

# Covenant Presbyterian Church

## FUNERAL POLICY



The purpose of this guide is to support families in this time of grief by assisting in planning a service that recognizes the loss of a loved one and the celebration of their life. The service, in expressing the faith of the church, will be an occasion of dignity, reverence and remembrance. We carefully follow the guidelines for the Service of Witness to the Resurrection which is found in the *Book of Common Worship*, which is a part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



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The funeral service is to be a “Witness to the resurrection and thanksgiving for the life of.....” Covenant suggests the service be held in the sanctuary; however the desires of the individual and the family will be supported. A graveside service, a memorial service at the church, a worship service, or combination is possible.

The church encourages members to pre-plan the service and to have a written copy of those plans readily available at home and/or at the church office. Prior selection of scripture passages, hymns, and persons to take part in the service can relieve the family members at the time of bereavement. These plans can aid the Pastor in providing comfort to the family.

### **Pastor**

Upon notification of death, the pastor will work closely with family members to gather pertinent family information and plan details of the funeral/memorial service.

Information needed includes:

- Name of funeral home/director
- Day and time of service
- Name of cemetery
- Number of family members expected to attend including out-of-town family.
- Special requests concerning memorial gifts.
- Service planning

The pastor will give all the appropriate information to the church office staff, and will share the news of the passing with the congregation during the Sunday worship service or any other gathering of church members.

### **Church Office**

- Will notify the Bereavement Committee.
- Will inform the organist so that the organist may arrange the schedule or engage a substitute organist.
- Will publish an announcement of sympathy to the family in the church bulletin.
- Will prepare the bulletins for the service, if needed.
- Will inform the head of the ushers in order that ushers be available, if services are to be held at the church.

### **The Service**

A *funeral* is a service in which the body of the deceased is present. All funerals are ‘closed casket’ services. A *memorial* is a service in which the body of the deceased is not present due to cremation or other circumstances.

The pastor will assist the family with the service components. You may request favorite scripture verses, music and hymns. The pastor will deliver a homily during the service. Family members may also participate in the service.

The pastor will coordinate the logistics of the service with the funeral director.

## **Flowers/Pall**

One flower arrangement or a plant may be placed on the reed ledge. Any additional flowers or plants will be placed outside the sanctuary. The Bible may be placed on the reed ledge, if there are no flowers or plant. The candles on the reed ledge will be lit.

For a funeral service, it is appropriate to use flowers or a pall on the casket. Covenant has a beautiful white pall woven by a member. This pall is available for use on the casket, if desired.

## **Music**

The organist will provide prelude and postlude music as well as hymn accompaniment. The pastor will relay hymn selections and other music preferences to the organist. If a special music request is made such as a soloist, arrangements should be made with the organist.

## **Costs and Fees**

Facilities - There are no charges or fees for use of the church's facilities.

### Pastor

Members – Leading funeral/memorial services for congregation members is part of the pastor's call. However, the family may consider giving an honorarium to the pastor in appreciation of time spent in counseling, and service planning. This transaction is typically arranged through the funeral director. The pastor's approval is necessary should the family request another minister to preside or to assist.

Non-members - \$150 honorarium

### Organist/Pianist

An honorarium in the amount of \$150 is suggested for the organist/pianist. (Your funeral director can also arrange to handle this payment for you.) A bench fee\* of \$50 is charged, if someone other than the church organist plays for the service. (\*In keeping with guidelines established by the American Guild of Organists' document 'Wedding Policy: A Guide for Churches and Synagogues', October 2002.)

### Other costs

Other costs to the family will be for the flowers the family provides at the service and possibly for additional musicians and vocalists the family may request.

## **Columbarium and Memorial Garden**

There is a Columbarium/Memorial Garden available to members of Covenant Presbyterian Church for the burial of ashes. There is an 'in-ground' area which is designed for burial in biodegradable urns and a columbarium (above-ground wall) which hold permanent urns. Both of these areas are in a garden of trees, shrubs, and flowers on the Walton Way side of the Education Wing between the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall.

The cost of each in-ground plot is \$1,000 and each niche in the columbarium is \$1,250. These funds are used for building, landscaping, and maintaining the area so that there will be no financial liability to the church, now, or in the future.

The specific rules which govern the use of the Columbarium/Memorial Garden are available in the church office. Copies of the "Application for Use" form and the "Columbarium and Memorial Garden Agreement" are also available for anyone who is interested. Please contact the church office, if you would like to receive a copy of these documents. (706-733-0513)

## **Bereavement Committee Services**

Covenant's Bereavement Committee offers presence and help to church families who experience the death of a loved one.

The Bereavement Committee will:

1. Contact the family as soon as possible to learn of any special needs, to make sure that food is being provided and to assist with any details.
2. Determine if the family wants to provide flowers or a plant for the reed ledge. If not, the Bible will placed on the ledge.
3. Determine the number of out-of-town family coming in for the service and if transportation or housing is needed.
4. Determine date, time and place food is needed (home, church parlor or Fellowship Hall), number of people to be served inclusive of children, dietary restrictions.

If the request is for food to be served in the home:

- A. Use of paper products or china and glassware.
  - B. Type of food requested (hot dishes, sandwiches, cold cuts, finger food, etc.)
  - C. Types of drinks.
  - D. Determine if the committee should plan to do the clean up or would the family prefer to have things left so they will not feel pressured to eat so quickly.
5. On the day of the service, greet the family, direct them to the parlor, restrooms, etc. and provide them with bulletins.
  6. Place, remove, and return the pall. (Pall is stored in the Sacristy in the sanctuary.)
  7. Help with hosting a reception after the service as requested.