians 15:20–26,

35–38, 42–44, 53–58           Where, O death, is your victory?

2 Corinthians 4:16–5:1         A house eternal in the heavens

Philippians 4:4–9                  Rejoice in the Lord always

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18       God will bring with him those who have died

Revelation 21:1–4,

22–25, 22:3–5                       Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth

Suggested Hymns

The following hymns, suitable for use at a funeral or memorial service, are found in the *Glory to God* hymnal.

275 A Mighty Fortress is Our God

836 Abide with Me

649 Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound

819 Be Still, My Soul

450 Be Thou My Vision

839 Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine

306 Blest Be the Tie That Binds

630 Fairest Lord Jesus

39 Great is Thy Faithfulness

65 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

594 Holy, Holy, Holy

625 How Great Thou Art

611 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

366 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

834 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

438 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

375 Shall We Gather at the River

801 The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want